

**Auction history**

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nure lime - as well as household goods.

An antiques committee evolved almost by accident. While prowling around in upstairs of her barn one day, Mrs. Crump mentioned to Mrs. Howell and Mrs. A.D. Hutchison that there seemed to be some valuable antiques among the items brought in for the auction. They culled out a few of the better ones, washed and dried them, and decided to auction the antiques separately. They were placed on display on a work bench beside the tables used for the auctioneer's block to insure that a dresser or bird cage would not be dropped on a precious piece of cut glass.

There were just three booths that first year: the refreshment stand run by Mrs. Joseph Schmorzer; baked goods with Mrs. Harris Haycox as chairman; and a booth under the direction of Mrs. Dana Crump where pocket-books, toys, and lace could be purchased.

The day and night, and a dinner, which had been prepared by women of the Humsville Christian Church, was held at the school.

It rained that Saturday, June 7, 1947. Although there was cover for part of the crowd, the auctioneers and the goods to be auctioned were out in the open until Fred Howell went home and got his tent which he hooked onto the barn and stretched over the auctioneers and their tables. Because the rain kept some people away, the auction was continued to the next Saturday. It rained so hard, in fact, that the auction was moved inside the barn.

The barn then became one of the first traditions of the auction, with ensuing auctions being held at Risley's barn for the next quarter-century. The old white, wooden barn's cramped stalls eventually proved inadequate for both the expanding auction and the growing financial needs of the library. Therefore, a new barn was designed by Lee Eckert and John Gregorski and erected on property adjacent to the library facilities on Main Street. The construction was aided financially by a \$12,000 contribution from the Dallas Rotary Club.

over the block was purchased, usually at an inflated price - by Herman Thomas, a gentleman farmer from West Dallas. When Mr. Thomas died, his widow carried on the custom of purchasing that first article.

Herman Thomas was also responsible for establishing another tradition which proved especially delightful for youngsters. Each year he donated a fleecy lamb which he personally delivered to the auction grounds in a gaily-decorated buckboard wagon. When the lamb was put on the block, the story goes, Herbert Hill Sr., would imitate a lamb's "baaaa" each time the bidding went up a dollar.

One of the first items sold at the first auction - an Ithaca calendar clock - was purchased by Fred Howell for \$4, put in working order, and returned 20 years later when it was purchased by Albert Davis for \$104. Returned by Mr. Davis for the 25th auction, the clock was sold over the block for \$305.

Coats also have returned time and again to the auction block. One year, Dr. Sherman Schooley appeared on the grounds in a Raining Twenties raccoon coat. He was talked into donating the coat for sale across the block ... but couldn't bear to part with it and subsequently bought it back.

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**Mrs. Crump's Book Booth lives on**

While celebrating the auction's golden anniversary, many volunteers will also take time to remember an old friend who has been immortalized in the name of a booth.

Mrs. Florence Crump, the first children's librarian, operated the Book Booth now named in her honor and worked hard for the auction until health sidelined her in 1992. She passed away August 19, 1995, at the ripe old age of 100.

Affectionately known as "the first lady of the library," Mrs. Crump was usually the first person to get to work on whatever project was at hand. A gentle, humble person, she never found any job beneath her dignity.

Neighbor Benny Matchett, who took over the reins of Mrs. Crump's Book Booth, recalled some of the good old days with her beloved mentor.

"She was always anxious to get to the library," Benny said. "I promised her I'd pick her up at the end of her driveway, but she couldn't wait. First she'd call, then start walking to my house a few minutes later - often before I'd gotten the car started. The library was her life."

Mrs. Crump also loved making suggestions to book booth browsers on what they might find interesting - made easier by her having taught several generations of

*"Her system has made the book booth a continuing success," Benny Matchett, Book Booth chairperson*

**Benny Matchett**  
Book Booth chairperson

When she organized the book booth, she spent many hours all year round sorting and pricing books, using a system which Benny Matchett still uses.

"Her system has made the book booth a continuing success," she said.

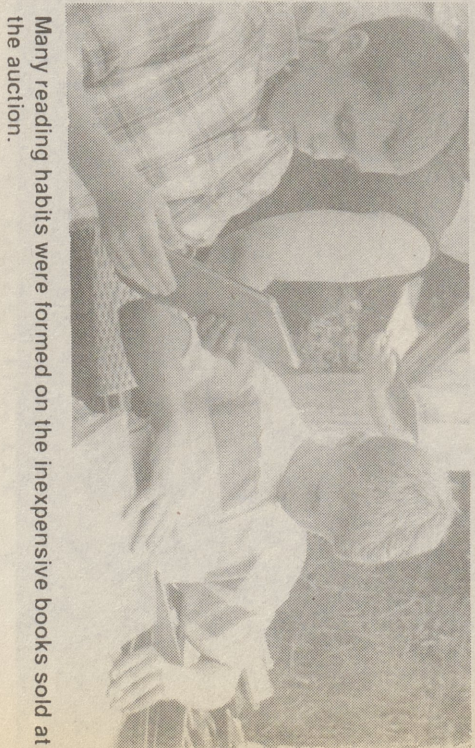
Between 1992 and Mrs. Crump's death, Benny always called her friend the chairman emeritus of the book booth.

"You don't find women like her - gentle, refined and knowledgeable on many subjects - any more."

Friends have described her as witty, determined and ageless, a real friend and a very special lady whose name will live forever on a simple wooden sign hanging above the entrance to Mrs. Crump's Book Booth.



Taking a break from auction preparations, Benny Matchett naturally relaxed with a good book.



Many reading habits were formed on the inexpensive books sold at the auction.

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