



Dundee Township Park District

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BUILDING HISTORY

LIBRARY HALL, constructed in 1896-1897, was one of the first buildings in Carpentersville and is within the Dundee Township Historic District. Julias Carpenter, the original owner, was a member of the state legislature and was influential in passing the Library Act in the State of Illinois.

LIBRARY HALL contained a library in the front upstairs rooms, a ladies parlor and meeting room in the rear upstairs room, and Congregational Church meeting room and community center in the basement. The basement contained a fully equipped kitchen. The building was originally meant as a community center since there were no other large buildings in Carpentersville. It was dedicated to the community on January 2, 1897.

With the donation of Library Hall, Mrs. Carpenter Lord also established trust funds which were meant to pay for the operation of the facility. A Literary and Library Society, which was organized in 1871, was to administer one trust fund and the Congregational Church the other. The title to the building was in the name of the Congregational Church. In effect, both parties shared operation costs for maintaining the building.

For about 25 years the trust funds nicely sustained the library and the building.

Over the next 20 to 25 years, public use of the library dwindled because the Literary and Library Society did not have enough money to purchase new and up to date books magazines and periodicals that the people of Carpentersville desired.

A building boom in Carpentersville and Dundee Township beginning in 1950-1955 caused a greater demand for library services. People from Carpentersville began going to the Dundee Township library which was a tax supported library. Soon the Dundee Townshp Library Trustees approached the trustees of the Literary and Library Society with the idea of making library hall a branch of the Dundee Township Library. In 1959 the branch library was established and worked well until about 1968 when again greater population growth caused greater library services demand.

The Dundee Township Library Trustees were forced to consolidate library services into one building for reasons of economy, better service, less staff, better accessibility and better parking. They moved from Library Hall in January 1969.

This consolidation in 1969 left the Literary and Library Society with only antique books, not enough money to buy new books, not enough money to maintain the building and consequently they closed all of their services. This closing, of course, left the total care and upkeep of the building in the hands of the Congregational Church. Actually over the past several years little if anything had been done to the building in terms of floor care, painting, furnace repair, repair of leaking pipes, etc. and the building was in a rather deteriorated condition, but not a hopeless condition. With the exception of a boy scout troop and an occasional church supper, the building was unused.

The Congregational Church also found that they did not have enough money to keep up the building. In 1965 they rented out a back room in the upstairs of the building to the recently formed Dundee Township Historical Society. In 1969 the Historical Society wanted to expand, so the entire upstairs of the building was rented for use as a historical museum.

As early as 1966 the Congregational Church was considering selling the building because expenses were too great, and they could not consolidate all of their activities with church buildings across the street. In 1966 they had an appraisal made of Library Hall.

The Dundee Township Historical Society first considered buying the building in 1969, but lack of funds caused them to abandon the idea of purchase.

In 1970 the Dundee Township Park District was approached regarding the sale of the building. After several months of discussion the Park Board decided to buy Library Hall in 1971.

At present the Dundee Township Park District offices are located in the upstairs level of the building. The basement is being used for pre-school classes.