



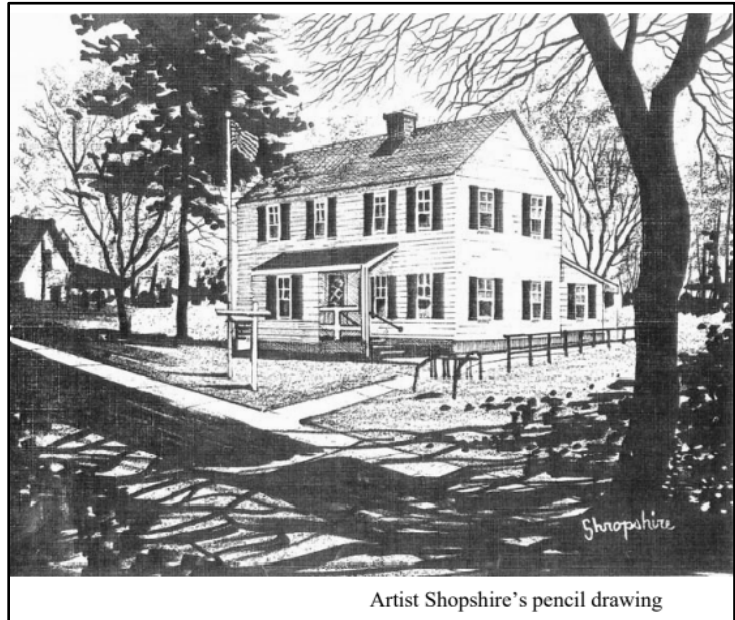
In Their Own Words

Curated by Gina Neist

For over two decades, Alli Chase has served as the director of the Alice Baker Library in Eagle. Recently, the Friends of the Alice Baker Library in Eagle (FABLE), celebrated her retirement. Here is a short history of Eagle's library which had its origins in 1905. For the complete story, please check out the October, 2009 newsletter at eaglehistoricalsociety.org.

Eagle's Library History by Jean Cisler

In one section of a store on Main Street, Marvin Bovee established the first library in Eagle. Though small, it contained many volumes on varied subjects of interest. The year was 1905. It has not been recorded how long that library lasted, but in 1949, the Eagle Homemakers sponsored a library housed in one room of the Eagle Elementary School, then known as the Eagle Graded School. The Free Library Commission of Wisconsin furnished the books. Its use was free to all Eagle residents, and the hours of operation did not coincide with school hours, making it a completely separate entity.



Artist Shopshire's pencil drawing

In 1972, Alice Baker tried to get people together who would have an interest in a library. She set up a meeting to determine interest. About 40 people attended this first meeting. They were instrumental in setting up the library at 217 Main Street.

In 1974 the traveling books moved to the Methodist Church, using a portion of their Sunday school room. There it remained until 1984. In 1984, Carl Zipprich moved from Eagle, but his love for the community was shown in the fact that he donated the Partridge house to the Library Board. This seemed an ideal spot for the library. Much renovation was needed; however, both the town and village appropriated \$25,000 each for the construction project. Many volunteers

helped keep the costs down. They painted, stained and moved 10 years of acquired books & materials to the new library.

They held their grand opening on July 30th, 1984. It was officially named the Alice Baker Memorial Public Library, in honor of Alice Baker who passed away in 1974.

The new library afforded them about four times as much room as the previous location, the Methodist Church. A headline in the Chief read "Eagle Library Settles into New Home." And indeed, it did settle in for ten good years, but those traveling books could not stay still forever.

In 1994, the final move was made to its present location at 820 E. Main Street where it shares one half of the Municipal Building. Now Eagle has a permanent location for its thousands of books, for computers, audio books and everything else needed for a first-class library.

In 1999, the Eagle Library had an open house, celebrating its 25th anniversary, dating back to the library in the Methodist Church. As we've shown, the desire for reading and learning actually goes way back to 1905, starting with Marvin Bovee and continuing on up to the present. The many people who worked and campaigned for a library are too numerous to mention here, but it wasn't the work of any one individual. It was the dream of people who wanted to better their community. It was for the love of reading that passed from one generation to another.



Editor's note: The Partridge house is now home to the museum of the Eagle Historical Society!