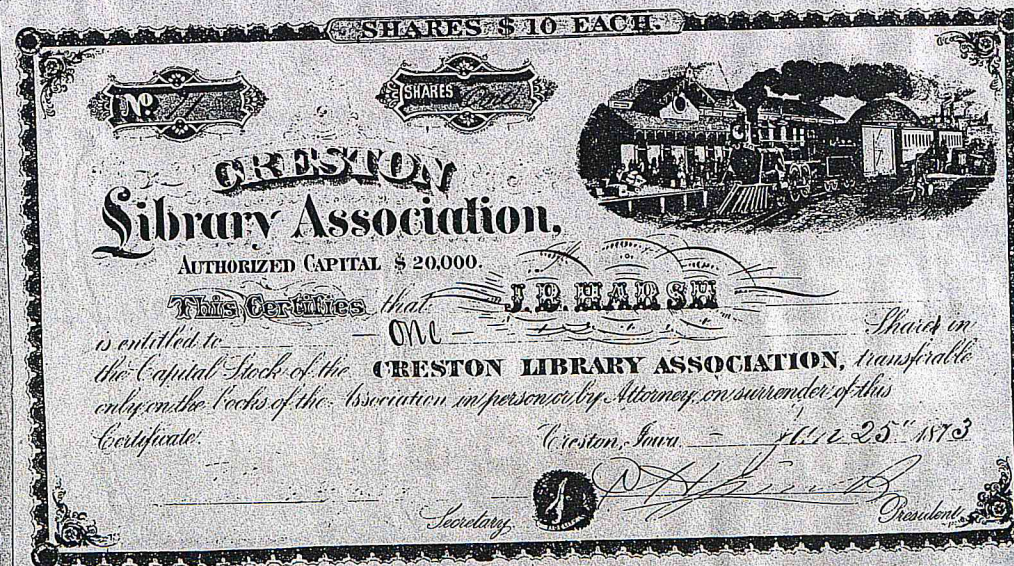




Creston's First Library, now The Corner Furniture Store

The Corner Furniture, S. Maple and W. Union Streets.
This is Creston's oldest business building—it housed

Creston's first library. "Red" Hart operated the business
for a number of years. News Advertiser photo.



A sample of the stock certificates issued for that first library.
Thanks to Union Co. Historical Society for furnishing copy

C.B. & Q. Founded First Library

The first library was founded by the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad to provide a pleasant place for their employees to spend their evenings. It was located on the southwest corner of Union and Maple Streets and is now where the Corner Furniture Store is located.

Mrs. Matilda Bowman was the first librarian. In addition to books, there were daily and weekly newspapers, current magazines and games of chess, checkers, etc. The second floor which has now been removed, was used for weekday entertainments and Sunday religious meetings.

For its maintenance, the Creston Library Association was formed at \$10 a share and J.B. Harsh was the first president.

As the north side residential section developed, the library was moved to the Carpenter-Patt block. Financial difficulties forced several moves until finally the books were given to the Board of education in 1897. The library was then established in the old high school building where, to both students and public, tickets were no longer

necessary.

When the building became the junior high school, the public library remained and this same room was later used by the Southwest Community College library. Early librarians were Mrs. Bowman, Rose Hill, Gertrude Hatton, Mabel Hatton, Carrie Hatton, Mrs. Gertrude Jay and Bella Alderson.

In 1930, after two attempts failed to obtain a Carnegie library for the city, Mrs. Frank Phillips of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, bought a building site at the southwest corner of Maple and Howard Streets for \$10,000 and presented the deed, together with \$15,000 cash to the city council to be spent on a joint clubroom and library in memory of her mother who had been active in church and charity work.

April 7, 1931 the Matilda J. Gibson Memorial Library was formally opened and in November 1943 the children's wing was added.

The present stone-trimmed brick structure measures approximately 66 by 51 feet and is set on two recently relandscaped lots. The Maple Street entrance leads to the main reading room. Flanking

this door on either side, are china-glassware collections and storage alcoves. Immediately opposite is the charging desk. A reference room, children's wing and office facilities are also on this floor. The basement contains the clubroom and kitchen lockers for rental organizations, workroom, restrooms and utility — janitor quarters. Outstanding interior decorating has made an attractive library of which Creston is proud.

During the summer, a story hour is presented and a reading club is formed.

Since the early 1940's librarians have been Margaret Ball, Mrs. Phyllis Arnold, and currently, Carole Stanger.