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VALLEY PEOPLE AT WORK

Librarian Finds Part-Time Job Grew Into Full-Time Occupation

Mrs. Gene Brownell of Selah left teaching in January, 1948, because she decided she would prefer a part-time job.

Her position as Selah city librarian, which she accepted at that time, has long since grown into a full-time job—and a very busy one—but she likes it nevertheless.

She came to Selah in 1941 and was home economics teacher at the high school when offered the new position. The library, started by women's clubs in Selah, had been taken over by the city in 1945 and had been in inadequate quarters until completion of the new city hall gave the library a centrally located, modern home.

Now the library has again outgrown its home and shelves of books limit the space for tables for readers.

THERE IS a great deal of satisfaction in library work, Mrs. Brownell has found. The number of patrons and the total number of books read has grown from year to year. Last year Selah ranked at the top among state libraries in the number of books borrowed per capita.

The latest report shows the Selah library topped by only one, in the little town of Duval in Western Washington, in the number of books issued per capita. The Selah library lent 37,755 books during the year, or 12.85 per patron.

Everyone expected a decline in reading after television came to the Valley, Mrs. Brownell said, and the library board actually made some allowance for such a trend, but the expectation proved false.

THE TREND to increased reading is still continuing, although the type of reading material wanted is changing, she said. There has been a very definite trend away from fiction and toward more serious subjects, Mrs. Brownell finds. She attributes



—Staff Photo by Maxine Holland
MRS. GENE BROWNELL, Selah's city librarian, finds interesting evidence of growth both in the library's book catalog and the file of library card holders.

this to greater interest in current events, science and other subjects which require supplementary reading after the interest is aroused by publications, television or the movies.

Reading follows current news events, she finds. Right now, for instance, the library's books on the Middle East are in constant demand.

The Selah library works closely with the schools, both in providing books to supplement school texts and during the summer months, encouraging reading during the vacation period. That is part of the secret of a growing list of adult card-holders.

Mrs. Brownell has two assistants, Mrs. Robert Whitson and Mrs. C. D. Morehouse.