Lafayette Parish Library Was Born Through Early Struggles of Les Vingt-Quatre For Good of the City

Two tables of bridge, a passing remark by one woman concerning her ambition to continue the study of history and other subjects in spite of the fact that she was working school, and the quick acquiescence of the other women to do something constructive toward learning; this was the foundation upon which Les Vingt-Quatre had its beginning on April 11, 1932.

Mrs. G. J. Tinsley was the speaker in interest; Mrs. T. F. Wilbanks offered the suggestion that a library be established. Miss Clare Roy and Mrs. J. M. Scott registered approval, and Mrs. Davidson offered her home as a meeting place to discuss the organization of the library. As the members disbanded for the afternoon, the time of meeting was agreed upon and each of the five planned to bring one or two more women who would be interested in such a plan. The next meeting found Mrs. J. N. Brown, Mrs. L. F. Browne, Mrs. E. G. Feusse, Mrs. E. E. Soulier and Mrs. I. T. Hart, and Mrs. D. Brown, either present or sending word of their interest.

The election of officers highlighted that first meeting. Chosen were Mrs. Davidson, president; Mrs. Scott, vice-president; Miss Roy, secretary; Mrs. Tinsley, treasurer, and Mrs. Wilbanks, reporter.

Clare Roy and Mrs. Wilbanks were appointed to prepare a constitution and Mrs. Feusse, Mrs. Tinsley and Mrs. Wilbanks were appointed as a committee and were requested to prepare a program for three months only — by that time it was hoped that the club would be well organized and would know more exactly the type of work it would do.

With a presidential campaign under way at that time, the committee chose topics relating to the candidates, the manner in which elections are conducted, and activities of Congress and the state legislature.

Several more members were added and the next meeting was held on May 12, with Miss Roy as hostess. At that time the committee preparing a constitution submitted the result of its work, which was adopted. The name “Study Club” was adopted as more nearly expressing the purpose of the club. A list of names was formed, and from these enough were selected to make up the membership of 24. The completed the organization of the club, and from that time on, regular programs were rendered at each meeting.

Probably the first business that came up, and acted upon without delay, was changing of the club from “Study Club” to “Les Vingt Quatre” club, a name which the club still bears.

Seek “Live” Project

The club soon became dissatisfied with its limited schedule, and it was decided that something “alive” was needed to receive the benefits of its limited energy. Several members began talking “library” and others became interested. The idea spread like wildfire until July, 1933, when all members were clamoring for a library.

So, nonchalantly, without a cent or a book, the club voted a juvenile library, and the president appointed a committee to take charge of it. Mrs. S. F. Fuch, Mrs. J. N. Browne, Mrs. W. Leb, Mrs. Soulier and Mrs. Hart.

A book party was planned to be held at the most centrally located grammar school in the city, the Southside Training School. Elaborate plans were made. The elements showered, the books sprinkled, and the guests tried to drink the punch prepared for many times their number.

But the seed germinated. Quarters were obtained in the American Legion Room at the Court House; two book cases were provided by the committee and one fine morning in October the club proudly placed the club’s 50 books on the shelf and worried what to do next. The membership of the club was followed.

The members of the organization of the club are as follows:

Mr. A. G. Montine, librarian of one of the high schools of the state; the committee asked for her, and the president named Mrs. Wilbanks as librarian.

At about this time, Miss Essie M. Cleaver, executive secretary of the Louisiana Library Commission, was secured to address the club. She was compelled to hurry on to her next appointment without seeing the club’s “library,” which had grown to four shelves of books, and included a set on “Mental Efficiency,” one on “The Wonders of Science in the Modern Life” along with a complete set of “Great Epochs in American History.” To this collection a few volumes were added, and in November, the library opened to the public.

The club assembled for the first time at 10 o’clock on Saturday morning and books were issued, and the project launched. Soon 40 books were being issued every Saturday. The club voted $20 from club dues for books, and a member with a railroad pass went to New Orleans to make the purchase. Gradually the circulation increased as older boys and girls began visiting the library. Then adults demanded books. In February, the club gave a benefit bridge, which yielded a little over $30, which was used to purchase books, some for the older readers.

Depression Brings Problems

The depression brought on the greatest opportunity for work, and the club increased its membership. The depression brought on the greatest opportunity for work, and the club increased its membership. The depression brought on the greatest opportunity for work, and the club increased its membership. The depression brought on the greatest opportunity for work, and the club increased its membership. The depression brought on the greatest opportunity for work, and the club increased its membership. The depression brought on the greatest opportunity for work, and the club increased its membership. The depression brought on the greatest opportunity for work, and the club increased its membership. The depression brought on the greatest opportunity for work, and the club increased its membership. The depression brought on the greatest opportunity for work, and the club increased its membership. The depression brought on the greatest opportunity for work, and the club increased its membership. The depression brought on the greatest opportunity for work, and the club increased its membership.
The meeting was under the sponsorship of the City Library Commission. Thomas M. Callahan, chairman of the commission, presided at the meeting, setting forth the action taken since the July 6th meeting, reporting that 400 letters had been mailed. Mrs. J. F. Wilbanks, secretary of the commission, read the list of contributors. The total amount received from the contributions was $450.00.

Chairman Callahan then continued the report and reported that 400 letters had been mailed to the individuals. Mrs. T. F. Wilbanks, secretary of the commission, read the list of contributors. The total amount received from the contributors was $450.00.

The chairman reported that the bill of sale between the city and Le Vingt-Quatre library had been completed and the check turned over to Mrs. L. B. Long, treasurer of the Library Commission.

"This places the sum of $1450 at the disposal of the Library Commission for the purchase of a trained librarian, Mrs. Wilbanks, member of the commission, will serve without compensation as she has been serving without compensation through the year.

"The city of Lafayette now has possession of the library, acting through its legally constituted board of control, the Library Commission."

Municipal Library Born
Les Vingt-Quatre Library had indeed and the Lafayette Municipal library was born, and though Les Vingt-Quatre Library had been completed and the check turned over to Mrs. L. B. Long, treasurer of the Library Commission, the Lafayette Rotary Club has the honor of having given the final push to make the present Lafayette Parish Library the present status.

With the library work done, the club moved on to other civic work. Members have played a vital part in every civic undertaking since its organization. The war work is outstanding and no appeal for funds for worthy causes goes unheeded.

On several occasions the club has sponsored book reviews by recognized speakers as a courtesy to their many friends.

During the 17 years of its existence the club has had but 33 members; of the 16 charter members, 13 are still members.

Charter members were: Mrs. J. J. Davidson, Jr., Miss Clare Roy, Mrs. M. Scott, Mrs. G. J. Tinsley, Mrs. T. F. Wilbanks, Mrs. E. G. Pfeiffer, Mrs. J. M. Bowe, Mrs. E. G. Feuser, Mrs. J. L. Fletcher, Mrs. T. F. Hart, Mrs. E. E. Souler, Mr. J. May, Mrs. W. Dugas, Mrs. L. B. Long, Mrs. B. J. Voorhies and Mrs. Fed Voorhees.

Additional members are Mrs. R. E. Chaplin, Mrs. Vernel Griffin, Mrs. W. C. Kinbrugh, Mrs. Don Alexander, Mrs. M. H. Read, Mrs. T. Montgomery, Miss Alice Voorhies, Mrs. Clay Dalferes, Mrs. F. E. O'Brien, Mrs. E. E. Souler, Mrs. S. E. Souler, Mrs. M. L. DeLaurier, Mrs. R. J. Covley, Mrs. G. J. Couey, Mrs. R. M. Friedmann, Mrs. Alldine Dubuis.