

Valley Author Tells Library History On Eve of Book Week Observances

National Children's Book Week, Nov. 12-18, with its theme "Hurrah for Books!" has a special meaning this year at the Toppenish City Library. The library will soon be commemorating 50 years of service to the city and surrounding community.

From its small beginning in the home of Mary L. Goodrich, whose name it bears, the library has grown to include an entire building and thousands of volumes.

A brief history of the library's early days is quoted here in part from a letter written by Inez Noelle Johnson, author of "Yakima", the first historical novel of the Yakima valley to be compiled and published. The letter was written recently to Mrs. Iris Dahlman, city librarian, following a visit from the author.

Library Begun

Mrs. Johnson wrote: "Since I

well recall the beginning of a library in Toppenish, I am pleased to relate the small part I played in that endeavor.

"It was early in the spring of 1912 when I went home from work one day and found Mary L. Goodrich reclining on the living room floor at the Goodrich residence. She was surrounded by numerous piles of books she had been sorting from the well-stocked shelves in the large living room."

Mrs. Johnson's letter explained that Mrs. Goodrich wanted to "get a library started" for the many people who liked to read but had nowhere to find an entertaining book.

The two women sorted books for the remainder of the evening, ending with a couple of hundred volumes felt by Mrs. Goodrich to provide a variety of reading material to suit different tastes.

Closet Used

Mrs. Johnson's letter continued, "For two years the books were kept on a shelf in a closet off the main room of the First National Bank. Mrs. Goodrich spent many hours during week nights serving anyone who was eager for a good book."

Mrs. Johnson served as "office girl" for the library during the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich in June and July when they attended their college reunions at Wellesley and Amherst. She wrote, "I feel very proud to have had a part in the wonderful library in Toppenish that today bears the Mary L. Goodrich name. My only regret is that she could not live to see the completion of her dreams for a public library in the town."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich took an active interest in the library during their lifetime, Mrs. Johnson further related. The

author was a member of the Goodrich household for eight years and, she wrote, "greatly benefited from their influence."

Will Hold Open House

In 1916, the growing library was moved to the Chamber of Commerce rooms in the Masonic building, and was still supported by private donations. In 1922, ten years after its founding, the city passed the present library ordinance providing for its support. Mrs. H. W. Ehlert was librarian at that time.

An autographed copy of "Yakima" was presented to the library as a gift from the author on her recent visit here.

During Book Week the library will hold open house, Mrs. Dahlman reported. She extended a special invitation to children and classroom groups to take the opportunity of learning more about their library and the books it contains.

Toppenish Review