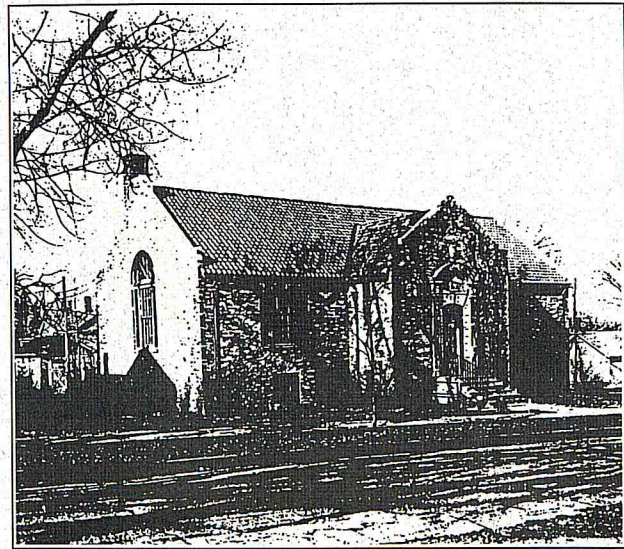


# Creston Public Library



*Matilda J. Gibson Memorial Library*

Compiled by Linda R. Huffman with information from:

*Creston News Advertiser*

*The Des Moines Register*

*The Spirit of Performance - Phillips 66*

*The Golden Era of J.P.S. 1937 - 1987*

Please make pledges (payable by June 30, 1997) to:

Gibson Memorial Library Renovation Fund  
Crestland Betterment Foundation  
Box 561, Creston, Iowa 50801

## PLEDGE

I/We pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ solely for use in the renovation/expansion of the existing library building at 310 North Maple Street, Creston, Iowa.

In the event renovation/expansion of the existing building at 310 North Maple Street, Creston, Iowa does not begin by January 1, 1997, this pledge may be revoked, and all funds paid as of that date shall then be returned upon the written request of the undersigned.

DATED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_



The Matilda J. Gibson Memorial Library has been beckoning Creston area residents to "come inside" its stately, stone-trimmed doors for 65 years. We have enjoyed its large airy rooms, lighted by beautifully arched windows. Children have delighted in their very own big room with a fireplace. Our library building has been a source of pride to our community – a solid, elegant reminder of our heritage, as well as a vital part of our present and future. How this legacy came to us is a fascinating chapter in Creston's history.

In 1930, Mr. and Mrs. Frank (Jane) 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 of Creston for a joint clubroom and library in memory of Mrs. Phillips' mother who had been active in church and charity work here.

On April 7, 1931, the Matilda J. Gibson Memorial Library was formally opened and dedicated. Ray Emerson was the local contractor. A copy of the News Advertiser of that day, a 1930 coin, a picture of Mrs. Gibson, and documents were placed in the cornerstone.

In 1938, the Phillipses donated \$7,500 to construct an addition to the west, and also continued to contribute books and funds for expansion of the library collection. This addition provided space for the Children's Room, and brought the total square footage to 7,456 feet - the current size.

Frank Phillips was born in Greeley County, Nebraska on November 23, 1873. A grasshopper plague forced his family back to Iowa about a year after his birth. They chose a farm near Creston where young Phillips grew up. He attended country school until he finished at the age of 14. He took a job in Creston as a barber's apprentice. Phillips later explained why he became a barber. "I knew a barber in town who always wore a pair of spring bottom stripped pants. I made up my mind that I wanted to earn enough so that I could afford to wear striped pants even on weekdays."

After learning the barber's trade, led by an adventurous spirit, in 1890 he headed west to follow the gold and silver boom. He barbered in Aspen, Colorado until the silver gave out, then headed to Utah, where he worked as a barber and a brakeman for the Central Pacific Railroad.

In 1895 he returned to Creston to be closer to his family, and began his conquest of the barbershop market. At the age of 24, he owned all three of Creston's barber-



Wedding photo of Frank and Jane Phillips

shops. He also began courting Jane Gibson, the banker's daughter. Frank and Jane were married in 1897 at the Methodist Church. Phillips sold his barber-shops and started selling bonds in New England and Chicago for John Gibson's bank. In 1903, he heard about the new oil fields being discovered near Bartlesville, in Indian Territory. He decided to use his savings to go into business for himself there. Phillips organized and became president of the Citizens Bank and Trust Company at Bartlesville. He soon found that banking in Oklahoma extended into oil operations and as his oil interests grew, in 1917 he and his brother L.E. Phillips founded the Phillips Petroleum Corporation.

Phillips expanded Phillips Petroleum into one of the world's largest independently owned oil companies. In 1937, he stepped down as president of the company and devoted the rest of his life, and a great part of his fortune to helping youth and church organizations. He died in 1950. His lifelong partner, Jane, had died in 1948.

Although Frank and Jane Phillips made their home in Bartlesville and New York City, they both considered Creston to be their first home. They kept close ties,

shops. He also began courting Jane Gibson, the banker's daughter. Frank and Jane were married in 1897 at the Methodist Church. Phillips sold his barber-shops and started

and made regular trips back to Iowa. In 1947, on the occasion of the observance of Creston's 75th anniversary, Phillips remarked, "In my opinion there is no place like the old home plate, which is Creston to me."

On this legacy, we are building Creston's future. Our Gibson Memorial Library needs updating, but it will meet our future needs. Our community can retain the beauty, integrity, and heritage of our library building, while adding new features, providing accessibility to everyone, and incorporating modern technology.

We are asking your help to raise funds to renovate Gibson Memorial Library. By working together, we can continue to have a library that is the pride of our community.

Contributions will be acknowledged (with permission) on a plaque commemorating our library's benefactors in this renovation process.

Pledges may also be returned to Iowa State or First National Banks in Creston.



Your Friendly Neighborhood Gas Cottage