

40th Annual

Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction

July 9 — 13, 1986



GRAND LADY OF THE LIBRARY — Mrs. Florence Crump of Shavertown will again have charge of the book booth, which is always a popular place at the library auction. She will be assisted by Benny Matchett and Priscilla Reese Liput.

The idea behind the fund-raising event

By KATHY SUDA
Staff Correspondent

In 1944, two people had an idea, a wish that they shared...the formation of a free public library that would serve the Back Mountain communities. The motivation behind these two was twofold — the educational betterment of the residents and the bringing together of the people of the Back Mountain.

Howard Risley, editor and owner of The Dallas Post at the time, recommended the formation of a public library to his subscribers. At the same time, Ruth LeGrand discussed the idea privately with members of two book clubs.

One day, Le Grand was taking a walk and saw a vacant house on Main Street owned by the Ryman family and envisioned it as the perfect home for the library.

Le Grand went before the Rotary Club and laid out her idea before members and asked the help of Kiwanis, women's clubs and the PTA.

An estimated \$10,000 was needed to renovate the Ryman house. The Osterhout Library offered to help by supplying two trained librarians and 800 books. Risley offered financial help and used his editorial column as a personal publicity column for the library.

A meeting was held at Lundy's Restaurant and representatives of 17 civic organizations attended. Committees were formed and the idea of a library was now a project. In February, 1945, Atty. Peter Jurchak drew up a charter and it was accepted.

After much discussion, the name of the Back Mountain Memorial Library was

made official.

While redecorating and refurbishing of the house took place, a fully-trained librarian was hired out of Springville. Miriam Lathrop served to organize the workings of the library with the help of many volunteers.

Between October, 1945 when the library opened and dedicated and 1950, the library grew. Books were donated by the thousands. Children's programs and the Book Club began. In 1949, reports showed the library stocked 17,000 volumes, 2,000 state books and served 1,000 members.

In 1950, the library's success and growth demanded expansion and the library sprung an annex at the Elmer Parrish home.

From this time until 1961 when Lathrop retired, the library took on the responsibility of more services. It offered its services to the Gate of Heaven School. Lathrop began to be known to children in Back Mountain schools as the "liberry" lady as she distributed books weekly to area schools. Books were distributed to shut-ins in 1955 and in 1959 a branch was opened in an ice cream parlor.

The need for more financial support brought the birth of 25 years of annual auctions which also has become quite an event in the Back Mountain utilizing many dedicated volunteers.

In March, 1985, the library found a new home at its present location at 96 Huntsville Road. It serves the Back Mountain communities and has a circulation of over 10,000. It offers four sessions of story hour for the children and Tuesday night pajama story time parties. For adults it offers the Book Club, Friends of the Library and exhibits throughout the year.

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