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Cooper Memorial Library, part of the Lake County Library System

Florida Library History Project

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Cooper Memorial Library, part of the Lake County Library System.

Cooper Memorial Library is a good example of grassroots determination resulting in a happy partnership between a City and an Association. The library was born in 1914 when Alice Cooper gave several lots to the city for the building of a library at 630 DeSoto Street in Clermont. The money was raised, and the one room library was built, and named after Alice. A small collection of circulating books that had been kept in various homes and churches became the first items in the new library. The Clermont Woman's Club supplied the volunteers that became the first librarians and the monetary support.

In the 1950's, an appeal was made to the City of Clermont to take over the financial support of the library and maintenance of the building. Cooper Memorial Library Association, Incorporated was formed and a contractual agreement was created stating that the City would support a public library, and the Association would provide the administration of the library. After additions to the building in 1958 and 1974, the city purchased a former bank building in 1980 and the library was moved. The books were passed hand-by-hand via a "people chain" across empty lots to the new location. A new children's room was added in 1984. In 1995 two legacies financed the addition of 4000 square feet for a new children's department and Florida room. No tax monies were used.

Cooper Memorial Library became a charter member of the Lake County Library System in 1982, and is the only continuous member of that system. The fifteen member Board of Cooper Memorial Library Association, Incorporated, continues to administer this public library with support from the City of Clermont, Lake County, and generous donations and legacies from area citizens.

COOPER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

620 Montrose St.

Clermont, FL 34711

352-394-4265