Chapter 6

Libraries under the law for townships
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Land</th>
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<tr>
<td>Batavia</td>
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<td>Cambridge</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>1434</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>3022</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1622</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Polo</td>
<td>1729</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Ogle F-1</td>
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<td>Winnebago F-1</td>
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<td>Warren</td>
<td>1587</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Jo Daviess D-1</td>
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Batavia

Public Library

The library of Batavia, Kane county, was begun by gifts, to supply the public demand for books; in 1852 the town-
ship was prevailed upon to accept the library as a gift from
those interested and agree to support it as a free, public library.
The circulation is now 2000 from 5450 volumes; the tax received
at first one mill, now two, gives an income of about $1500 yearly.
There have been no special gifts; the library has been adver-
tised in the local papers, and by reading room notices.

In 1856, the township had a population of 3319; the town,
1054; in 1899 the township had 4392, the town, 3445.
The town, seven miles north of Aurora, has a foundry and a
paper-mill. There are three clubs which find the library of use
in their work.

No opinion on the law regarding the establishment of libraries
was given, so that they seem satisfied; the library is much used.
The library of Cambridge, county seat of Henry county, is one of the few township libraries in county seats. It was started in 1873 by subscription, then came under the control of the village, and is at present supported by the township. The date of the transfer has not been learned.

The library, which is only open one day in the week, issued about 7500 volumes for home use last year; there are 4300 volumes in the library. The income from the tax is from $600 to $650 a year. There has been no large gifts.

The population of the township in 1860, was 2302, in 1890, 1886; the population of the town shows a similar decrease of 400 in the same time. The town has no special industry except a flour-mill.

The library appears to be doing good service with small means. The township tax is not mentioned.
The library of Dundee, Kane county, founded in 1879 by Dr. H. F. Cleveland, is now the property of the township. The library circulated 400 volumes last year; it contains only 1700 volumes.

The tax amounts to $250 a year. The township which had a population of 2750 in 1860, had in 1890, almost 4000, while the town has lost , a gain of 600 in ten years. The town has a creamery, a cheese-factory, and brick-works.

The community is not wealthy. Farmers, working-men, and school-children are the chief patrons of the library. The people of the township outside the town use the library to quite an extent.

The tax does not seem to be as high as it might; the income should be larger to supply the needs of the readers. No opinion is given on the law.
The library in Genesee, Henry county, like that at Cambridge has passed through three stages in its development; first a shareholders' library, between 1852 and 1856, it became a city library, and later was transferred to the township. The first change was made to "extend the influence of the library," the second "to increase its usefulness and revenue". There are now 6000 volumes in the library; no record of circulation is kept.

The shareholders petitioned the city to take the library, and the Library Board accomplished the transfer to the township.

The annual income of the library is $1500; the librarian has $420 a year. The library was given $10000 in 1886 for a new building, and into this the library moved this year.

In 1850, the township had a population of 4711, in 1890, 4651 while the town showed a like decrease of about 400, having in 1890 only 3125. Now there are said to be but few families in the township outside the city limits. Coal is mined, and farming tools are made in the town.

The law is satisfactory as it stands.
Public Library

The library of Geneva, Kane county, due to a suggestion made by the mayor to the Geneva Improvement Association, was begun in 1894-95 by vote of the township. The election was carried largely by the zealous efforts of the Association, which also lent the library $500 as a permanent investment to help out the first year, and drafted a letter to tax-payers asking for funds to support the library till the tax should be available. Library lectures were given as a means of educating the people to need the library.

There are in the library 1237 volumes and 11357 volumes were issued for home use last year. The income from the tax is $1100 a year. A few books have been given to the library.

The township had a population of 3050 in 1850; that of the town was 1042, an increase of about 400 in each since 1850. There are six factories, gluee-works, a creamery, and a foundary in the town; the community is not wealthy.

"The library is on the whole, very popular and growing more so," the librarian says. Children, especially those whose parents are of foreign birth, form a large proportion of the readers.

No opinion is given of the law, it seems to work well here.
Kewanee

Public Library

The library of Kewanee, Henry county, was founded in 1873, by vote of the township; it was preceded by small subscription library. The project was thoroughly talked up before the election, so that all knew about it. The librarian says "We kept it continually before the voters". The only gifts received have been a few books.

The circulation is over 20,000, for the 8,000 volumes in the library. The tax yields $1,000 a year now.

The township had in 1880 a population of 4,207, the town 3,704, while in 1890 the township had 5,988, and the town 4,569. The community is wealthy and growing. Coal is mined, and there are boiler and tube factories.

The library has always been well advertised; "the country people use it freely and are pleased with it". The city limits now include about five-sevenths of the population of the township, while in 1880 two-fifths lived outside the limits.

The present law is satisfactory as far as it goes; the librarian says, "We would like a law whereby we could assess and collect a two mill tax for a proper library building."
Monticello
Public Library

The library of Monticello, county seat of Putt county, is the gift of Mrs. G. W. Allerton, being the visible expression of the interest felt by the Allerton family in the community where their first land interests were. In 1897 Mrs. Allerton offered the township the books, furniture, and fixtures for a library, with a fund for the purchase of more books, if the township would provide a building, and pay the running expenses, as librarian's salary, heat, light, and janitor service. The offer was accepted almost at once, and the township makes an estimate of the probable expense for the year, and appropriates money for the purpose; it is hoped that the two mill tax can be levied by vote of the township, to provide a regular income. The library has received a few smaller gifts.

The circulation, 10544 volumes is excellent for the first year of a library having only 3000 volumes.

The township had in 1690, a population of 3632, and the town, 1643. There are in the town five factories, a foundry, and a flour-mill; it seems to be prosperous.

The problem of the law has not come up in the history of the library yet. The librarian says, "We try to carry out as far as possible, approved methods for creating greater interest in the library." Every one seems to be satisfied.
At Polo, Ogle county, the library was begun as a stockholders' library in 1871; a lot was bought, and a building fitted up; but the enthusiasm died out, and in 1889 the library was almost dead. The next year some of the stockholders petitioned the township authorities to make it public, on the understanding that the property of the old organization should be given to the new library. The proposition was approved and the library became the property of the township; the tax of one mill amounts to $500 to $600 a year. Some money has been raised by entertainments. A gift of $500 with its interest is set apart with some smaller sums, as a fund for a new building. There are 2664 volumes and 2588 were issued for home use in 1896.

Buffalo township had, in 1890, a population of 2653, while that of the town Polo, alone, was 1736; the town ships live stock to Chicago, and farm tools are manufactured.

As regards the township law, Mr. R. B. Woolsey, one of the trustees, writes as follows:

"Is the present township law satisfactory?" This is very difficult question to answer, and of course depends altogether on the ideas of the individual giving the answer. So far we have found no difficulty. In fact I will say we have paid very little attention to it. There is not much of it. This is the very reason why as an individual I think
good deal of it; it makes it less difficult to keep in line with its work. Chapter 8 of the Statutes is very short and mostly relates to larger cities. But in Article 10, townships are given certain powers and under this we act and find no trouble. We have ample power and as long as things move harmoniously all is well. The fact is, we have had very little cause to refer to the law; hence, I am inclined to say, let it alone.

As to the cause of there being so few in the State, I would suppose it results from the fact that public opinion is not sufficiently developed to demand more. Here it seems to me is the necessity of the times.

Our American people are perhaps too busy to have a general rule to do much in this direction, but they are mostly right if brought to a realizing sense of what is needed. A few energetic men and women pulling together would build a library in any town. Why do they not do it? Here is in my opinion, the secret of progress."

The library appears to be thriving and duly appreciated.
The township library in Rochelle, Ogle county, was founded in 1891; it has received no important gifts.

The library in 1896 contained 900 volumes and the circulation is given in the Report for that year as 600 volumes. No special reason appears for the large circulation, so far as can be learned; the figures may include reading room circulation as well as the books issued for home use. The income of the library for the same time was $1200.

In 1890, the population of the town was 1769; that of the township, 2495. The town, the center for a stock-raising and agricultural region, has two foundries and a flour-mill.

The reports which have been obtained indicate that the library is appreciated.

No direct report could be had, so that no opinion of the law was obtained.
Rockton
Talcott Free Library

In 1868, Mr. Walt Talcott and his son W. A. Talcott offered to give to the township of Rockton, Winnebago county, a building suitably arranged for library purposes and a lot, if the people would agree to found and maintain the library. The offer was accepted. The tax furnishes an income of $700 a year. There have been no other gifts.

The library contained 5300 volumes last year, and in 1888 7500 volumes were issued for home use.

The population of the township in 1890 was 1492, that of the town 462. There are paper and flour mills, and a foundry in the town, which is also named Rockton.

The library is fairly well patronized and seems to be appreciated; the tax is reasonably liberal for so small a community.

No opinion was expressed concerning the law; probably they have had little need to consider it.
Warren

Free Public Library

The library in Warren, Jo Daviess county, was founded primarily to aid the students of the Warren Academy, in 1858; it is open now to the public and is supported by the township in part. The Academy furnishes a room and a librarian, but no statement could be found concerning the source of the income of $100 a year.

The library contains 3000 volumes and the circulation last year was 3000 volumes.

In 1890 the population of the town was 1172; that of the whole township was 1887. The town has a flour-mill and foundry; farming and stock-raising are the industries of the township.

The present arrangement appears to give satisfaction. No statement was made regarding the law. From the reports it seems likely that the funds are obtained by an appropriation from the township authorities for the purpose.
THE relatively small number of libraries organized by townships may be ascribed to any one, or better, all of these causes; absorption in personal affairs; the hostile attitude apt to assume when the extra tax on people outside the city limits is proposed for some object centralized at a point inside; the universally bad roads which make easy communication and so the prompt return of books, a difficult matter at the season when the country people have time to read; or, indifference on the part of the town to the mutual benefit to be gained.

At any rate, of the sixty which have been studied, and which are fairly representative, eleven are township libraries; that at Lombard, in Chapter 1, should possibly be added, as their library seems to be open to all, irrespective of place of abode.

These eleven libraries are distributed in the towns of the different sizes as follows:

Chapter 1, Cambridge; and Rockton;

2, Deans, Geneva, Kewanee, Monticello, Polo, Rochelle, and Warren;

3, Batavia, and Genesee.

Those founded by individuals, which the people have had only to accept and, in part or wholly maintain, are the libraries in Deans, Monticello, and Rockton, and in all the public has taken good care of the gift and profited by it. That at Warren was founded by individuals for the school, but is answering the purpose of a free public library as well as if that had been the original plan. In Geneva and Rochelle the public libraries were not
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preceded by other libraries of any sort, but
were the almost spontaneous result of the awakening of the pub-
lic conscience.

The other five, in Batavia, Cambridge, Genesee, Kewanee, and
Polo, were the outcome of agitation which took the form of li-
brary associations and companies, of various ages; the oldest, or
the oldest whose age is known is that at Polo, which after a
temporary prosperity, languished, till after fifteen years, the
people were roused to a sense of what the library should be.

In Cambridge and Genesee the libraries passed through three
stages of existence, shareholders, village and city respectively,
then became township institutions; in each case the original
proprietors surrendered their ownership whenever the people were
willing and ready for the change.

Only two of these libraries are in county seats, Cambridge,
and Monticello; the latter as a gift can not be considered repre-
sentative. A majority, seven, were begun in towns having
1000 to 2500 people. All but Monticello are in the northern one-
fourth of the State; three are in Henry, three in Kane, two in
Ogle, and one each in Jo Davies and Winnebago counties.

According to the data, Rockelle, if we concede the figures report-
ed in 1866, is far in advance of the rest; the issuance of twen-
ty-four times the number of volumes in the library, even if it
includes reading room use, is not unusual. Genesee issues nine,
Batavia four, Monticello, three, and Dundee a trifles less than
three times the number of volumes contained in their respective libraries. The rate in Keweenaw, Polo, Rockton, and Warren varies from twice to two and one-fifth times the number of volumes; Cambridge gives out a little over one and one-half times its whole number; while Geneva, with 6600 volumes, keeps no record of circulation.

The age of the libraries appears to have very little influence, as Geneva, next to the youngest, has a much higher rate than Monticello, the most recent, which in its turn, does but a trifle better than that in Dundee, founded in 1879 instead of 1657.

The manner of founding does not matter if the people realize the value of the library when it is in their possession. This is determined by the character and habits of thought of the community; else by the methods used in administering the affairs of the library.

The libraries in townships do not have, as far as I can discover, a higher rate of circulation as a rule, than libraries of equal size in towns of the same population; the increased number of possible users does not insure a greater number of actual readers, in the majority of cases. There may be exceptions, when the towns differ materially in make-up, or an unusually active Board and librarian take advantage of unusual conditions. The chief argument for libraries under township organization is the field for increased usefulness by the added income.