

Talk given by Mr. J. L. Woodbury February 16, 1940

At the age of Fifteen, Andrew Carnegie obtained a job as messenger boy for the telegraph company in Pittsburgh at two dollars and fifty cents a week. This was in 1850 and he states this was his first real start in life. While so employed, Colonel James Anderson a resident of Pittsburgh announced the free use of his library of four hundred volumes to working boys. Andy the messenger boy availed himself to the full of this privilege. He states in his autobiography that, " It was from these early experiences that I decided there was no use to which money could be applied so productive of good to boys and girls who have good within them and ability and ambition to develop it, as the founding of a public library in a community which is willing to support it as a municipal institution. I am sure that the future of those libraries I have been privileged to found will prove the correctness of this opinion."

The response to Mr. Carnegie's offer was nation wide. The Utah Legislature meeting in January 1907 promptly enacted the Free Public Library and Gymnasium law which provides that: Where ten percent of the legal voters of any city of the third class or incorporated town shall present a petition to the city council or town board of trustees, asking that a public library be established and maintained, or that a public library and in connection therewith a gymnasium be established and maintained, and shall specify in their petition a rate of taxation not to exceed 2 mills on the dollar for the establishment and maintenance of such public library, or not to exceed $2\frac{1}{2}$ mills on the dollar for the establishment and maintenance of a public library and gymnasium in connection therewith, the city council or board of trustees, as the case may be, shall call on election to determine such question, and a majority vote of the electors, being property taxpayers in such city or town, voting shall determine the question of levying such tax, etc.

At a special session of the City Council held September 30, 1907, Professor George, W. Decker presented a letter from Governor Cutler, regarding the law enacted by the last Legislature (Chapter 94). The object of this law is to establish public libraries and gymnasiums in Utah cities and towns and to levy a tax to pay for the same. As motion by Counselor Armstrong that this city Council is in favor of a tax levy of 2 mills was carried and the council adjourned to its regular meeting of October 7.

E. Schoppman

City Recorder

D. T. Leigh, Mayor. Council consisted of George H. Wood, J. Foster, A. H. Rollo, J. H. Armstrong, Wm. H. Corry.

Since all city tax levies must be made and certified to the County Auditor not later than the second Monday in August it was not possible to receive any library revenues before November 1908.

Council met regularly on November 4, 1907 in City Hall. Mayor Leigh and all the councilmen present. Uriah T. Jones addressed the Council and stated that he in place of S. J. Foster attended the convention held in Salt Lake City regarding the matter of public library and gymnasium. He also stated that a standing committee be appointed in each settlement for the purpose of carrying out the law enacted would be advisable. The report was accepted by vote. On motion of councilman Foster, fifteen dollars was allowed Mr. Jones for expenses while attending said convention. Councilman Corry voting no.

The question of authorizing the establishing of Library and Gymnasium and levying a tax for maintaining same as provided by statute was submitted to the voters at the regular city election of November 5, 1907. The vote being 93 for and 68 against.

July 28, 1908, the Council voted a 2 mill levy for Library and Gymnasium purposes.

November 5, 1908--The Mayor suggested that steps be taken to establish the free library and gymnasium, a tax for which was authorized at the last municipal election (the levy was made July 20, 1908). On motion the mayor was instructed to appoint a committee of three on the free public library and gymnasium to investigate and report their recommendations as to the best plan of establishing and conducting same. December 7, Councilman Fife reported that the committee of Free public library and gymnasium had met. No suitable place could be found in town, but Mr. Decker had offered to permit the use of the Normal library for such a purpose, they to have full control of same and a preference to use the room when necessary for school purposes. On motion the matter was referred back to the same committee with a request that they meet with the council at their next meeting.

January 16, 1909--The Special Committee on free public library and gymnasium, composed of councilmen, Fife, George W. Decker and Herbert Haight, made a verbal report on the matter. George W. Decker said that as no suitable building in town was available, said institution could be established temporarily at the Normal School Gymnasium and that same would be at the disposal of the citizens on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday of each week from four to five p.m. for school children and from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. for adults: That there would be no cost to the city for use or maintenance, but there would have to be procured certain apparatus, a list of what he considered necessary was read and explained, the cost of which would aggregate about \$267.40. Gym shoes would also have to be procured.

The report of the committee, together with the proposition of Superintendent Decker was thereupon duly accepted until such time as the city is able to procure more suitable and convenient quarters. Councilman Foster and Superintendent Decker were authorized to place an order for

the necessary apparatus.

The judiciary committee was to draft an ordinance establishing and regulating a Free Public Library and Gymnasium.

February 1, 1909--Councilman Foster reported having ordered the apparatus for the gymnasium.

March 4, 1909--Mayor instructed to appoint three additional members of library-gymnasium board.

April 1, 1909--Mayor Woodbury presented the names of Mrs. C. G. Bell, John Walker and Richard Williams to complete the Free Public Library and Gymnasium Board. He having previously appointed William R. Palmer, Willard E. Corry and Mrs. Allie Knell.

Cedar City, Utah, March 1, 1909--

The Cedar City Public Library and Gymnasium committee consisting of the following persons appointed to this labor by the Mayor and City council met in the State President's Office at 8 p.m.: Mayor John S. Woodbury, Richard Williams, John Henry Walker, Mrs. Allie Knell, Mrs. C. G. Bell, Willard E. Corry and William R. Palmer.

The work of organizing was taken up and the following officers and committees appointed:.

Mayor John S. Woodbury , Chairman

W. R. Palmer, Secretary

Committee on rules:

Willard Corry, Mrs. Knell and J. H. Walker

Committee on Building, grounds and furnishings:

Richard Williams, Mrs. Bell and W. R. Palmer

Committee on Library:

Mrs. Bell, Willard Corry and Mrs. Knell.

Committee on Finance:

W. R. Palmer, J. H. Walker, and Richard Williams.

Adjourned for one week