



INTERESTED VISITORS AT THE JOHN T. EDGAR BRANCH OF OMAHA PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Edgar Branch of Omaha Public Library

The experiences of Eggleston's Hoosier schoolmaster are recalled by the trials of the library assistants who have been pioneering at the John T. Edgar branch of the public library.

So far none of the youngsters has tried to smoke out the attendants by stuffing hay into the chimney, but nearly every other subterfuge has been resorted to without success. Miss Bertha A. Baumer has held the fort. After two months' of missionary work she has succeeded in engrafting library manners upon some very unwilling subjects.

Most of the patrons of the new Vinton street station are children and many of them are very mild-mannered children. But there are others who are not mild-mannered. Street car sheds and ball park seats had sheltered a gang of young Americans who held regular meetings in the approved Huckleberry Finn style.

Wind and weather were defied by these apostles of Buffalo Bill and Jesse James. When a fine, light room, abounding in books and papers and provided with comfortable chairs was opened to this crowd of cave-dwellers they had to show their appreciation by upsetting tables and chairs and letting out shrieks which annoyed the spick and span children who were studying the Iliad and reading St. Nicholas.

The refining influence of the beautiful pictures of Grecian temples which adorn the walls of Omaha schools had not penetrated the skin of the young barbarians. The peaceful eyes of the Madonna of the chair had not calmed the restless spirit of boyhood. A meeting place where watchful parents and chiding teachers were not present was too much for unbridled youth.

Opening of the library.
On January 10 the doors of the branch library were thrown open to the public. The crowd was equal to that which gathers about theater doors at 7 o'clock in the hope of getting a front seat in the gallery. For several days all was peaceful. Then the James gang got acclimated and trouble began.

Dangerous looking pins found their way

into the seats of chairs. Self-propelling paper wads came from the direction of serious faces that were buried in the Century magazine or Review of Reviews. Rubbers and caps acquired the habit of flying through the air. Pinches and cuffs gave way to a battle royal and Miss Baumer

felt that it was time to call in some help.

"Ten ninety," she requested, after giving the telephone a fierce ring.
"Is this Chief Donahue?" she asked.
"I want you to send an officer out to the branch library at 1524 Vinton just as soon as you can."

The effect was electrical. In their haste to leave the room pugilists failed to see

tables and chairs. Books, papers and furniture were in a hopeless mass. When the officer arrived he found Miss Baumer straightening up a room which looked as though a herd of Texas cattle had paid it a visit.

The scheme worked too well. For days the library was deserted. Boys pecked into the windows and made remarks about "fly bobs." Miss Baumer had lost her clients and saw that she must make an effort to inveigle them into the reading room. The boys were chary. Blue coats and brass buttons were supposed to be hidden away in the book stacks and the principals in the athletic contests didn't propose to get within reach of a "copper."

One by one the participants in the mill ventured into the library. The illustrated papers were too great a temptation. At first the youngsters kept one eye on Miss Baumer all the time and held themselves in readiness to make a "get-away" in case the worst happened. When the patrolman on that beat stopped in front of the library station the culprits showed a streak of yellow and slipped noiselessly out the back door. But they have now lived down their fear.

It has not been necessary to turn in another hurry call. All the lions have returned to the fold and they and the lambs sit peacefully together and feast on the mild food the library supplies to its patrons. Nick Carter is being replaced by G. A. Henty. Pockets are not bulging with penny dreadfuls as they were two months ago and General Custer and other heroes threaten to dethrone Cherokee Bill and Old Sleuth.

Thronged with Little Folks.

During February 166 adults visited the John T. Edgar branch. No attempt was made to count the children. From the time school is dismissed in the afternoon until 9 o'clock in the evening the library is thronged with little folks. The average number of books issued daily was ninety-eight. Five hundred volumes were sent to the station when it was first opened. This number was found to be entirely inadequate and 1,000 additional books have been borrowed from the main library since that time.

In two months cards were issued to 268 persons who had not previously been patrons of the public library. This showing is particularly good when it is taken

into consideration that the public library has stations in several of the school buildings in the south part of the city. These stations will be closed during the summer and the new branch will afford library facilities to persons who have hitherto been unable to secure books when the schools are closed.

Sunday is the day when the branch is

visited by adults. No books are issued on Sunday, but the reading room is kept open. Thirteen monthly publications, twelve weeklies and four daily papers are to be found on the reading tables. Children are requested to allow adults to have the use of these on Sunday and quiet reigns supreme in the branch on the day of rest.

In naming the new branch after the late John T. Edgar the library board honored the man who donated the first books which were placed in an Omaha public library. He served for many years as a director of the public library before it was supported by the city and did much to perpetuate an institution which threatened to be short lived.

Mr. Edgar was a hardware merchant in Omaha for many years. During President Arthur's administration he was appointed to the United States consulship at Beirut, Syria. He died while filling this office and his remains were interred at Beirut.

Miss Baumer is in Charge.

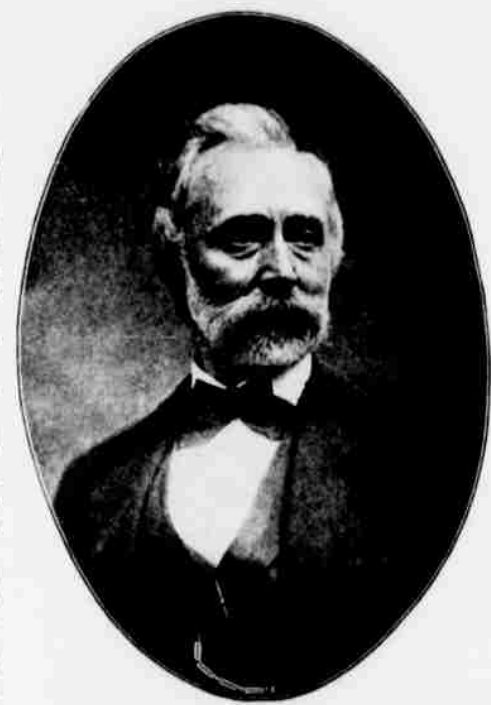
At present the John T. Edgar branch is open from 3 in the afternoon until 9 in the evening. Miss Baumer is in charge of the work and is assisted by Miss Jessie Walker. Any book which is in the main library may be drawn through this branch. The patronage of the new station is far better than had been anticipated and it is probable that similar branches will be established in other parts of the city.

A brighter, happier lot than the little folks who are found daily in the Vinton street branch cannot be imagined. They have the merit of being natural. Instead of tiptoeing through the reading room as though there were death in the family, they walk. Occasionally they talk louder than a stage whisper.

When The Bee artist went to the branch to photograph the little folks he found

them very willing subjects. There was some jockeying for positions near the camera and a few mills developed on account of the desire of certain boys to stand between the lens and fellow readers. A troop of bright-eyed youngsters shouted a lusty goodby as the artist started for the car. A derby hat was too great a temptation for Johnny Deadshot. He let

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JOHN T. EDGAR—FIRST CONTRIBUTOR TO OMAHA PUBLIC LIBRARY.



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When The Bee artist went to the branch to photograph the little folks he found

a snowball drive and sent the photographer's hat into the gutter.

"That's a nice way to treat a fellow that gives you a square deal," a red-faced boy shouted as he landed an uppercut on Johnny's jaw. He was joined in the chastisement by the whole crowd and the boy with the loose arm was soon scurrying east on Vinton street to escape a fusillade of snowballs.

Diamonds

Detroit Journal: Once upon a time the average girl fell in love with diamonds.

Behold, it was an abiding love. And it came to pass that a small people, who ate with their knives and went to bed without undressing, had diamond fields in their midst.

Now hereupon a great people became filled clear up to the neck with high resolve and unselfish purpose, and went after the small people.

"Ah, me!" sighed the average girl, and wept for the small people, and made up nightgowns for their wounded, and was otherwise active in their behalf.

No Easy Job

Indianapolis Sun: "Scuse me, boss," said Hoxey Hill, as he stopped Mr. Smithers. "I want ter ask you a question. If I was to offer you 50 bucks a day to do de work I'm doin' now would you take de job?"

"What are you doing now?"
"Sleepin' in box cars at night an' mosey'n' aroun' in de cold hittin' women fer hand-outs in de daytime. Would yer take de job at 50 cases?"

"No, indeed! Why do you ask?"
"Oh, some cheap plug back dere jist asked me w'y I don't work."



BRIGHT-EYED PATRONS OF THE BRANCH LIBRARY.