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Lake Alfred Public Library, part of the Polk County Library Consortium

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Florida Library History Project

Lake Alfred Public Library, part of the Polk County Library Consortium

The library was started by the Junior Woman's Club in April 1962 and was housed in the Dees Building on West Haines Boulevard. The second location was in the caretaker's house at Lion's Park in 1970 through 1973. In October 1973 the Library was taken over by the City and moved into the Public Safety Building. Betty Shinn was appointed the first librarian. (At that time the Library had a collection of approximately 7500 books. I remember Mrs. Shinn telling me that on moving day, the entire Library was thrown into the back of a City truck!. It took a l-o-n-g time to straighten it out again!) I was hired as her assistant and gradually became responsible for all of the children's activities. The Library was dedicated in February 1974.

One of the first projects that I took on when I was hired in May 1974 was the card catalog. It seemed that every time I would go to the catalog to look up a book, I'd find the card in the catalog, but could find no trace of the book. Apparently books were discarded but the catalog cards for them remained.

So the first thing I did was inventory the Library using the shelf list cards to make sure that I had a shelf list card for every book in the Library. Then, once that was completed I took each shelf list card and checked for author, title and subject cards in the card catalog. When I found the cards, I'd initial the back of the cards. Once I'd completed going through the entire shelf list cards, then I checked the back of all the catalog cards. If a card did not have my initials, then I knew that particular book had been discarded, and all those cards were pulled. The project took me a year to complete and I can not even begin to tell you how many cards I pulled from the card catalog!

A funny story that I remember. Mrs. Shinn and I were straightening the Library, resorting the books after their hurried arrival to their new home. We came across a book called *The Slim Gourmet* that was classified and shelved in fiction. After looking at the book we discovered that it was a cook book but we agreed that whoever classified it as fiction was probably correct!

In 1984 Mrs. Shinn left the library to operate her husband's business after his sudden death. She was unable to return and I was appointed city librarian and held that position until 1992. Sally Mueller, the present librarian, was appointed in 1992. In 1994 Nancy Timmer joined the staff on a part-time basis. Currently Nancy and Sally are co-directors and both work on a part-time basis. In 1997 Bumpy Hoofnagle took over children's activities on a part-time basis.

The Penguin Book Drop that we had was donated by the Junior Woman's Club in 1975. The Junior and Senior Woman's Club were always kind to the Library. The Junior Woman's Club helped to finance our Children's Program for years, and the Senior Women contributed throughout the year. The Lion's Club was also a great benefactor of the Library. It was because of their generosity that we were able to maintain such a good collection of large print books and children's books.

The library shares a building with the fire department and the police department at 195 East Pomelo Street in Lake Alfred . Hours are 9-6 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; Thursday 12-6; and Saturday 9-12.

Cathy Parson
February 28, 1998