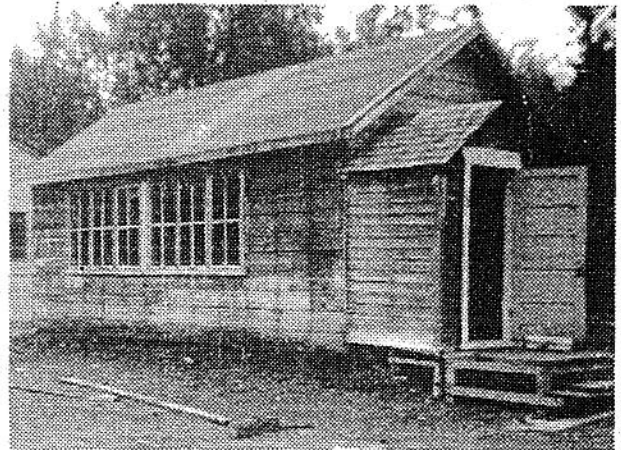
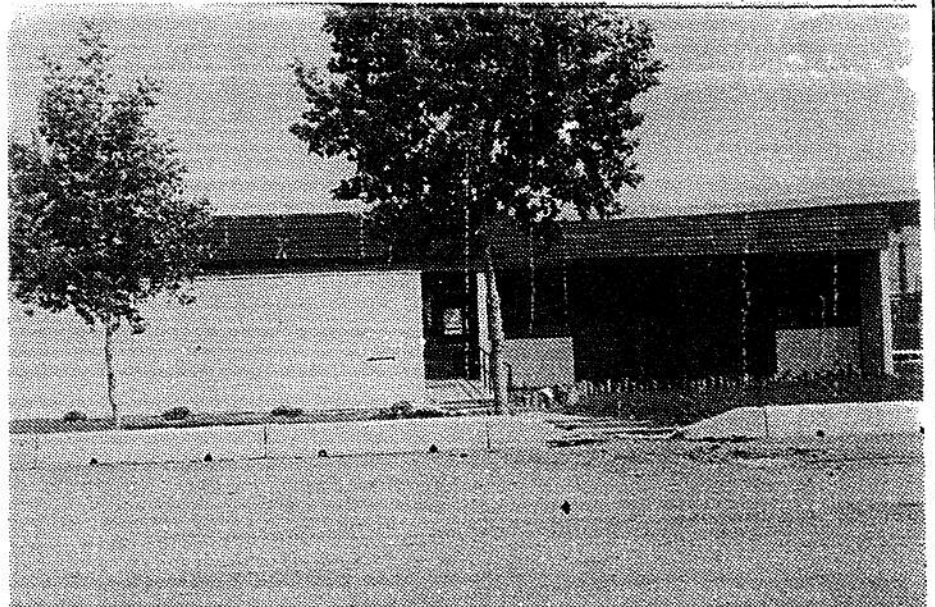


A History of the Chetwynd Centennial Public Library

**Remember
when?**



**Look
at
us
now!**



1949 - 1982

23 years of service for Chetwynd and area

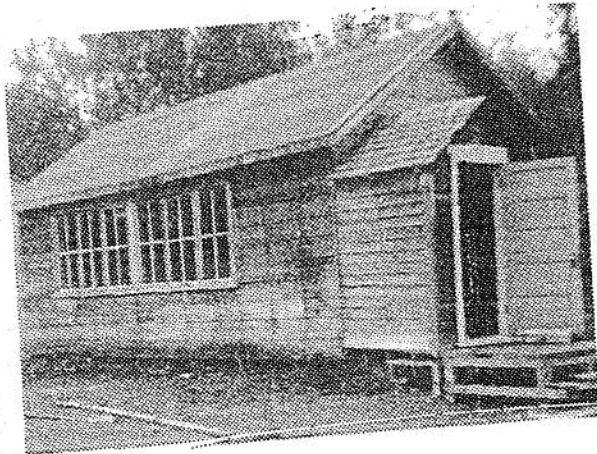
History 1959-1982

The Community of Chetwynd should be very proud of its new, up to date well stocked Library and Services. When visiting it or driving by, thought should also be given to the many dedicated people who pioneered it, they were very fine people indeed. Hundreds of volunteer hours have been put into the Library to achieve the services we have today.

From a very small beginning the Library has grown every year, thanks to dedicated staff, volunteers, board members and interested people. Together we grew a little, got a little wiser, a little more daring and more assertive in demands, all with great results. On the following pages we have outlined some of the highlights of 23 years of service to and for the Community.

In September 1959 the Parent Teachers Association donated books to become the first collection for a Public Library in Chetwynd. At the same time Howard Overend of the Public Library Commission of Dawson Creek explained how a Public Library could be formed in the community. On February 20th, 1960 the first Library was opened in an old building which had previously been used as a classroom on a site located across from the Hotel Chetwynd. The Library Development Commission delivered 250 books to that new Library.

Old School House 1959



The Little Prairie Ladies Club volunteered their services to provide Librarians and to assume responsibility for arranging the finances to construct and operate a new establishment. In recognition of their outstanding contributions to the community they received a Chatelaine Award.

CHATELAINÉ

CLUB AWARD HONORABLE MENTION

Presented to

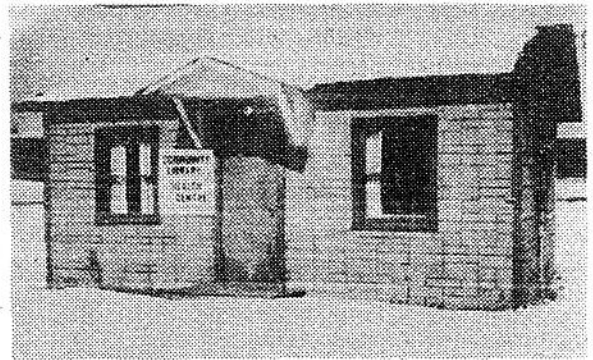
LITTLE PRAIRIE LADIES' CLUB
Chetwynd, British Columbia

*In recognition of an outstanding contribution
to the community*

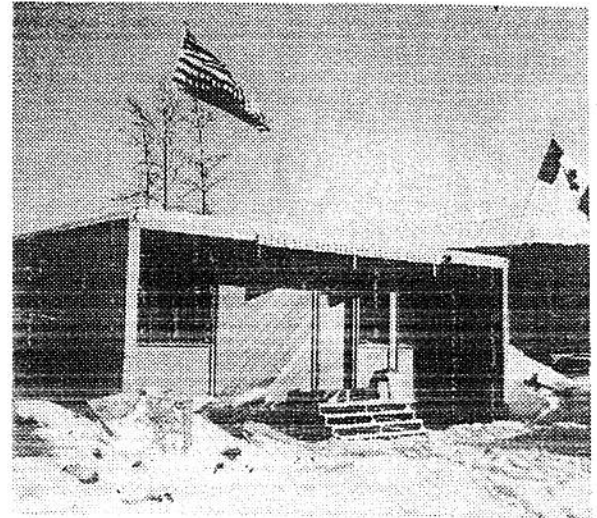
1960-61

In February 1961 an improved building housing both the Library and Health Centre was opened. The Librarian Yvonne Elden had 800 books on the shelves. The new centre located near Windrem School was the first district Library to have a building of its own.

Library and Health Centre 1961



At that time books were exchanged with the Public Library Commission so that there would always be a new supply of books on the shelves. The first book 'exchange' was conducted by Librarian Yvonne Elden and Corky Grant. The Library was open 7 hours a week and there were 43 adults and 56 children registered in 1961.



The Chetwynd Centennial Public Library 1967

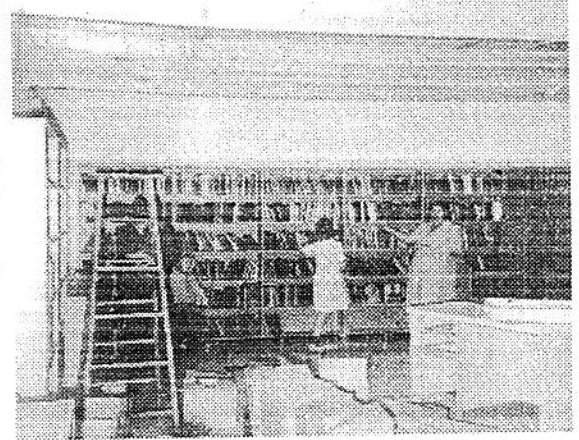
The Library book stock continued to grow over the years under the very capable custodianship of Mrs. Irene McClarty. Books were now cramming every available shelf space, and by 1966 the stock had increased to over 2500 volumes. The Chetwynd Community Library had approximately 1500 volumes of its own bought with donations received by the Little Prairie Ladies Club. It was apparent new quarters would have to be found!!

In 1966 the formation of a Chetwynd Public Library Association was approved by the British Columbia Government. The new arrangement made the Chetwynd Library eligible for a grant of \$800.00 from the Provincial Government and a matching grant from the newly incorporated Village of Chetwynd. The Association hoped to erect a new \$10,000.00 building on the same site.

1967 being Centennial Year, the Village of Chetwynd and the community agreed that a new Library would be their Centennial project. This project got off the ground immediately and in February 1967 the new Library was officially opened. It was the first Centennial Project to be completed in the Peace River Area and was approximately 30' x 30' building, costing somewhere in the region of \$11,000.00.



Korky Grant and Yvonne Elden 1961



Moving In 1967

By 1968 the Library owned 3300 books and shelving had to be built. This was done in the central part of the Library to accommodate the increase. The Library had started accumulating photographs and historical documents and also boasted a complete collection of telephone directories for the Province of B.C.

In 1969 the Library was completing its two year 'crash' up-grading programme as outlined by the B.C. Library Association. One of the final aspects was to subscribe to ten periodicals including newspapers.

As we entered the 70's the welcome addition of a sign indicating 'Centennial Public Library' was erected on the south wall. 1971 was taken up with bake sales, and all fund raising events, the annual centennial tea was held in February. 1972 saw our new vertical file in place and the 5th anniversary of the Centennial tea was celebrated with Open House. 1973 the South Peace Community Arts Council presented the Library with \$300.00.

In 1974 we experienced the fear of all public buildings. An act of vandalism created chaos. The vandals cleaned out the cash box - \$2.00. But the damage was estimated at \$500.00. The vandals had overturned shelves, ripped boards off the walls and all the books were thrown about.

1975 - Once again the Library was busting at the seams, they had a total book stock of 10,000 volumes. The Regional District gave permission to go to a referendum in order to increase the benefitting area so as to build an addition to the building. The referendum was defeated at that time. However we did receive some good news, the association received LIP funding to compile a history of Chetwynd. Mrs. B. Kurjata was in charge of this project. This history can be seen at the library by any interested residents. 1975 also saw the implementation of the Audio Book Service, which caters to disabled and handicapped patrons.

November 1975 saw the end of an era when Mrs. Irene McClarty resigned due to ill health after more than 12 years of service as the Librarian. When she left the Library had more than 1100 registered patrons.

1976 started with a bang. The Library acquired a projector which was rented to the patrons with films from the National Film Board Service. Due to the defeat of the Library referendum, a feasibility study of a joint COMMUNITY-SCHOOL LIBRARY COMPLEX was carried out by a committee representative of the Village, School District, Schools and Public Library. After much discussion the committee felt this would not be an appropriate time for a joint School Community Library.

Paperbacks were always a popular item and in 1977 the Library instituted a paperback exchange. Patrons bringing paperbacks to the Library could take a paperback from the exchange section or purchase one for 25 cents. During this year "Barney The Bookworm" also came to life, he won Second Prize in the Rodeo Parade and took up residence in the juvenile section of the Library.

Barney the Bookworm



1978 saw the first Book Sale. The Library also extended its open hours and for the first time started opening on Saturdays from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. The fees for non-residents were also increased to \$6.00 per person or family. An up to date Legal Reference Section was also added to give all people access and knowledge of the laws that effect us all. A garage sale was also held, much time and effort were put into these fund raising events over the years. In November 1978 the CAN-FOR GROUP of Companies presented the Library with a gift of \$5,000.00. The Board bought an electric typewriter and a photocopier, which was available to the public for a nominal fee.

1979 was the beginning of Inter-Library Loans. This meant the books in the collections of other Peace River Libraries were now available to patrons of the Chetwynd Library. PRAL (Peace River Associated Libraries) set up a special needs fund to which the Library applied and received a grant of \$2,500.00 for a building fund. Again the Library was becoming too small! We also received a portable screen from the Peace Arts Council. The Charger Model C was also acquired, this was a streamline charge-out system which automatically imprints your book card for check out. Extra help was provided through the Summer Student Programme and the Northern Lights College installed a microfiche which allows patrons and students access to books in many of B.C.'s Universities. The Library was really coming into its own! Many extra services other than the loan of books were being implemented.

The 80's have already proved exciting. In 1980 the first Library Auction was held, this was extremely popular and the local merchants were more than generous for this event, the grand sum of \$4,500.00 was raised and put into the Building Fund. A joint effort by the Library Board and Village Council to extend the Library using a one third recreation facilities grant was started by forming a Building Committee consisting of representatives from the Village and Library Board. November saw the passing of the Chetwynd Library Referendum, which gave the go ahead for the extension; it also defined a Library benefitting area. Peace River Liard Regional District agree to fund the Library over the next two years. These 'one thirds' were made up of grants from the Provincial Government, The Village of Chetwynd and the Peace River Liard District.

1981 and plans were moving ahead in leaps and bounds. At the Library the very popular Story Book Hour was begun, once a week. Our second Auction was held, again a very successful Auction and boosted the Building Fund by a further \$4,000.00. Tenders were put out for bid, awarded and building began September 23rd, 1981 at an estimated cost of \$200,000.00.

January 1982 saw patrons and staff coping desperately with boxes, builders, snow and hoping desperately there would be no delays in the completion date. The nine member board worked full time throughout the year to assure the change over be made as smoothly and quickly as possible with the least inconvenience to the public. The Library now has a full time Librarian, an Assistant Librarian, Secretary and Page. Public hours have increased to 28 hours a week, plus two Story Book Hours and additional half hour studying periods for High School Students. The Library has 11,500 volumes compared to the 250 volumes in 1959 when a few people conceived the idea of a Library for Chetwynd. What an achievement!

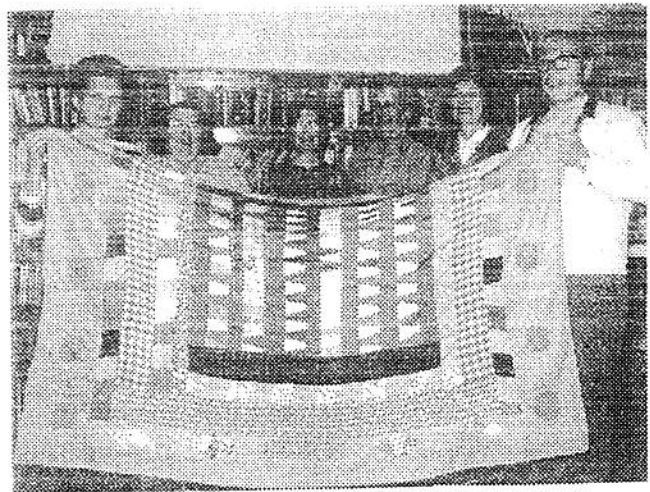


(100 years old)

Granny Seymour



This quilt was presented to the Chetwynd Museum on Tuesday by John Martens (right). On the left, Korky Grant, the President of the Chetwynd Library Association accepts it on behalf of the Library Board. Others (left to right) are Mrs. Irene McClarty, Library Custodian, Beth Ferguson, Secretary of the Board, Mrs. Doug Dimond and Mrs. Ed Hoffman. The quilt was made by the famous Prince George native woman Granny Seymour and had been sold to Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Chetwynd on Mrs. Seymour's 100th birthday. The old lady had made the quilt at that age still not requiring glasses. The money was used to purchase a tent in which Mrs. Seymour and her grandson lived in the bush. Mrs. Chetwynd passed the quilt along to Joan Oberle and Mayor Frank Oberle conveyed it through the Chamber of Commerce to the Library Board's Museum Committee.



Personal Memories by Irene McClarty



Irene McClarty



Laurie McClarty

The idea of a library first came from the Little Prairie Parent Teachers Organization and soon was taken up by the Little Prairies Ladies Club. These were some donations of books and along with 250 books from the then Public Library Commission, we opened our 'library' for the first time in February 1960.

It soon became apparent that we would have to move from the old school where we kept our books, and the Ladies Club took up the challenge. They raised \$1,000 and along with donations of material and all the labour, the Chetwynd Library and Health Centre was born. (The Public Health nurse had nowhere to go either).

Many projects were put in motion because the bills had to be paid. Plant sales, bake sales, strawberry teas, you name it, we tried it. One such project was a raffle put on, on the days the nurse came. She needed a helper so if I could talk someone else into taking it I would but I finally decided it was easier to do it myself so I went. This was when I got the idea of a mini-affle. I would either make (or ask someone else to make) something small but useful to raffle like oven mitts or small socks and sold tickets for 50 cents each. It kept everybody amused and earned 50 cents to \$1.00 for the bills.

Laurie our youngest child, practically grew up in the Library. I remember days when the stove refused to light, or there were no matches and I had to go back home and get some. Days when I forgot to bring water and a little one was letting me know in no uncertain terms that she was thirsty. Days when a happy, chattering class came in and made my day. The days when the Library van brought new books and took away the ones we had. A day when a little girl came in on her way home from school and told me she had heard someone say "Happy Birthday" to me and brought me some flowers - a huge bunch of squashed dandelions - I loved them!

I loved books but I was a complete amateur in library work and I learned by my mistakes, someone always pointed them out! In 1964 Howard Overand invited me to the Annual Meeting and Workshop of the Peace River Associated Libraries and for the first time I learned more about what I was trying to do, to be a good Librarian. At this time I realized we would be better off as a library if we were a registered society, but it wasn't until 1966 this was actually done. Because the village was making a new library their centennial project, I realized there had to be a responsible organization to run it. So it was a proud day for me when the Chetwynd Centennial Public Library was officially declared open, complete with elected board of officers and paid librarian. All the Library Board could afford to pay me was \$50.00 a month.

I went to conventions and workshops, took the first librarians correspondence course and the following workshop. It was a red letter day for me when I was told that my library was one of the few who had met all standards demanded by the Library Development Commission. All the work, lessons, workshops and visits to the Libraries all over B.C. had paid off.

People came to the library for many different reasons. To borrow books or other material, study, read, sit in peace for an hour or sometimes just to visit. One day a family came in and, of course, the children kept pestering their parents to see the pictures; I snatched up a book and called them to come and hear a story. They came and stood beside me while I read. When I looked up I found parents, a couple of teachers, the High School Principal and various others, twenty in all, listening just as intently as the children. When I finished the story they all had a good laugh at themselves but they enjoyed it just the same!

Posters and bookmark contests, prize givings and Anniversary Teas were all part of the library and I loved it all, the pleasure when the children came in to show me their report cards or what they had done in class. Classes coming and going. The many, many stories I read both at the Library or when I went to the classrooms because they couldn't come to me. The girls who came after school asking "Will you let us put the books away?" All these things made me realize I was part of their lives and never ever in all the years I was Librarian did I ever have trouble with any child.

I was very proud when I was presented with the Citizen of the Year Award in 1975 for my work in the Library.

Staff at the library



(left to right) Bev Sandnes, Kay Seidl, Beth Ritchie, Marg waller.

LIBRARY HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1 P.M. - 9 P.M.
Saturday 1 P.M. - 5 P.M.

PROGRAMS

Storybook Hour - Monday, Wednesday
Teen Research Hour - Monday 12:30 - 1:30 P.M.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Children's films and research hours in
conjunction with Recreation Department.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

Games Club - borrowing board games
Senior Citizens Club



The Chetwynd Public Library Association

in co - operation with

The Honourable Don Phillips
Minister of Industry and Small Business

Mr. Jack Hannam
Chairman, Peace River Liard Regional District

Mayor Charles Lasser
Village of Chetwynd

Cordially invites you to our Official Opening
Saturday, July 3rd, 1982 at 2:00 p.m.

Refreshments

Library Board February 18, 1967

President - John Martens
Vice-President - Margaret Grant
Secretary/Treasurer - Doris Hutchison
Executive Members - Jean Campbell, Derrick Morris,
George Peck.

Village Centennial Committee 1967 Charter Members

President - Frank Oberle
Director - Marcel Lamarre
Director - Joan Oberle
Secretary - Rose Drake

Honoured Guests and Officially opened by:

Father Jungbluth
D.F. Cunningham - Chetwynd Jaycees
E. Pfanner - Chairman Village Commission
W.H. Overend - Public Library Comm., Dawson Creek
Margaret R. Grant - Library Association, Dawson Creek
Marcel Lamarre - Centennial Committee

OFFICIALLY OPENED FEBRUARY 18th, 1967