

A BOOK IS A BOOK, IS A BOOK

Thanks for our Public Libraries

One great blessing of our day is being able to have books to read. I remember as a young child I would go around the corner from my home on Second Avenue and enter Safford Public Library located in the right wing of the present Safford Women's Club.

Here I discovered the world of make believe. I found the Nancy Drew Mysteries, the historical novels of Elsworth Thayne, inspiring stories by Lloyd C. Douglas, biographies by great people and so many other wonderful delights awaiting me to discover under the book covers.

I would read every chance I got after my home chores were done. Dad would come by my room and tell me that it was time for lights out. How could I turn the light out and stop reading at a very good part? Sometimes I would find my flashlight, turn it on and read under the covers. That is how wrapped up in reading books I was. Never mind going to sleep. I did not want to wait to find out what happened.

Was the mystery solved? If there was a murder, I had to know who "dun" it. Did the heroine get saved by her hero? Was the world going to end? Whatever the plot, it had an end and I had to know what it was, the sooner the better. Reading was so compelling to me that I often continued to read until I knew the end of the story.

Later as we became parents, every child had a library card. We would visit the closest library about every two weeks. Their little minds became immersed in books as well.

We just recently returned from visiting some of our grandchildren. Our 11 year old

granddaughter wanted a Kindle for Christmas. Showing my age, I asked her what was a Kindle?

Well she was happy on Christmas morning when she got her a Kindle and was able to download books approved by her mother on to this modern digital invention. She proceeded to show me how she turned the pages by lightly brushing her finger across the tiny screen.

I struggled with that invention. It didn't look like a book, it didn't feel like a book, I could not see it well like a book, and well, I could not accept it as a way for me to read a book.

I don't know about you the reader but I like to have a hard cover book in my hands or at least a paperback. Otherwise I feel as though the book in its entirety is not there. What if the battery runs down or I lose a page? I may not be able to know the end of the story. Horrors! That would be terrible.

Doing a little search I found that the Safford Women's Club established a Safford Public Library in 1916, maintaining it until July 1, 1962, when the books were given to the city of Safford. (Mt Graham Profiles, Vol 1 pg. 411)

According to the plaque on the Safford Women's Club building, this building was dedicated in 1937. I do not know at this time where the Safford Public Library was located from 1916 to 1937. That will take further research.

Later as a teenager, I went to the Safford Public Library located in the Oddfellows building just above the railroad tracks on 8th Street. For a time the Library occupied the main floor, I suppose until the current library building was completed.

Here is a current photo of the Women's Club of Safford, where one of the first public libraries in Safford was located.



This building is on the National Register of Historic Places

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the early women settlers in this valley who realized the importance of making books available for the general public.

As responsible citizens of this valley we should all be a friend to our libraries and help support them wherever and however possible. Or else, I am afraid, they too, will be a thing of the past.

Submitted by Sue Dette Crandall Reed