

Boy Scouts from Troop 281 put on the children's auction Saturday morning.

PHOTOS BY CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK



Auction began as community event, and remains so

In 1945, the Back Mountain Memorial Library in Dallas, Pennsylvania, consisted of a grand total of 3,000 volumes, a paid staff of one librarian who was assisted by several hardworking volunteers, and assets of \$13,000. Today, the library boasts a collection of more than 40,000 books and periodicals, four full-time staff members to fill the increasing demands for library service, and an annual budget of \$40,000 to fund its operations.

A substantial part of the library's growth has been made possible by a unique community endeavor - the Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction. Initial funds to create the library had been raised by a house-to-house campaign conducted by the Dallas Woman's Club throughout the 11 municipalities of the Back Mountain. However, by 1947, community donations had proved insufficient and the library's financial reserves were dwindling.

That winter, a group of women who had volunteered their services to prepare books for the shelves, were discussing with librarian Miriam Lathrop what could be done to replenish the funds. Among the women were Mrs. Alice Howell, Mrs. Harry Ohlman and Mrs. Lewis LeGrand.

The women hit upon the idea of collecting recipes and publishing a cookbook, but were discouraged from this project by Howard Risley, then publisher of *The Dallas Post*, because he felt it would involve too much time with too little profit. That idea was scrapped, but the women continued to search for a way to support the library.

One afternoon while they were working in the library, Mrs. LeGrand casually commented that a friend of hers had written that her group had made a profit of \$700 from an auction.

This intrigued Mrs. Howell, who took the idea to Mr. Risley. He was enthusiastic from the outset and is quoted by Mrs. Howell as saying, "Hell, we'll have an auction and make \$2,000!"

Howard Risley was wrong. The first auction made over \$3,000. The cookbook idea didn't die either, and Maryann Daily made it a success in 1993 with "Chefs and Artists," a few copies of which are still available.

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Crowds jammed Lehman Avenue around the barn owned by Dallas Post publisher Howard Risley, which was the site of the library auction for 25 years. This photo is from 1953.

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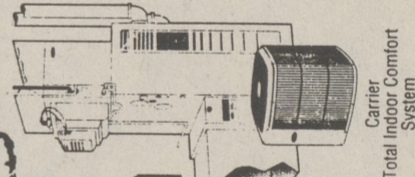
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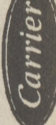
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