

the library made its next move - to the Braun

Building in the center of town.

On April 7, 1919 the Library Committee disbanded (its sponsor, the V.I.A. had been defunct since about 1903, its purpose having

been superceded by the organization of a Borough Council when Allendale was incorporated as a Borough in 1894). In its place, the Allendale Library Association was formed, with

its goal being "the perpetuation of the Allendale Public Library and the extension of its work in the community." The secondary goal of the Association was to establish a building fund, to solicit donations to the fund, and to find and purchase a suitable site for the construction of a permanent home for the library.

In the ensuing busy years, a site was located and purchased from William H. and John A. Mallinson; the Library Association was incorporated (in November 1923) and architect William Dewsnap (who had also designed the fire house) began to draw up plans for the long-awaited building. By June 7, 1926, the foundation had been completed.

December 18, 1926 was the big day for the library - a public reception and open house was held in the newly completed building. Years of hopes and dreams had finally become reality: Allendale's Library at last had a permanent home.

Libraries, like families, sometimes tend to outgrow their first homes, and it wasn't long before Allendale's "squeeze" began - in more ways than one. In 1930 Allendale's

its quarters. In the library was feeling a squeeze, its borrowers were feeling one too, for the depression was affecting Allendale as well as the entire country, and library membership dues and donations dropped alarmingly.

On March 21, 1931, Mr. H.E.S. Buechner presented to the Board of Trustees of the Library a framed panel on which his daughter, Eugenia, had hand-lettered the names of all those residents who had contributed to the Building Fund. This plaque hangs in the library to this day and reads like a veritable "Who Was Who" of Allendale.

The library weathered the lean depression years but by 1941 the toll of existing by the skin of its teeth became very apparent - renovations to the existing building were sorely needed and the need for additional space was even more acute than ever. Money was still tight, when, in June 1941, Mr. and Mrs. William C. Lee came to the rescue of the Library by presenting to the Board of Trustees their generous offer to renovate the existing building and donate the addition of a wing. A whole separate article could be written about the contributions Mr. and Mrs. Lee made to the library over the years - Mr. Lee served the library for over 31 years, first as trustee, later

as vice president and treasurer and finally as president. His wife, Mary K. Lee served as Allendale's volunteer librarian for over 33 years. By November 1941, the renovations and the new wing were completed.

Through the years, many efforts had been made to officially municipalize the library, but it was not until November 4, 1952 that the residents of the town voted to have the borough government take over the library building and grounds and to operate the library municipally as a Free Public Library.

In December of 1952 the Library Board voted unanimously to re-name the library the "Lee Memorial Library" in memory

of William C. Lee, whose death had occurred in July. In February of 1953, Mrs. Austin Sprague became Allendale's first paid librarian. In March 1953, Schuyler C. Lee, son of Mr. and Mrs. William C. Lee, unveiled the bronze letters over the doorway, which read "Lee Memorial Library."

Although the present library has served extremely well over the years, and continues to do so, under the direction of its present librarian, Mrs. Grace Huselman, it does not meet the needs and demands of a town the size of Allendale, whose current population is 4 1/2 times the population in 1926, when the library was built. The present building is about one-fifth

the size recommended by the state for the borough.

With the possible Borough purchase of the Crestwood Lake tract imminent, the library awaits another chapter in its long history - for the purchase of the land could mean that a future library site is at last in view. The Junior club hopes to help get that new chapter written with this Old-Fashioned Country Fair on October 16.

Mrs. Huse observed that although the Allendale Junior Club has long been interested in the support of the Library (one of the first



ALLENDALE PUBLIC LIBRARY, SUMMER 1946. Mr. and Mrs. William C. Lee display the weather-beaten Library sign first hung by the Village Improvement Association in 1901.

fund raisers the club held after its incorporation in 1933 was a card party for the benefit of the library) even stronger efforts are being made in its behalf these days. Over a year ago, the club began its project "to improve library facilities and services in Allendale" by entering the Community Improvement Program, a contest co-sponsored by the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the Sears Roebuck Foundation.

The club has held fund-raisers, including fashion shows and the sale of privately printed notepaper featuring a member's sketch of the Library, and for the past several years has conducted story hours for pre-schoolers in the Library.

Along with its attempts to aid the Public Library, the club has been working to improve library facilities in Allendale by helping to catalog and shelve books in the Hillside School Library this summer. Because the school has no permanent circulating library, the club hopes to begin a roving circulating library in the school beginning in October. The "book buggy", stocked with a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction books and staffed by members of the Junior Club, will visit each classroom monthly to allow students to borrow books.