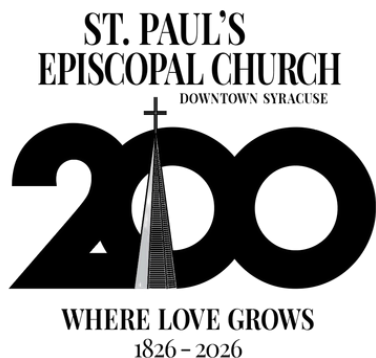


St. Paul's Starts a Library

By Amy Mangram



If you ever explore the history of our wonderful local library system, the Onondaga County Public Library, you will be pleasantly surprised to learn that its earliest roots were planted right here at St. Paul's.

In 1830, just four years after the church was incorporated, the Reverend Palmer Dyer assembled a small collection of books known as the Parish Library of St. Paul's Church. The entire library fit inside a wooden box kept in the Vestry.

The initial effort was supported by Mrs. Hiram Putnam and Mrs. Lewis Redfield, who sent their sons through the neighborhood with the family clothes basket, gathering donated books to fill the wooden case. This humble, homegrown library became a cherished resource for the parish.

A parish newsletter from 1908 reflects the growing vision for the library. Librarian Mr. A.T. Taylor and his assistant Mr. W. Lyon wrote:
 "The collection of books on our shelves is, we hope, but the nucleus of a larger and more comprehensive library. Our ambition is to have books for those who are finding their way into the world of books by means of large type and simple words, for those who need interesting stories and for those of more mature years who are looking for reliable works and books of reference."

continued



St. Paul's Starts a Library *continued*

By Amy Mangram



The Parish Library was eventually transferred to the Syracuse Public Library. That institution later merged with the Onondaga Library System, ultimately forming the Onondaga County Public Library system we know today. A library system that is 32 libraries strong, with an annual circulation approaching five million items.

It's remarkable to think that the legacy of St. Paul's first little library, born from a wooden box, a few dedicated parishioners, and a community's generosity, helped spark a countywide system that continues to serve and inspire readers nearly two centuries later.

