

Yakima Valley Libraries History of Leadership

Jessie Ballard – Librarian, Yakima Public Library (May 1914 – January 1917)

In May of 1914 Jessie Ballard (1888-1979), who had just received her Certificate in Library Science from the University of Washington, was hired as librarian at a salary of \$75.00 per month. Miss Ballard served through January 3, 1917, the time period when an addition to the Carnegie building was being planned. As librarian, she would have been involved in the planning of the Carnegie addition. However, construction was delayed by World War I. Building materials were needed for the war effort and the local economy was dealing with 10 to 12% inflation. Construction did not begin until 1919 when Jessie Ballard was no longer employed as librarian. Even in light of budget constraints, Jessie Ballard was forward thinking in her proposals and methods. For example:

- She put forward a plan (which was not approved) for starting a traveling library.
- She campaigned for broadening access to the library by issuing county residents library cards. This was well in advance of the Rural Library that was established in 1945.
- Her reports to the board were the first to be typed rather than hand written.
- She provided more statistics than previous librarians.
- She provided leadership and assistance to other communities (Toppenish and Wapato) working to establish public libraries.
- She worked with the American Library Association to raise money for libraries for service men.¹

Jessie Ballard tendered her resignation to the board at the end of 1916 when she married local veterinarian Peter G. MacKintosh, but she remained an active advocate for the Public Library² serving as a library trustee periodically from 1924 to 1957. She was also appointed to the Washington State Library Commission and organized a local Friends of the Library group.³

¹ "Honor Roll of Yakima County," 218.

² Anthon, "Daily Mirror," YVL.00004.

³ Jackson, Gary L. "Yakima Regional Library: a history of constant growth," *Yakima Valley Sun*, Aug. 19, 1976.