

LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN WHEELING AND  
BUFFALO GROVE 1930-1958

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To the  
Wheeling  
Historical Society -  
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LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN WHEELING AND  
BUFFALO GROVE, ILLINOIS: 1930-78

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## INTRODUCTION

Many Wheeling residents erroneously assume that the Wheeling Public Library, established in 1958, was the first public library in the village. Concerned citizens were interested in library service to the public as far back as 1930,<sup>1</sup> and a community library was housed in the Wheeling Public School from 1939 until 1955.<sup>2</sup> Wheeling's slogan is: "Wheeling—Where Progress Is By the People," and this paper examines the role of the people in organizing and supporting library service for their community. Because funds were limited, the quality of library service in Wheeling and Buffalo Grove until the early 1960s was dependent upon the kind and number of donations received and the willingness of residents to serve as unsalaried librarians and to voluntarily assist in any other capacity needed. Many individuals and organizations gave their time, money, and services freely for this purpose, and it is they who were responsible for library facilities in Wheeling and Buffalo Grove until tax money was available. Even after the Wheeling Public Library was put on the tax rolls, volunteers were indispensable. The short-lived Buffalo Grove branch was allowed to open only if it could sustain itself with volunteers; it failed because there were not enough volunteers or books, and no money to adequately support it.<sup>3</sup>

Sources used for this study include newspapers; library scrap-books; correspondence; village, school, and library board minutes; Woman's Club reports; printed histories; and personal communications.

No previous study of public library service in Buffalo Grove and Wheeling is known to have been written, according to the Wheeling Historical Society and the Indian Trails Public Library District;<sup>4</sup> therefore it is hoped that this paper will help fill a gap in the records and will encourage further research by Wheeling and Buffalo Grove historians.

The paper is divided into four parts. The first is a brief history of Wheeling and Buffalo Grove; the second is a discussion of library service prior to 1939; the third is an account of the Wheeling Public Library of 1939; and the last is an examination of the formation and development of the Wheeling Public Library District with emphasis on the years 1958-64, including a detailed account of the efforts of Buffalo Grove to establish a library in its village.

## I. HISTORY OF WHEELING AND BUFFALO GROVE

The village of Wheeling is located twenty-seven miles northwest of Chicago, in Cook County. Its boundaries are Buffalo Grove to the north, Arlington Heights to the west, Prospect Heights to the south, and the Des Plaines River and Cook County Forest Preserves along Dundee Road to the east.

The first settler in Wheeling Township is thought to have been a Mr. Sweet, who arrived in 1833 and stayed less than a year.<sup>5</sup> Joseph Filkins was the first to build a home in the village of Wheeling in 1834;<sup>6</sup> it was located near Milwaukee Road and Route 68.<sup>7</sup> Wheeling became popular as a stopping point between Chicago and the areas farther north after Milwaukee Road, the first mail and stage coach passage between Chicago and Green Bay, Wisconsin, was built in 1835.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Daniels opened the first store in 1837, and a hotel was also opened at about this time.<sup>9</sup> The post office was established in 1836, a blacksmith shop opened in 1838,<sup>10</sup> and the first school was built in 1845.<sup>11</sup> Most of the people were of German-Alsatian descent and their main occupation was farming.<sup>12</sup> In 1884, when the population was around two hundred, the village contained two general stores, three hotels, two blacksmith shops, one wagon shop, two shoe shops, one brewery, one physician, and a Lutheran Church.<sup>13</sup> A. T. Andreas, author of History of Cook County, Illinois, described Wheeling in 1884 as follows: "This village attained its present size quite a number of years ago, and not being near a railroad is not likely to grow very materially in the near future."<sup>14</sup>

He could not have imagined the effect that the automobile would have on this small village, whose population skyrocketed in the 1950s.

Wheeling was incorporated as a village on 18 June 1894.<sup>15</sup> The population was 331 at the turn of the century; Wheeling was considered to be a typical rural town.<sup>16</sup> However, there was a sudden increase in population during the fifties when it became popular as a residential suburb and went from 916 people in 1950 to more than 7,000 by 1960.<sup>17</sup> Industrial and commercial development brought more people to the village, especially as the city and close-in suburbs became more crowded. Growth continued in the sixties and seventies as young couples, discouraged by the high prices of homes in the city and nearby suburbs, found the condominiums and townhouses in Wheeling and surrounding areas more reasonably priced. The population of Wheeling today is estimated at more than nineteen thousand.<sup>18</sup>

Buffalo Grove, Wheeling's neighbor directly to the north, was founded by Melchior Raupp in 1851. Like Wheeling, it was settled mostly by German dairy farmers. St. Mary's Church and The Buffalo House, still in existence, were two of the earliest buildings in the town. A general store opened in 1912. It was not until 1957 that developer Albert Frank established the community as a growing suburb and got it incorporated in March 1958.<sup>19</sup> Its population at the time was only 164.<sup>20</sup>

Because it was so small, Buffalo Grove relied upon its more commercially developed neighbor, Wheeling, for many of its services. Since that time, however, it has been suffering "growing pains" and has attempted to "cut the apron strings" from Wheeling. The village wants

its own post office, fire department, and library, and wants to annex the same land that Wheeling has its eye upon.<sup>21</sup> Its population is now over twenty thousand and is increasing rapidly.<sup>22</sup>

## II. LIBRARY SERVICE PRIOR TO 1939

The first public library<sup>23</sup> in Wheeling was established in 1930 because the small school library in the Wheeling Public School was inadequate to meet the needs of the students. Members of the school's Achievement Club reported in the local newspaper: "It has been very difficult for us to carry out our Reading Project because we have no public library to help supply us with books."<sup>24</sup> They said that the Chamber of Commerce had donated money to the library, and that the library extension department at Springfield had given them forty-six books.<sup>25</sup> The next week it was announced that a "modest library" was available for Wheeling residents. In addition to the books from the state, residents donated ninety more. The school library was open to the public two evenings a week, for 1½ hours each night. Due to the limited collection, each person was allowed two fiction books and one nonfiction book for a period of one week. Overdue fees were set at one cent per day.<sup>26</sup>

This library may have succeeded, but it did not become very large or significant since there is no further mention of it in the paper and no reference to it when Wheeling talked about how to form a public library eight years later. Nevertheless, it was a first attempt to enable all Wheeling residents, not only the school children, to have access to library books.

In the summer of 1937, a vacation time library was organized by the Presbyterian Church school and the Wheeling Public School P.T.A.

Books were collected from the church, the school, and from Wheeling residents; the library was open one evening a week for two hours and for a short time on Sunday mornings.<sup>27</sup>

There was also a library at Childerley, a home for widows and children, located about two miles northwest of Wheeling. Childerley, which means "children's meadow,"<sup>28</sup> was owned and operated by Frances Crane Lillie, daughter of a prominent Chicago iron master.<sup>29</sup> Mrs. Lillie, a friend of Jane Addams of Hull House, also wished to help the poor.<sup>30</sup> In 1912 her brothers established the Crane Fund for Widows and Children to support her work.<sup>31</sup> Childerley had its own school and library for its residents, but Wheeling also benefited from Mrs. Lillie's generosity. In 1932, Childerley Community Center was opened up to the village (for a small fee) to serve as a meeting place for all kinds of activities.<sup>32</sup> At this time the village had no such center of its own. Childerley was used often for P.T.A. sponsored parties and meetings,<sup>33</sup> square dances,<sup>34</sup> plays,<sup>35</sup> and meetings of the Mother's Study Club.<sup>36</sup> Other uses included a Presbyterian Church Young Peoples' Club carnival, a Farmer's Institute,<sup>37</sup> and the Wheeling Public School graduation.<sup>38</sup> Those who visited Childerley on these other occasions may have had access to the library although library use is not specifically mentioned.

In addition to its use as a community center for the village of Wheeling, the Childerley residents performed concerts<sup>39</sup> and plays<sup>40</sup> to which the general public was invited. The Annual Valentine's Day<sup>41</sup> and May parties,<sup>42</sup> open to Childerley residents, former residents, and their friends, were enjoyed by many Wheeling residents. Because of this close interaction between the Wheeling community and Childerley, it is not surprising that when Mrs. Lillie became ill and was forced to give up

Childerley in 1939,<sup>43</sup> she donated its library to the village for the purpose of starting a community library.<sup>44</sup>

There had been some interest in starting a library a year earlier. The speaker at the P.T.A.'s January 1938 meeting was a trustee from the Glenview Public Library, who talked about how a public library could be formed and how small towns could obtain help from the state board of extension of libraries and by loans from nearby city libraries.<sup>45</sup> The village, however, did not have sufficient funds to even begin the project, so the library did not get under way until Wheeling received the books from the Childerley library.<sup>46</sup>

### III. WHEELING PUBLIC LIBRARY: 1939-55

Although Childerley provided a community center for the village of Wheeling, the residents of the village wanted a public building of their own. In 1937, they planned to annex a gymnasium to the Public School.<sup>47</sup> Because government aid was unavailable and the school's taxing base limited, the facility was built with funds from a variety of local sources. The school district's share was \$4,500,<sup>48</sup> the Chamber of Commerce's was \$4,000 plus a pledge of \$2,000 for the next five years,<sup>49</sup> and the Fire Department's contribution was \$200 plus 25 percent of the annual Wheeling Days celebration until the building was paid up.<sup>50</sup> The gymnasium could seat five hundred people and it was used by school, church, athletic associations, and other groups.<sup>51</sup> It was managed by the Community Center Association Board, including representatives from almost every organization in the village.<sup>52</sup>

In 1939 when the Crane Fund gave their library, consisting of approximately nine hundred volumes, to Wheeling, the Community Center and School Boards worked together to establish a community library. The Community Center Association Board appointed a library board whose members included the Reverend D. C. Morrison, chairman; Mrs. D. C. Morrison, librarian; Miss B. Keith, secretary; Mrs. John Nielson; Miss Hazel Utpadel; Miss Lucille Schneider; Mr. Marshall Balling; and Mr. A. Miller, Sr.<sup>53</sup> The library, located in the Wheeling Public School, began operations on 1 November 1939 and was open one evening a week for 1½ hours.<sup>54</sup> There were no funds for operation or maintenance of the library,

except for a library card fee of ten cents per year and overdue fines of five cents per week,<sup>55</sup> so the people of Wheeling were asked to donate books and their services.<sup>56</sup> They responded to the pleas for donations, with the following residents or groups giving the greatest numbers: G. Periolat, ninety-eight books;<sup>57</sup> A. Schwab, seventy-nine books;<sup>58</sup> the Presbyterian Church, sixty-two books;<sup>59</sup> and the Chicago Industrial League, fifty books.<sup>60</sup> Circulation averaged about twenty books a week,<sup>61</sup> and in April 1940 a record of thirty-five books were checked out in one evening.<sup>62</sup> By 1941 there were more than sixteen hundred volumes in the Wheeling Public Library.<sup>63</sup>

In September 1942 the Community Center Board appointed a new library board consisting of Troy Lee, chairman; Mrs. Merle Willis; Henry Grandt, Jr.; and Frank Utpadel. The retiring board had recommended Mrs. Robert Utpadel for new volunteer librarian and her appointment was approved. At this meeting, the Community Center Board also voted to give the library twenty-five dollars to purchase new books.<sup>64</sup> Funds were obtained only through the collection of small fees; library cards cost twenty-five cents for adults and ten cents for children, and popular books were rented for ten cents per week.<sup>65</sup> Still, the library's primary means of support came through donations.<sup>66</sup>

According to the local newspaper, the popularity of the library began to decrease in 1946 because there had been no regular librarian for a while.<sup>67</sup> Ingrid Nelson, who began working in September 1945, left six months later, forcing the library to close for a month until Alice Ortegat replaced her at the end of February 1946.<sup>68</sup> She served only until September, when Mrs. Merle Willis took over temporarily.<sup>69</sup> It was not until April 1947 that a regular librarian was found; she was

Mrs. Charles D. Balling.<sup>70</sup> Mrs. Balling wanted to increase the library's value to the community. She attended a one week school for librarians, sponsored by the state in August 1948.<sup>71</sup> The library hours were increased to once a week in the afternoon in addition to the weekly evening hours.<sup>72</sup>

Around 1950 the supervision of the library was transferred from the Community Center Board Association to a committee of the Wheeling Public School P.T.A.<sup>73</sup> The reason for this change is not clear, but it is likely that the Community Center Board ceased to exist since the newspapers make no further mention of it. The library remained in operation for five more years; during this period it relied upon donations from the Our Town Club,<sup>74</sup> Ladies of the Lions,<sup>75</sup> Philip Carpenter Post 66 Amvets,<sup>76</sup> and the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>77</sup> Mrs. Balling became the chairman of the library committee in 1951<sup>78</sup> and Mrs. Douglas Cargill served as librarian from then until 1954, when illness caused her to resign.<sup>79</sup> Noreen Dever replaced her and was librarian until the closing of the library.<sup>80</sup>

During these final years of the Wheeling Public Library, there was a growing concern about the shortage of books, especially for school-children. Enrollment at the school had increased enormously in eight years, from 84 pupils in 1945 to about 375 in 1953, and there was no school library for their daytime use.<sup>81</sup> When state officials inspected the school in January 1952, they criticized the library for not having enough children's books.<sup>82</sup> Mrs. Cargill complained to the school board in November 1952 about the school using a set of encyclopedias that belonged to the library.<sup>83</sup> It was not until 1953 that the children were allowed to use

the library during the day. Ironically, many of the adults in the community did not know that the library was not meant only for the school children and that it was open to the public. "There is a library in our town," Mrs. Cargill reported to the newspaper.<sup>84</sup> The need for funds and books continued, along with a growing desire to form a real school library as well as a tax-supported public library. In 1955 the community library closed and plans were discussed for two new libraries.

#### IV. WHEELING PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT: 1958-78

The Superintendent of Wheeling Elementary Schools, Jack Norris, was determined to provide better library service for the students of Wheeling Public School and for the community as a whole.<sup>85</sup> At a meeting in September 1955, the P.T.A. adopted a resolution asking the village board to explain how Wheeling could form a public library and to give them the legal authority to dispose of the books in the closed community library.<sup>86</sup> In October the Chamber of Commerce informed the school that they could keep the books they wanted for a new school library and they should give the rest to the agency working to establish a public library.<sup>87</sup> The P.T.A. found most of the books unsuitable for children except for the newer books that were purchased more recently. James E. Ervin, advisor to the library committee of the P.T.A., called the old library "a community effort on a limited scale, and not specifically planned for schoolchildren."<sup>88</sup> He asked for the support of Wheeling community organizations to help the P.T.A. build a good book collection.

The P.T.A. also agreed, in October 1955, to sponsor a petition calling for a referendum to form a tax-supported library district, and the Reverend William McGill volunteered to act as a "clearing house" for suggestions and volunteers to help with the project.<sup>89</sup> The newly established Wheeling Junior Woman's Club was interested, but they felt that the tax base was too small to support a library.<sup>90</sup> No real progress was made until a group of interested citizens including the Reverend

William McGill; Mrs. George Bobalko, past president of the Wheeling Junior Woman's Club; Mrs. Ray Burlingham, Junior Woman's Club; Mr. Jack Norris, Superintendent of Wheeling Elementary Schools; Mr. Larry Duke, Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees); Mr. John J. Hinz, past president of Holy Name Society of St. Joseph The Worker Church; Mr. William Tripp, and Mr. Owen Reese formed a library committee. Mr. Norris agreed to serve as chairman. In January 1958 Mr. Tripp contacted Mr. de Lafayette Reid, Assistant Librarian of the Illinois State Library in Springfield, and asked if he, or someone from his office, could attend a meeting to be held on 9 March to discuss how Wheeling could set up a library.<sup>91</sup> At the meeting, it was decided to organize a demonstration library first, and then form a tax-supported library district as its neighbor, Prospect Heights, had done.<sup>92</sup> Mr. Reid reported that the State Library could loan the library up to twenty-five hundred books and supply personnel to help catalogue them.<sup>93</sup>

The Wheeling Junior Woman's Club voted to sponsor the library. Club members who served on the library committee and were instrumental in establishing the library include Mrs. Robert Strom, Mrs. Wallace Lischett, Mrs. George Bobalko, and Mrs. Ray Burlingham. The Wheeling Jaycees also agreed to act as library sponsors, and the campaign began with a book and buck drive held on 28 June. The day was officially proclaimed "Book and a Buck Day" by the village president, A. R. McIntyre. Volunteers from the Woman's Club and the Jaycees, with the aid of Cub and Boy Scouts, went from house to house seeking donations of money and books. Some of the volunteers drove through the streets with sound equipment announcing the drive.<sup>94</sup> Over two thousand books and more than \$250

was collected, and the library treasury contained \$450 in all.<sup>95</sup> From July until October the books were processed and catalogued by volunteers, directed by Mrs. Strom, of the Junior Woman's Club.<sup>96</sup> They were assisted by Mrs. Gordon Wells, Prospect Heights librarian, and by Mrs. Robert Lusk and Mrs. Janet Morris, members of the Prospect Heights Woman's Club who had helped establish their public library.<sup>97</sup> The Woman's Club catalogued sixteen hundred books before opening day,<sup>98</sup> and they were also responsible for staffing the library with volunteers.<sup>99</sup>

The library committee rented a building located behind the Union Hotel parking lot, at 122 South Milwaukee Avenue, from the hotel owners for seventy-five dollars a month. The owners, George Palm and Frank Miramonti, were more than cooperative in helping the library; they kept the money in a special account and in 1963, when the library moved to new quarters, they returned \$3,070 in rent money which was then used to furnish the new building.<sup>100</sup>

In September the library was inspected by Miss Alma Lundeen, consultant from the Illinois State Library in Springfield. She reported that it was organized in a "very businesslike manner."<sup>101</sup> An Open House was held on 4 October; coffee and cake were provided by the Woman's Club.<sup>102</sup> About one hundred people visited their new library,<sup>103</sup> which was described as a "charming white frame building with a main room and a smaller room which will eventually house children's books."<sup>104</sup> It had a tile floor, white walls, and aqua drapes. The presence of plants added to the pleasant appearance.<sup>105</sup> The library officially opened on 13 October 1958; around 6,000 books were available for check out.<sup>106</sup> Instead of the 2,500 books expected, 3,000 were received from the state "in recognition of remarkable achievements" and "because

of the splendid effort of all concerned with the project, and the great community spirit."<sup>107</sup> Mrs. Strom volunteered to serve as the first librarian, and she reported that there were over seventy people present on opening day, and there were many happy faces.<sup>108</sup> Superintendent of Schools Jack Norris was also pleased. He wrote a thank you letter to the library committee which said in part:

For many years we had talked 'library' in Wheeling, but somehow the spark was never kindled until last year. I can assure you that the school children are very happy about this, and their teachers, if I may say this, more so.<sup>109</sup>

By 23 October 265 library cards had been issued and 309 books circulated.<sup>110</sup> The library was open sixteen hours per week. The Chicago Daily News praised the village, stating that the library was the "result of an intensive volunteer effort by village organizations."<sup>111</sup> In addition to the Wheeling Junior Woman's Club and the Jaycees, these are some of the many organizations that helped support the library in its first year, either with cash donations, books, or services: Camm Construction Company, Chicago Commutator, Inc., Ekco-Alcoa Containers, Inc., Flink and Son, Geest and Wheeling, Gordon's Mobil Service, Hagerstrom Metalcraft, Illinois Bell Telephone Company, Jaycee Jills, Jewel Food Store (Wheeling), Ladies Guild of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Lattof Motor Sales, McIntyre Lumber, Mark Walgreen Drugs, Mayer's Oil Company, Meyer Coal and Material Company, National Food Store (Wheeling), North Shore Rambler Sales, Paddock Publications, Palette Shop, Schuler's Hardware, Tom Brothers Concrete Contractors, Weston and Lassley Company, Wheeling Appliance Service, Wheeling Ladies of the Lions, Wheeling Motors, Wheeling Nursery, Wheeling Paint and Glass, Wheeling State Bank, Wheeling

Trading Post, Wheeling Volunteer Fire Department, and Wheeling Youth Club.<sup>112</sup> In addition, there were many individuals who contributed to the library operating fund.

The next step was to establish a library district. A petition was filed in Cook County Court by Craig Larson, attorney for the library, and a hearing was held on 25 February 1959.<sup>113</sup> The proposed library district was bounded on the west by Arlington Heights Road, on the north by County Line Road, on the east by the Wheeling Township line, on the south by Hintz Road between Arlington Heights and Wolf Roads, and by Palatine Road from Wolf to the township line.<sup>114</sup> It included both Wheeling and Buffalo Grove; whose combined population was about eight thousand.<sup>115</sup> In this way, a larger tax base was created so that the library could be adequately financed.

A special election took place on 28 March and the Junior Woman's Club again played an important role in helping the library. They visited residents in order to explain the referendum, made about eight hundred telephone calls, assisted at the polls, drove residents to the voting places, and baby sat so that others could vote.<sup>116</sup> The result of the referendum was an overwhelming victory for the library. There were 527 votes cast; 458 were in favor of the district, 62 were against it, and 7 were spoiled.<sup>117</sup> Mr. Larsen, the attorney, said that it was the largest vote in favor of a tax issue that he had ever seen.<sup>118</sup>

The first library Board of Trustees was elected on 23 May 1959. All were members of the library committee and included Mrs. Bobalko, Mrs. Burlingham, Mrs. Lischett, Mr. Larry Duke, Mr. Owen Reese III, and Mr. William Tripp. The Board elected Mrs. Bobalko president, and

Mrs. Burlingham secretary.<sup>119</sup>

Because tax money was not available until 1960, donations were still essential in these first two years. Even after 1960, voluntary assistance was welcomed and the Junior Woman's Club continued to work in the library and regularly contributed money for books.<sup>120</sup> The Jaycees, the Woman's Club, and the Volunteer Fire Department sponsored a raffle which netted about four hundred dollars.<sup>121</sup> The Buffalo Grove Woman's Club donated the proceeds from their first Annual Spring Dance to the library fund.<sup>122</sup> In May 1959 the Woman's Club contributed three hundred dollars; this was the largest single donation received.<sup>123</sup> Senator Paul Douglas, who had visited the library while in town, sent books from his personal library.<sup>124</sup>

The first annual budget and appropriation ordinance was passed on 3 August 1959; the budget for fiscal year July 1959-June 1960 was \$7,950.<sup>125</sup> A first anniversary celebration was held in October. Circulation totaled 10,264 and there were 954 card holders.<sup>126</sup> The thousandth card was issued in November.<sup>127</sup> Tax anticipation warrants were issued in December.<sup>128</sup>

On the basis of its outstanding community achievements in 1958-60, the Wheeling Junior Woman's Club won first prize in the Illinois Community Achievement contest sponsored by the General Federation of Woman's Clubs and the Sears-Roebuck Foundation, winning over sixty-six other clubs. Then it entered the national contest and placed sixth among fifteen thousand entries, winning much deserved recognition for all the time and energy spent to establish the Wheeling Public Library. The organization received an award of one thousand dollars to be used for future community projects.<sup>129</sup> If not for the determination of these

women, who contributed 3,105 service hours in one year,<sup>130</sup> the organization of the Wheeling Public Library would not have progressed so quickly and efficiently.

Services began to expand in 1960, especially for children. The first Saturday morning story hour was held on 13 June and led by one of the trustees, William Tripp. This became a weekly event, usually taking place outside.<sup>131</sup> In February, Mrs. Lischett and Mrs. Burlingham were hired as part-time librarians.<sup>132</sup> Mrs. Lischett led a six week summer reading program in July and August, and volunteers from the Junior Woman's Club helped sort and label children's books.<sup>133</sup>

The library was located in its original building until 19 May 1963, when space was rented in a shopping center on the corner of Dundee and Milwaukee Avenue, in what previously had been Welflin's Variety Store.<sup>134</sup> It was open thirty-one hours a week until June 1964 when the number of hours increased to sixty-seven.<sup>135</sup> The 1965 budget was \$21,200 and there were 12,725 books in the collection. Circulation totaled 60,622.<sup>136</sup> Two referendums to increase the assessed valuation failed in 1965 and 1966; however, the law allowed an increase from six cents to twelve cents in 1967 which doubled the budget.<sup>137</sup> The first professional librarian, Mr. Raymond H. Deutsch, was hired in 1970.<sup>138</sup>

Because library quarters were becoming more and more crowded, the Board wanted to buy and remodel the St. Mark's United Church of Christ, located near Elmhurst and Dundee Roads. This was close to the center of the library district. A referendum held in April 1970 passed by a vote of 649 to 472. A tax rate increase from twelve to twenty cents per hundred dollars of assessed valuation also passed by a narrow margin of 574 to 545.<sup>139</sup> The new library was finished in June 1971.

The collection in that year totaled about 33,000 books,<sup>140</sup> and it continued to increase until its present size of about 72,000 books.<sup>141</sup> The district now serves around 43,500 residents in the Wheeling-Buffalo Grove area<sup>142</sup> and in 1976-77, 267,500 books were circulated.<sup>143</sup> Again, the library is becoming too small for its collection. In October 1977 a referendum was held, asking for \$3.5 million dollars to build a new library on Schoenbeck Road in Wheeling. The referendum failed by a vote of 710 to 563;<sup>144</sup> a new date has been set for August 1978.<sup>145</sup> Although a survey showed that the tax increase was the major reason for the defeat of the referendum, it also showed that the location was another cause, especially for Buffalo Grove residents.<sup>146</sup> In order to understand the dissatisfaction of the Buffalo Grove voters with the proposed library site, it is necessary to go back to 1961 and trace Buffalo Grove's role in the development of the Wheeling Public Library District.

Buffalo Grove, in the early sixties, was experiencing the same rapid growth that Wheeling had experienced in the fifties. Some new homeowners, living in a subdivision, formed the Navajo Civic Association in February 1961 under the direction of William Weiskopf.<sup>147</sup> They were interested in forming a library and apparently did not know that they were part of the Wheeling Public Library District. A Family Fun Day on 29 July earned \$202.57 for their cause.<sup>148</sup> Mr. Weiskopf and Mr. George Klatt represented their Association at a special meeting of the Wheeling Public Library Board on 10 August 1961. They informed the Board that they were planning a book drive, and since they were in the district, wanted help in forming the library branch. The men were told that the district was too new to be able to afford a branch at this time

and did not have any books to spare. Mr. Montedonico, representative from the Illinois State Library, suggested that if the Navajo Civic Association could find quarters and guarantee to support the branch with funds and volunteers, books could be loaned to the Wheeling Public Library District for the branch.<sup>149</sup>

A public meeting, attended by about twenty-five to thirty people, was held to discuss the library branch plans. Albert Frank, owner of the Buffalo Grove Home Builders, Inc., offered his farmhouse office building for the library.<sup>150</sup> The book drive was held on 9 September and netted 377 books. A second drive produced 550 more.<sup>151</sup>

The Wheeling Public Library District Board was critical of the Association's handling of the project from the beginning. They said that the Association had not invited a representative from the Board to their meeting, and that they had reported a meeting with School Superintendent Kenneth Gill, but this meeting never took place. The trustees also felt that the Association's assumption of Board support of the project was "pre-emptory and misleading."<sup>152</sup>

A special Board meeting took place on 21 September to clarify some of the problems. George Klatt and six members of the Navajo Civic Association were present. Trustee Bobalko commended the Association for its efforts to establish the branch, and explained that the Board was in favor of the plans but the shortage of funds was a serious problem. They agreed to allow the branch to be established provided certain conditions were met. The Navajo Civic Association must staff the branch with volunteers, it must pay no more than ten dollars rent per year, and it must submit a written proposal to the Wheeling Public Library Board stating how it was planning to benefit the district. The

branch would not be maintained without the complete cooperation of the Buffalo Grove residents. The Wheeling Public Library District would supply clerical supplies and assistance, and would obtain one thousand books from the state for the branch.<sup>153</sup>

The branch opened at 88 Buffalo Grove Road on 17 January 1962. About two thousand books were available, including one thousand from the state, several hundred from the Wheeling library, and the rest from donations. The hours of the branch were the same as the main library's hours of operation. Mrs. Lawrence Lenard headed the volunteer staff and the library committee head was George Klatt.<sup>154</sup>

Problems developed when the branch experienced difficulty in maintaining regular library hours due to a shortage of volunteer help. Patrons began to complain about the branch to the main library.<sup>155</sup> In addition, Mr. Klatt, who had become a trustee, had failed to attend a Board meeting and had not sent in a report, thus making communications difficult.<sup>156</sup> On 26 June 1962 the problems were discussed at a special Board meeting. Mr. Klatt was optimistic about the library because forty people had showed up at a meeting in his home and there had been eighteen volunteers.<sup>157</sup> In August, the branch was discussed again. Mr. Klatt was not sure that the librarians would be available once school began. He asked for sixty days to organize the library operations and the trustees agreed.<sup>158</sup> However, in September Mr. Klatt unexpectedly moved out of town and the volunteers were left with no guidance.<sup>159</sup> A meeting was held in the branch with representatives from the Wheeling library present to help plan the branch operation. The library continued to function, with thirteen volunteers, but it was closed for four afternoons in September because no volunteer was present.<sup>160</sup> A telephone was added

late in the year.<sup>161</sup> Circulation in the branch reached a high of 523 books in the month of November.<sup>162</sup> In March 1963 Ann Ruck, the librarian, asked for one thousand more books from Springfield. The Board of Trustees voted to allow twenty-five to thirty dollars per month for the branch, but decided to wait until they heard from the State Library about the loan.<sup>163</sup> However, in April the branch was forced to move into the Alcott School because the State Fire Marshall condemned the farmhouse.<sup>164</sup> The library remained open during the summer, but it was not able to stay there when school started in September. The branch closed and the books were put into storage in the farmhouse.<sup>165</sup>

A new location for the branch was not found until July 1964 when rent-free space became available in the Buffalo Grove Civic Building.<sup>166</sup> Some of the members of the delegation that wanted to reopen the branch, including Ann Ruck, the former librarian; Derek Palmer, the Park Commissioner; Harry Rueckel, Buffalo Grove trustee; and Jim Pfister attended the 4 August 1964 Board meeting of the Wheeling Public Library District. They asked for another loan of books from the state, clerical supplies, and twenty-five dollars worth of children's books per month from the district. They stated that they could obtain additional book donations from local organizations. The Wheeling Library Board did not think that Buffalo Grove should solicit donations while it was being supported by the district. They stressed the fact that Wheeling could not afford to buy any more children's books for the branch, and that the Illinois State Library would probably not be able to loan them any more books. They suggested that Buffalo Grove should consider disannexing from the library district and forming its own library, meanwhile operating on a volunteer basis. The Buffalo Grove representatives did not think that

the people of Buffalo Grove would like the idea because they pay taxes to the district. The Wheeling trustees stated that only about one tenth of the library's funds came from Buffalo Grove; most came from industry that was centered in Wheeling. It was also emphasized that disannexing would cost \$2,500 and would involve a special election with all polling places open.<sup>167</sup>

The Wheeling Public Library District Board of Trustees voted, on 6 October 1964, not to reopen the Buffalo Grove branch. It sent a letter to the village explaining its reasons. Wheeling was no longer eligible to receive children's books from the state and could not spare any books from its own collection. Furthermore, the Wheeling library's collection was barely adequate so it did not want another inferior library in the district. Finally, the Board was considering a move to a new location soon, which would put the library closer to Buffalo Grove and make a branch unnecessary.<sup>168</sup>

Although the negative vote discouraged the village of Buffalo Grove, it did not stop trying to get a library. In 1969, when the district was looking for a new location, the village tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade them to open a branch in Buffalo Grove.<sup>169</sup> In 1971 the president of Buffalo Grove, Gary Armstrong, said: "Perhaps we could get a library in Buffalo Grove on the Raupp Memorial site."<sup>170</sup> Before the referendum was held in 1977, Buffalo Grove asked to have the new library or a branch built in its village, but library trustees felt that the Wheeling location was closer to the center of the district.<sup>171</sup> After the referendum failed, Buffalo Grove renewed its efforts. On 4 November 1977 the Buffalo Grove Plan Commission together with the Buffalo Grove Village Board asked the Indian Trails Public Library District to consider another

location for the library since they thought that the Schoenbeck Road site was inaccessible to Buffalo Grove residents. They suggested opening smaller branches instead of building one new library.<sup>172</sup>

On 2 December the Buffalo Grove trustees met with members of the library Board to suggest building the library in the proposed town center of their village and to offer support in getting another referendum passed if this site were chosen.<sup>173</sup> Later that month the library trustees (note that four out of the seven are Buffalo Grove residents) voted to reject the site because the cost was higher than that of the original location, the site was inconvenient to Wheeling residents, and there was a lack of other development in the proposed town center.<sup>174</sup> The Buffalo Grove Board of Trustees were naturally unhappy about this decision. Trustee Robert Bogart suggested that a citizen's committee be formed; someone else brought up disannexation again. Trustee Clarice Rech said that the cost of establishing a separate library was too high.<sup>175</sup> The trustees agreed that, as a Board, they would not oppose the library any more, but as individuals they still wanted to see a library in Buffalo Grove.<sup>176</sup>

Library service in the Buffalo Grove-Wheeling area has progressed from a small collection in 1930 to a modern library consisting of more than 75,000 books and other media. The Wheeling Public Library, established in 1939, was almost totally supported by donations and staffed with volunteers. It was difficult to build a good library collection based upon donated books and limited funds; therefore, the library remained small. However, due to the continued support of individuals and community organizations, and the availability of volunteer librarians, the library served the village for sixteen years until

plans were made for a new, tax-supported public library in 1957. This library also depended upon volunteers and donations for several years. Because of the determination of the Wheeling Junior Woman's Club, as well as the assistance obtained from many other individuals and organizations in the village, the venture was a success. Less fortunate was the Buffalo Grove branch, also run by volunteers and partially supported by donations. Because of the financial impossibility of adequately maintaining the main library and the branch, and because there were not always enough volunteers, the Wheeling Public Library District could not allow the branch to remain open. Thus, public library service in Buffalo Grove and Wheeling was, for a long time, dependent to a large extent upon the willingness and the capability of the people to donate their time and their money for the purpose of operating a library.

ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Cook County Herald (CCH), 7, 14 Nov. 1930.
- <sup>2</sup>CCH, 3 Nov. 1939-5 Aug. 1954; Wheeling (Il.) Herald (WH), 29 Sept. 1955.
- <sup>3</sup>Wheeling Public Library District (WPLD), Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Meeting of 4 Aug.; 6 Oct. 1964.
- <sup>4</sup>The Wheeling Public Library District changed its name to the Indian Trails Public Library District in 1974.
- <sup>5</sup>A. T. Andreas, History of Cook County, Illinois: From the Earliest Period to the Present Time (Chicago: By the Author, 1884; reprint ed., Evansville, Ind.: Unigraphic, Inc., 1973), p. 501.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 510.
- <sup>7</sup>Wheeling (Il.) Daily Herald (WDH), 1 Nov. 1977.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup>Andreas, p. 510.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup>Wheeling Historical Society, "Wheeling Diamond Jubilee, 1894-1969," Wheeling, Il., 1969.
- <sup>12</sup>WDH, 1 Nov. 1977.
- <sup>13</sup>Andreas, p. 510.
- <sup>14</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup>"Diamond Jubilee."
- <sup>16</sup>WDH, 1 Nov. 1977.
- <sup>17</sup>"Diamond Jubilee."
- <sup>18</sup>WDH, 1 Nov. 1977.
- <sup>19</sup>WDH, 4 Mar. 1978.
- <sup>20</sup>Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Prospect Heights, and Wheeling (Il.) Countryside Reminder News (CRN), 29 June 1978.

<sup>21</sup>WDH, 21 Jan. 1978.

<sup>22</sup>CRN, 29 June 1978.

<sup>23</sup>Public in this context means that the library was open to all residents of Wheeling, not that it was tax-supported.

<sup>24</sup>CCH, 7 Nov. 1930.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>CCH, 14 Nov. 1930.

<sup>27</sup>CCH, 25 June 1937.

<sup>28</sup>Frank R. Lillie, "The Crane Fund for Widows and Children," p. 8.

<sup>29</sup>Johanna Doniat, History of Childerley, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>31</sup>Lillie, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup>Arlington Heights (Il.) Herald (AHH), 7 Oct. 1932.

<sup>33</sup>AHH, 3 March 1933; 18 Oct., 1935.

<sup>34</sup>AHH, 3 Mar. 1933.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>AHH, 27 Oct. 1938.

<sup>37</sup>AHH, 3 Mar. 1933.

<sup>38</sup>AHH, 22 May 1936.

<sup>39</sup>AHH, 20 Feb. 1931; 27 Mar. 1936.

<sup>40</sup>AHH, 27 Mar. 1936.

<sup>41</sup>AHH, 20 Feb. 1931.

<sup>42</sup>CCH, 24 Apr. 1936.

<sup>43</sup>Lillie, p. 8.

<sup>44</sup>CCH, 29 Sept. 1939.

<sup>45</sup>CCH, 19 Jan. 1938.

<sup>46</sup>CCH, 29 Sept. 1939.

<sup>47</sup>CCH, 8 Jan. 1937.

- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 AHH, 14 July 1939; 26 Apr. 1940.
- 52 CCH, 22 Oct. 1937.
- 53 CCH, 3 Nov. 1939.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 CCH, 3, 17 Nov. 1939.
- 56 CCH, 13 Oct. 1939; AHH, 8 Dec. 1939; AHH, 26 Jan. 1940.
- 57 CCH, 19 Feb. 1940.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 AHH, 21 June 1940.
- 61 CCH, 9 Feb. 1940.
- 62 CCH, 19 Apr. 1940.
- 63 AHH, 28 Mar. 1941.
- 64 CCH, 18 Sept. 1942.
- 65 CCH, 20 Nov. 1942; 12 Feb. 1943.
- 66 CCH, 20 Nov. 1942; 15 Jan., 5 Feb. 1943; 7 Jan. 1944.
- 67 AHH, 4 Apr. 1947.
- 68 CCH, 28 Sept. 1945; 1, 22 Feb. 1946.
- 69 CCH, 16 Sept. 1946.
- 70 AHH, 4 Apr. 1947.
- 71 CCH, 13 Aug. 1948.
- 72 CCH, 22 Oct. 1948.
- 73 WH, 18 Jan. 1952.
- 74 CCH, 21 Apr. 1950; WH, 11 Jan. 1952.

75 CCH, 18 July 1952.

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77 CCH, 15 Jan. 1953; 3 Mar. 1955.

78 WH, 29 June 1951; 1 Feb. 1952.

79 CCH, 7 Jan. 1954.

80 Ibid.

81 WH, 26 Feb. 1953.

82 WH, 18 Jan. 1952.

83 Community Consolidated School District Number 21, Minutes of the Board of Education, Meeting of 12 Nov. 1952.

84 CCH, 10 Sept. 1953.

85 WH, 29 Sept. 1955; CCH, 27 Oct. 1955.

86 WH, 29 Sept. 1955.

87 WH, 27 Oct. 1955.

88 WH, 5 Apr. 1956.

89 WH, 27 Oct. 1955.

90 Wheeling Junior Woman's Club, Public Library Report.

91 William Tripp to de Lafayette Reid, 28 Jan. 1958.

92 WH, 13 Mar. 1958.

93 Ibid.

94 WH, 12, 19, 26 June 1958.

95 WH, 3 July 1958.

96 Indian Trails Public Library District, Scrapbook.

97 Ibid.

98 WH, 11 Sept. 1958.

99 Junior Woman's Club, Report.

100 WH, 27 June 1963.

- 101<sub>WH</sub>, 25 Sept. 1958.
- 102<sub>WH</sub>, 9 Oct. 1958.
- 103Ibid.
- 104Scrapbook.
- 105Ibid.
- 106<sub>WH</sub>, 2, 16 Oct. 1958.
- 107<sub>WH</sub>, 11 Sept. 1958.
- 108Scrapbook.
- 109Jack W. Norris to Muriel Lischett, 20 Oct. 1958.
- 110<sub>WH</sub>, 23 Oct. 1958.
- 111Chicago Daily News, 23 Oct. 1958.
- 112Scrapbook.
- 113Ibid.
- 114Ibid.
- 115Ibid.
- 116Junior Woman's Club, Report.
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- 126<sub>WH</sub>, 10 Oct. 1959.

- 127 Scrapbook.
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- 129 Scrapbook; Junior Woman's Club, Report.
- 130 Junior Woman's Club, Report.
- 131 Scrapbook.
- 132 WPLD, Minutes, Meeting of 29 Feb. 1960.
- 133 Scrapbook.
- 134 Ibid.
- 135 Ibid.
- 136 Ibid.
- 137 Ibid.
- 138 Ibid.
- 139 WH, 6 Apr. 1970.
- 140 Scrapbook.
- 141 CRN, 19 Jan. 1978.
- 142 Ibid.
- 143 CRN, 6 Oct. 1977.
- 144 WDH, 24 Oct. 1977.
- 145 WDH, 15 June 1978.
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- 149 WPLD, Minutes, Meeting of 10 Aug. 1961.
- 150 WH, 7 Sept. 1961.
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- 152 WH, 7 Sept. 1961.
- 153 Mary Burlingham to James Montedonico, 7 Oct. 1961.

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- 155<sup>WPLD</sup>, Minutes, Meeting of 11 June 1962.
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- 157<sup>Ibid.</sup>, 26 June 1962.
- 158<sup>Ibid.</sup>, 13 Aug. 1962.
- 159<sup>Library</sup> Notice of Special Meeting of Interest to Wheeling Public District Trustees, 20 Sept. 1962.
- 160<sup>WPLD</sup>, Minutes, Meeting of 8 Oct. 1962.
- 161<sup>WPLD</sup>, Minutes, Meeting of 10 Oct. 1962; <sup>WH</sup>, 1 Nov. 1962.
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- 166<sup>Village of Buffalo Grove</sup>, Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Meeting of 2 July 1964.
- 167<sup>WPLD</sup>, Minutes, Meeting of 4 Aug. 1964.
- 168<sup>Ibid.</sup>, 6 Oct. 1964.
- 169<sup>Village of Buffalo Grove</sup>, Minutes, Meeting of 28 July; 4 Aug. 1969.
- 170<sup>Scrapbook</sup>.
- 171<sup>WDH</sup>, 17, 19 Oct. 1977.
- 172<sup>Ibid.</sup>, 4 Nov. 1977.
- 173<sup>Ibid.</sup>, 9 Dec. 1977.
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