

MAPLE PLAIN HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

This restored building (1987) is located on the corner of Maple and Main Street in Maple Plain. It became the Maple Plain Library in 1922. It was given a home in a building that was formerly used as a post office.

The library was purchased by the village in 1937 for \$100.00 and moved from Main Street to around the corner in back of the Presbyterian Church. This lot belonged to Miss Amanda Johnson and was adjacent to her house. The village paid her \$100.00 for the use of the land.

The first librarian was Emma Nelson and she served for only a few months. The first permanent librarian was Amanda Johnson, whose property was where the library was located. Miss Johnson was the librarian from 1923 – 1959 (36 years). She had the distinction of having served as the librarian for the longest period of time.

The following comments were written by Carol Mooney in regard to Amanda Johnson:

She was affectionately called "Mandy" by adults and children. Amanda was an avid reader and loved her patrons. As a result of her knowledge, she was able to skillfully match readers with the book which they would enjoy and read. The book mobile from the Hennepin County Library in Minneapolis served the library at Maple Plain. Amanda would frequently have a hot meal ready for the traveling librarian and her driver of the book mobile when they arrived with a new supply of books.

Verna Hamilton shared her memories of the library:

Verna's memories relate back to the 1920's and 30's. There were shelves of inviting books and the library had a nice "booky" smell. Mandy usually had house plants to give a more feeling like home. There was a small home made wooden bi-plane that hung from the ceiling. Mandy proudly shared that Adrian Halgren made that for her. When Mandy was faced with a heavy work schedule, she would say "I'll take some good books along home so I will take out time to read and not work too hard." When Mandy was told she need not keep the library open on a cold blustery Saturday evening, she replied she would keep it open, "people need something good to read in this kind of weather."

The following information was written by Florence Moline Carlson, Amanda's niece:

"Mandy" as she was affectionately called, graduated from eighth grade at the Armstrong one room school house. She passed a test that would give her a license to teach in a Country School. However, because of her father's age and declining health she was not able to accept such a position. Her monthly salary was \$30.00. The library was open three afternoons a week from two to five p.m. and in the evening from seven to nine p.m. People came at all hours. She was very accommodating. She would drop everything and go the library. If she was in the garden, she would not take time to wash her hands so there were many smudges found on the books and library cards. When people were ill and shut in, she would walk miles to deliver books to them. The elderly would ^{stop} ~~stop~~ in for a friendly greeting and they would leave with books under their arm. She was loved by adults and children. She

was held in great esteem by the county library. She loaned out more books per capita than any other library in the county. Her love and untiring service left a "mark" on all who came in contact with her.

As you can tell by reading these shared memories, Mandy was well respected and loved. Many of us who attended Maple Plain Elementary School remember crossing Highway 12 one to two times a week and visiting the library and Miss Johnson.

In 1959 Amanda fell and broke her hip and was unable to continue to work as the librarian. Mrs. Pearl Gothman was her substitute and worked in the library from 1959-1963. Mrs. Winifred (Winnie) Bryant was the Maple Plain librarian from 1963-1972.

This is the first of a series of articles that will be written about the Maple Plain Historical Library and Museum.



Amanda Johnson, librarian for 36 years.