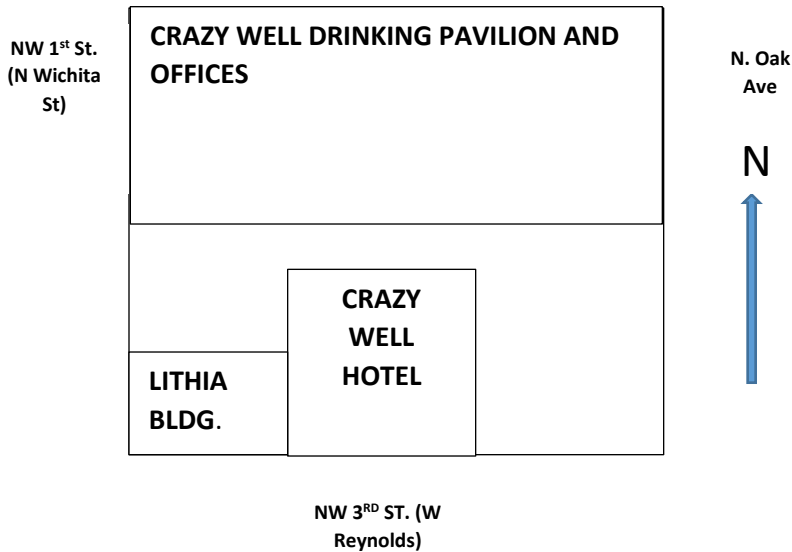


# A HUNDRED YEAR HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY IN MINERAL WELLS

Local resident and historian, Mrs. Joyce Chesher, a librarian herself, wrote a professional paper on the history of the Boyce Ditto Public Library. In her research, she interviewed many supporters and employees of the library and her work is the basis of this timeline.



## LIBRARY'S ONE-HUNDRED FIFTEEN YEARS OF EVOLUTION

- 1907 Elk's Club, in 1909 was housed in the BPOE Hall (Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks) at 106. E. Wall St (106 NE First St). It is said that their building housed the first public library in Mineral Wells.
- 1911 From the publication, *Love Story of Mineral Wells*, the office of Dr. James H. Eastland in the Lithia Bldg. was one of the earliest sites of the library. His wife, Alpha, was a member of the Friday History Club, a club that worked to establish a library in Mineral Wells.
- 1914 The Lithia bldg was destroyed (or absorbed) for the expansion of the Crazy Well Hotel. The Crazy Well Hotel expanded westward to Nw 1ST Ave. As late as 1920, Doctors James H. Eastland, E.F. Yeager and C.B. Williams had offices (in the location formerly called the Lithia Bldg) at 116 NW 3rd St, in the extension of the Crazy Well Hotel.

- 1920 The Mineral Wells Circulating Library was in the Crazy Well Pavilion (413-415 N. Oak Ave) and Bess Savage was both the librarian and a reporter for the Daily Index (listed as nna E. Savage in 1920 census).
- c. 1924 The Mineral Wells Circulating Library was at 104 NE 2nd St, west the Post Office/Federal Building (Mineral Wells Woman's Club in 2007) and was the only structure on the south side of the street from Oak Ave east to NE First.
- 1925 The Block of the Crazy Well Hotel burned March 2, 1925.
- 1927 The Crazy Hotel was rebuilt and renamed the Crazy Water Hotel. The insurance monies from the fire along with the contributions of area clubs refurnished a club center and library in the Crazy Water Hotel Pavilion at 411 N Oak Ave.
- 1929 Mrs. (Ann E. "Bessie") Bess Savage Woodruff became acting librarian and the library outgrew its place in the pavilion and the library was moved to the basement of the Crazy Water Hotel.
- 1947 The library moved to the second floor of 211 SW 1st Ave, Camp Wolter's former downtown Army headquarters, (in 2010. Mineral Wells City Hall Bldg.) In the 1947 City Directory, the Mineral Wells Public Library was listed in the Mineral Wells Health Center Building, another name for that building.
- 1950 The City of Mineral Wells took the Financial responsibility of the library facility but contributed little or no money to buy books. Service organizations continued to purchase books for the library.
- 1954 That spring, the Texas State Library held its convention at the Baker Hotel. During that year, due to Mrs. Woodruff's failing eyesight, a replacement librarian was sought.
- 1955 Miss Madeline Dyer was hired and her mother, Mrs. Beatrice Gallant, an unpaid volunteer, became the library's staff.
- 1959 Mineral Wells Zona Club paid Miss Dora Peach, a Mineral Wells schoolteacher, to work for two months each summer to classify and catalog the library's material.

- 1965 Fort Wolters began growing. The city supported the public library but the acquisition of books still came from donations not the city budget. Nearby Fort Wolters had a large library that the citizens of Mineral Wells could use for a small fee.
- 1967 When Mr. Boyce Ditto died, a large portion of his estate became the Boyce Ditto Library trust.
- 1969 Miss Dyer, due to ill health, requested to be made assistant librarian, a position made for her. A librarian was hired, Mr. Hubert Irsfeld. The city bought the property north of City Hall, facing SW First St. The building (currently City Hall Annex had been a blacksmith shop and it was rebuilt with money from the trust for the library. Several organizations donated furniture and carpeting to the library.
- 1970 The library was named in honor of Mr. Ditto, the Boyce Ditto Municipal Library, and became a department of the City of Mineral Wells. As the library's collection grew, the trust bought the building to the east and expanded the building.
- 1973 Miss Dyer retired and Joyce Cheser was hired as an assistant librarian. Mr. Irsfeld retired and Mrs. Patti Lofits was hired as librarian.
- 1974 Ft. Wolters closed and 6,677 books from the Army's library were given to the Boyce Ditto Municipal Library. The trust provided both additional shelving and additional staff.
- 1982 Mrs. Gaither was director for one year. She spent her year working to make the proposed new library building a reality.
- 1983 Mrs. Sally Pruitt was acting director once again until Mrs. Pat Burwell was hired. The Friends of the Library, Mary Baugh, Glenda Snyder and the Library Advisory Board worked to obtain a matching grant to the Trust's funds for the construction of a library building.
- 1984 The grant was awarded and the site was purchased by the trust at SE 7th St (in 2010, Martin Luther King, Jr. St.) and SE 22nd Ave.
- 1986 In January, there was the ground-breaking for the new building and its completion and dedication in September of the same year.
- 2006 Pat Burwell retired after the building she watched from the planning stage through construction celebrated its twentieth anniversary at 2300 SE Martin Luther King, Jr. St. Palin Bree became Library Manager.

2007 In Palo Pinto County's Sesquicentennial Year, the library celebrated a hundred years of service to Mineral Wells.

2008 Palin Bree heads a project in conjunction with Friends President, Mary Alyce Buckner, to oversee a digital heritage project. Long time members of this project credited with grant and digitalization work on this project included Troy Stone and Gerald Warfield. This digital heritage project is now entitled, "The Portal to Texas History", a digital collection principally managed by University of North Texas. This collection houses 1,720,264 items. At least 21,944 of those items have been contributed by the work of the local Heritage Committee who worked on this project from its inception until the year 2017. Additionally, during this time, Texas State Library and Archives Commission directs the city make their proper serving population inclusive of all Palo Pinto County residents.

2017 - present Ms. Louanne Noel is hired as Library Manager. Ms. Noel oversees a number of projects that move the library from a principle analog model and book warehouse to a full digital conversion of library presence while updating and providing new life for common spaces, targeted audience needs and updated resources. The library again becomes a community cultural hub and traffic increases by three-fold with emphasis placed on partnerships, social networking, marketing campaigns, digital programming, web page traffic, e-reading contracts and free assistive educational technology such as online tutoring for students. Ms. Noel oversees the library during the pandemic with the assistance of a small crack team of Casey Slaughter, Brittney Douglas and Assistant Library Manager, Lori Batchelor. The library also moves ahead culturally and progressively from the model of fines paid for overdue materials to a fine-free model of library service. The Library Advisory Board reinvigorates the library's role creating a strategic plan designed to facilitate moving the library ahead toward a full digital convenience model. They also advance the needs to consider a new physical location changed on the zoning and limitations of the space.

The Library Advisory Board continues to consider a new alternative space that nurtures the desires and needs of an outdoors agrarian community who desire outdoor intellectual spaces to blend the library's indoors and outdoors learning model while advancing the value of the library as the "public's free university" and the value of education in advancing a progressive community.