

Newspaper article - Parcher Wing dedication April 18, 1929. Wausau Public Library.

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Parcher Wing To Library Is Dedicated To Public Use

Library One of Most Complete In State—Presented To City

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The splendid Parcher Memorial wing of the Wausau Public Library, erected at a cost of \$80,000.00, through the generosity of the late Robert E. Parcher and Mary Single Parcher, was formally dedicated last Friday evening in the auditorium located on the second floor. Several hundred citizens and many friends of the late Mr. and Mrs. Parcher were present and the program was a simple and dignified one, which included the presentation of the building to the city by Judge A. H. Reid, trustee of the Parcher fund; its acceptance by Mayor A. V. Gearhart on behalf of the city and its acceptance by the Rev. Paul Graeser on behalf of the library board.

Before and after dedication ceremonies, many visitors thronged the library building, the stack rooms, reading rooms, juvenile department and all parts of the second floor were open to the public and exclamations of surprise and pleasure were heard on all sides at the beauty and practicability of the structure, which has been described in detail in previous issues of The Pilot. Particularly striking was the lighting, which flooded every nook and corner and revealed the new note that has been struck in library construction.

Shortly after eight o'clock, with the spacious and attractive auditorium very nearly filled, the speakers and guests occupied the rostrum in the south end of the hall. This was large enough to accommodate the seven persons who participated in the program, as well as the orchestra. Many magnificent cut flowers in appropriate baskets and containers stood at the front of the rostrum and in their small way attested to the happiness of all those who have been interested in the progress of this useful public institution. The donors of these bouquets were Mr. and Mrs. Judd S. Alexander; Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Lull; Mrs. Susan Single and Mr. Wesley Single; the Dunbar family Lund Floral company; Philipp Floral company; Wisconsin Valley Electric company; Will-

Wesley Single; the Dunbar family Lund floral company; Philipp Floral company; Wisconsin Valley Electric company; William Zimmer and the J. M. Kuebler company.

Following the rendition of several numbers by the orchestra, the Rev. F. J. Turner pronounced the invocation and Alfred H. Zimmerman, president of the library board, introduced C. B. Lester, secretary of the Wisconsin Free Library commission, who complimented the city of Wausau and its people on the Parcher wing and commented also on the generosity of its donors.

"There is no place other than the printed page where man can attain the wisdom of the ages to use as he pleases," said Mr. Lester. "In this fast moving generation when standardization tends to uniformity in thought and action everywhere, people must have something else to eliminate the sameness. It is in this connection that the public library serves a tremendous use to the people of the nation. The public library is becoming increasingly necessary to the public schools for the individual text books upon which many of us used to depend, has been supplanted generally by the use of many books and the library, therefore, becomes essential to the development of individual initiative. Service to the public schools is a vital part of library function."

Mr. Lester also emphasized the adult education movement in which the library has fitted in an important way and knows how to render certain kinds of service that cannot be obtained elsewhere; just as industry knows how to do certain things well, more and more will be demanded of the library, and as a result it will be able to furnish more material.

Mrs. George Silverthorn rendered three lovely solos and was called back for an encore. She was accompanied by Miss Wanda Hopp. The official presentation of the Parcher wing to the city of Wausau was then made by Judge A. H. Reid.

Judge Reid stated that he felt triply blessed in making the presentation, first because it is more blessed to give than to receive, secondly, that he had the pleasure of bestowing the gift of another and thirdly because he himself is the recipient of the blessings of the gift as well as all citizens of this community. Judge Reid prefaced his explanation of the Parcher bequest with a brief summary of the career of Andrew Carnegie. Mr. Carnegie came to the United States from Scotland at ten years of age, beginning his work in a factory at twenty cents a day. His conviction always was that it was entirely wrong for a man to die possessed of great wealth and that what he had accumulated should be redistributed. He founded a great technical institution and then distributed millions among universities, hospitals and finally determined upon libraries as a real benefit. From his fortune before his death, over 3,000 libraries were constructed and Wausau was the recipient of a gift of

about \$25,000.00, which was increased later when it was found that more was needed to construct the original library building.

Judge Reid also paid a great tribute to the late Walter Alexander, also a native of Scotland, who gave the land for McIndoe park which extended to the north of the library building and in Mr. Alexander's conveyance to the city, he stipulated that the property could only be used for park purposes, except that an addition to the public library could be constructed upon it, if that ever became necessary. "It was this stipulation made by Mr. Alexander that has enabled the trustees of the Parcher fund to erect this wing," added the judge.

Judge Reid further spoke of the very great generosity of the late Robert E. and Mary H. Parcher, the latter of whom, when she passed away, provided that their fortune should go to some great public service. The original trustees were J. M. Kuebler and the late G. D. Jones and C. E. Turner, who were later succeeded by Judge A. H. Reid and H. C. Berger. Judge Reid explained that when he became a member of the trustees, most of the important details of the estate had been settled and that the careful handling of this fund had been almost entirely the work of John M. Kuebler, who, since, its creation, has devoted much of his valuable time and effort to the administration of the estate. During the construction of the library, Mr. Kuebler had his fingers on everything involved. The trustees, Judge Reid said, felt that a tablet should be placed upon the Memorial wing mentioning the gift from the late Robert E. and Mary H. Parcher.

In accepting the gift of the Parcher fund trustees, Mayor A. V. Gearhart gave an interesting and complete history of Mr. and Mrs. Parcher, pioneer residents. We are glad to publish his remarks at full length as follows:

Mary Single Parcher was the oldest daughter of Charles A. and Elizabeth Si. Practically her whole life was spent in Wausau. She was born in Milwaukee, October 28, 1845, and came to Marathon county with her parents in

Practically her whole life was spent in Wausau. She was born in Milwaukee, October 28, 1845, and came to Marathon county with her parents in 1847. The family resided for a short time at "Little Rib" where Charles Single was interested with his brother, Benjamin Single, in the lumber business.

In the year 1849, Mr. Single purchased a half block on the west side of the block between Forest and Jackson streets and on this he built his first hotel (The Forest House), which hostelry became famous throughout the pinery. It was here that their daughter Mary grew to womanhood. The hotel which had given hundreds of the boys in "the pinery" a happy home for thirty years was destroyed by fire in 1878. It was the home of the rich and the poor, the sick and the injured. Mr. Single was never known to refuse the call of sickness or distress, nor was he ever known to charge for such services rendered. His life, although a very busy one in managing the large hotel, was devoted to the health and happiness of others.

Mrs. Single, Mary's mother, was one of the most revered pioneer women in the "Wisconsin pinery." She was the ministering angel of the "Forest House," looking after the welfare of guests and it was a fact, well known to the public, that those in sickness and distress never missed attention and care while she was in charge. With all the love of humanity in her heart and soul she "never wearied in well doing."

It was in such a home and surrounding that Mary Parcher was reared. Her natural tendency was to radiate happiness, to help others, and much of her young life was devoted to assisting the sick and the suffering. And in this, her home life was rich in example.

Robert E. Parcher, a young man of rare ability, came to Wausau in 1859. He walked to Wausau from Stevens Point, and characteristic of him, divided his last quarter with his companion to buy food. He found an opening at once as a drug clerk with Taylor and Ellis. He eventually became the owner of the store and launched into general merchandise. He later entered into lumbering and real estate. He was appointed postmaster in 1866 which position he held for three years. His business increased with leaps and bounds. He and Mary Single became acquainted and were united in marriage in the year 1865 and in 1870 Mr. Parcher built one of the handsomest dwellings in Wausau.

Mr. Parcher's business kept on growing until he became one of the wealthy men of Wausau. He was mayor of our city for three years. He was one of the men instrumental in the building of the First National bank and was first to recognize the possibilities of our large beds of granite. He worked with such men as W. D. McIndoe, D. L. Plumer, Alexander Stewart, W. C. Silverthorn, William and N. T. Kelly, John Ringle, J. C. Clark, Jacob Paff, George Silverthorn, August and E. W. Kickbusch and

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PARCHER WING TO LIBRARY IS DEDICATED TO PUBLIC

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many others for a greater Wausau. In all this he was ably assisted by his wife.

Mr. and Mrs. Parcher, it can be said, gave much of their lives and of their fortune to the upbuilding of Wausau. Their gift to St. Mary's hospital aided materially in the progress of that institution. They made it possible to install a complete chemical laboratory in the Wausau high school.

Mrs. Parcher was a devoted member of the St. John's Episcopal church from its organization and she was a steadfast and active worker and not until the last illness did she discontinue her constant vigilant interest and work with the church body. The Episcopal church seemed always bound to her and she to it. The history of one, seemed impossible without the biography of the other. A wonderfully pleasing personality, a serious purpose in life, a desire to help every one, but to turn assistance to the most needy, were her striking characteristics. They welded people to her and compelled them to love her and have added to the sanctity and glory of her name.

Good actions and kind deeds, wrought for Mary Parcher a community standing that is distinct. The church and its various lines of progress had her attention. The building of several houses of worship since St. John's organization, at times took up her time and she was largely instrumental in their completion. Charitable institutions were always certain of her assistance and generous contributions. She interested herself largely in St. Mary's hospital in accordance with the wishes of her husband. She was an ardent champion of the Federated Charities and one of the last evenings out of her home was to attend one of its meetings. She put her very soul into the Children's Infirmary. Throughout her life she sacrificed much of her time and strength to assist in beneficent and charitable work rather than to idle her time in social activities.

There were few persons who hung more tenaciously to rigid, but beautiful rules of Christian conduct. Her life was a model and more than one character had been moulded by its beauty, thoughtfulness and consideration for others.

In her passing, the memorable words of William Cullen Bryant are especially fitting, for her life fulfilled his plea:

"So live that when the summons come to join

The memorable caravan that moves to that mysterious realm where each shall take

His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Than go not like the quarry slave at

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John
The memorable caravan that moves to
that mysterious realm where each shall
take

His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Than go not like the quarry slave at
night

Scourged to the dungeon; but sustained
and soothed

By an unfaltering trust, approach thy
grave

Like one who wraps the drapery of his
couch

About him and lies down to pleasant
dreams."

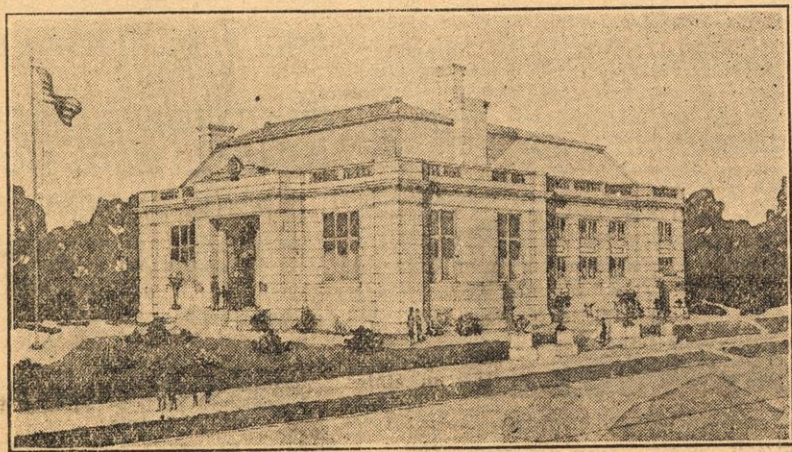
Mr. Parcher died in this city on the fourth day of December, 1907. His death was a great sorrow to his widow and to the community. Mrs. Parcher conducted the immense and varied business left by her husband and made many substantial gifts, lifting the weight of sorrow and care from the shoulders of many.

November 14, 1911, she presented two beautiful electric standards to the Wausau public library in memory of her husband. The standards are exquisite in design and workmanship. One occupies the entrance to the grounds on First street and the other at the south entrance of the library building. Each has four clusters of lights supported by beautifully designed up-rights. It is a beautiful memorial gift to the city.

The gift was presented by G. D. Jones, and what he said at that time about Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Parcher is preeminently appropriate to us today, where we have gathered to pay tribute.

Mr. Jones said: "In Mr. Parcher's long and useful life, he was greatly blessed with the love and support of the girl-bride for whom he proudly and lovingly reared in the home in the forest, and who remained by his side to the end. She knew the man, Robert E. Parcher, best of us all. She knew all his tastes, his dislikes of display and his appreciation of beauty and usefulness. She knew and she shared with him his generous love for this city. She appreciates the natural beauty of this location and our opportunities to make it more successful, wholesome and enjoyable. Wausau is, and always has been a busy

Wausau is, and always has been a busy | chetti corresponded with the Carnegie



WAUSAU PUBLIC LIBRARY WITH PARCHER MEMORIAL WING

city. It has, perhaps, given too little thought to the refining influence and, although this building is justly known as the most artistic and perfect of its kind in the state, Mrs. Parcher has seen an opportunity to add a crowning feature to its beauty. It has given her applause to do this as a memorial which she knows would meet the approval of her husband. She has wished to do this quietly, without ostentation or display of any kind for she believes this is the way that would have pleased him best. But the gift is so beautiful and the love of friends for him and for her is so strong that their wish to pay a just tribute to his memory could not be withstood. Hence, she has reluctantly consented to this somewhat formal dedication of this gift."

Mary Single Parcher passed to her eternal home August 8, 1920, after a lingering illness. The members of her immediate family were with her to the end. She was deeply mourned, and, until all who knew her and loved her have passed away, there will be deep sorrow. Her memory is enshrined in the hearts of our people.

In the last will and testament of Mary Parcher, her love and faithfulness to Wausau and our citizens were clearly expressed in a wonderful and liberal request, under and through the management of her administrator and trustees, John M. Kuebler, Judge A. H. Reid and H. C. Berger.

On September 10, 1925, Walter Alexander deeded to the city of Wausau lots number one (1) and two (2) block four (4) of the original plot of the now city of Wausau, with certain stipulations as to its use, said lots lying immediately north of and adjoining the original library and its grounds. One such stipulation was "that no structure or building of any kind shall be erected upon the described lands except that should it at any time in the future be deemed necessary to increase or extend the public library now maintained by the grantee on the property immediately adjoining the above described property on the south, that such public library building may be increased or extended to cover such portion of the property herein conveyed as may be deemed necessary."

In view of these advantages, John M. Kuebler, administrator of the Mary Parcher welfare fund, is to be congratulated and highly commended in carrying into effect what he, and what we all believe would have been the desire and fully met the hearty approval of Mary Parcher; and which the city of Wausau now accepts with grateful hearts and many thanks, this wonderful addition to the Wausau library.

Concluding the ceremony, the Rev. Paul Graeser, member of the library board, made a decidedly pleasing talk.

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Rev. Graeser referred to the late Herman G. Flieth, who, over a long period of years had been active on the library board and was serving as its president at the time of his death. Rev. Graeser read a letter which had been received from Miss Lutie D. Stearns, formerly of the state library commission and a resident of this city. The letter had been received by Miss Cora Lansing, librarian, and reads as follows:

"I regret more than I can tell you that I cannot attend the dedication of the addition to your library. It is another evidence of the public spirit of your citizens. I have said for years past that Wausau was the best city in the state and I'd like to tell it to the world. I have known Wausau intimately for thirty-two years. Shortly after the Pine Knot Literary club was established in 1871, it began to collect books for one of the first libraries in Wisconsin. Later, the Ladies' Literary Society took it over in its rooms on Third street opposite the Court House but the books were restricted to the use of the members only as was the custom in those days. Later it was taken over by the city and the first time I saw it, it was in the Court House. At a meeting at Mrs. Van Vechten's I interested the members of the Ladies' Literary club in a traveling library system for Marathon County. Books and money were donated and I recall traveling all over the county in a buckboard with Mrs. D. L. Plumer who was a member of the Literary board and the Ladies' Literary Club, with the boxes of books piled in the back. The people in the little hamlets, such as Stettin and Hamburg Heights, etc., readily accepted them when they heard the explanation from 'Frau Plumer' as they called her. The County ordered the library to vacate as it needed the room and the library, in charge of Nellie Silverthorn, found refuge, through the kindness of Mr. Plumer, in the basement of the First National bank, to which the traveling libraries were also moved. I do not know what became of them after I resigned from the Commission in 1904. I believe that Judge Marchetti corresponded with the Carnegie

Foundation to secure a grant for a library building. When I saw the plans for the library, I stated that the building was beautiful but that there was no place for the books—a prime essential. A number of the board felt the same way about it but the plan was adopted and I recall attending and speaking at the dedication. Now that the difficulty of lack of book space, auditorium, etc., has been overcome, I wish to congratulate you, the Library Board, and the citizens of Wausau on one of the finest buildings in the state. It will give the greatest opportunity for the finest kind of service to young and old. Where there are parochial schools and churches of various denominations, the public library is the only thing in a community for which everyone can work and help support and where all can continue the education begun in the public schools. I sincerely hope that the library may have many years of usefulness and that I may attend the hundredth anniversary of the library movement in Wausau in 1971.

"With best wishes,

"Faithfully,

"Lutie E. Stearns."

Rev. Graeser's summary of Miss Nellie C. Silverthorn's report as the first librarian caused some amusement, for the total income and expenditures at that time amounted to \$1,218.00. Rev. Graeser was particularly complimentary when he referred to Miss Lansing, who has been the efficient librarian for the past fifteen years. He emphasized her conscientious devotion to her work, and expressed his opinion that the library staff had likewise been most faithful in the performance of their duties. In conclusion Rev. Graeser asked that those present bow their heads in a moment of silent tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Parcher, after which he turned to Mayor Gearhart and gravely pledged the library board to carry on library work and to care for the property. The program was completed with the singing of "America" and a benediction by Rev. Graeser.