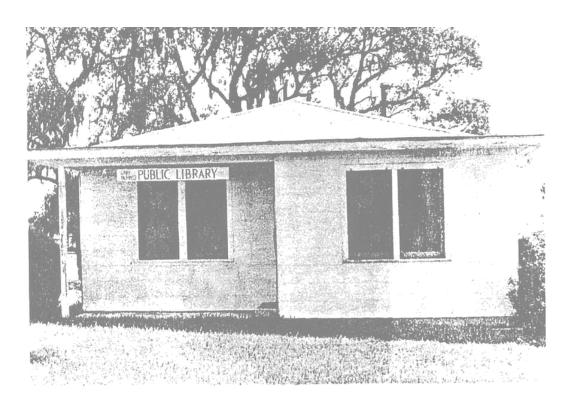
# OUR LIBRARY IS BORN

Lake Alfred, Florida 1962 -1973



Jane Brumbaugh Margaret Wheaton

### **Acknowledgements:**

The newspaper clippings and pictures included in this history were found in the scrapbook of Yvonne Fielding, president of the Lake Alfred Junior Women's Club, 1969-1970, as well as in the collections of Jane Brumbaugh, who was president in 1965-1966, and Margaret Wheaton, president in 1967-1968. They were originally published in *The Winter Haven Daily News-Chief, The Lakeland Ledger, The Winter Haven Herald, The Lake Alfred Sun, The Tampa Tribune,* and *The Orlando Sentinel*. Additional information was provided by Betty Shinn, Librarian starting in 1969, and was also found in a report prepared by Cathy Parsons, Assistant Librarian in the early 1970s.

The early photograph of the Dees Building is used courtesy of Ni Ni's Lake Alfred Cafe, Lake Alfred, Florida.

### **OUR LIBRARY IS BORN**

There was no public library in Lake Alfred in 1961. There was, however, a newly forming Junior Woman's Club under the leadership of Margalo Sutton, searching for a project. After much deliberation, the members chose to start a library. Plunging in, they began the work in early 1962.

The first step: Advertising and campaigning for donations of books. The response was great, and they quickly saw the need for learning how to process all the incoming donations. Mrs. Jones of the Winter Haven Library was consulted and became their mentor.

The second step: Typing four cards plus an envelope for each of the approximately one thousand books – author card, title card, subject card, and date due card. Member Alice Jutras provided a workroom over her garage, which became filled with books, cards, glue, pens, and members' typewriters.



Books went through a production line, each book receiving a number penned in two places, the copyright page and one chosen further into the text. Next, the typing people added the number to the four cards and the envelope, and after that the envelope was glued inside the back cover and the date due card tucked into it. This card would be removed and filled in at checkout, then stored on the library desk, to be the library's only record of books taken out. Another part of the production line was to stamp the library's name in several designated places in each book.

Many an evening was spent by the members doing this work, plus more hours as anyone could find the time. Tom Gretencord, husband of member Carol Gretencord, typed hundreds of cards at home at night.

and Mrs. Larry Sutton proudly display the certificate which denotes that the Lake Alfred Junior Women's Club won third prize in the state Women's Federation junior education department for its part in launching the Lake Alfred Library.

Winter Haven News-Chief 1962

Lake Alfred residents, families, merchants, and friends donated boxes and boxes of books. Junior Woman's Club members processed them throughout that whole first summer, often storing books in their homes as well as the workroom.

The third step: The search for a place to open a functioning library to the public. In June merchant W.R. Dees provided the storefront in his centrally located building at the corner of West Haines Boulevard and Lakeshore Way, asking a rental amount low enough for the club to manage. The women raised rent money by holding bake sales, rummage sales, and LAKE ALFRED LIBRARY CITED—Mrs. Douglas Cook, left, even dances to raise the funds. Soon some furniture and materials could be moved in, and husbands and others built and installed large shelves, adding to the smaller ones already donated. Someone donated a desk and chair.

The grand opening for the public took place on an early evening in October of 1962. A number of townspeople and officials came to welcome the new Lake Alfred Public Library and its happy volunteers, with a thousand books ready to be loaned out. Within a year a larger storefront space opened in the same building, and the Junior Woman's Club, with helpers, moved everything to the larger quarters. If the club members, all of whom had families to care for, had known what a large and time-consuming task they had taken on, and if the Lake Alfred community and leaders had not been so encouraging, they might not have considered the project. Probably not! But they did follow through consistently, and with all its challenges the library remained stable and dependable.

The main difficulty in a library or any service maintained entirely by volunteers is staffing it regularly and often enough to build a public following. Sometimes eleven members would be available during a week, and sometimes only three or four. Sometimes the library could be open only three hours a week, mostly at night from 6 to 7 or 7 to 8 o'clock. Those who could not work at checking out books helped with processing more books and cleaning the premises.

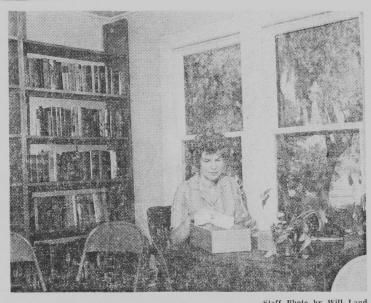


As time went on and the city commissioners saw the steady progress and use of the library, they took on more responsibility. In 1967 the city provided a small house in Lions Park that had formerly been used as a home for the caretaker. It was a larger, more attractive, and equally accessible

setting. This building had no heat or air conditioning, no telephone, and once an infestation of fleas that was more than disconcerting! But it was a positive improvement in ability to serve, and it further developed its working relationship with the city. Thus the library

Carol Sutton and Yvonne Fielding, cleaning the porch of the library's new home in Lions Park.

came a step closer to the goal of ownership completely by the city.



-Staff Photo by Will Land

### Library Opens in New Quarters

Mrs. Margaret Wheaton, member of Lake Alfred Woman's Club, acts as librarian to assist visitors to Lake Alfred Library's new facility at the city's Lions Park. The woman's club operates the library which opened at the new location this week. Hours are 2:30-4 p.m., Mondays and Tues-days; 7-8 p.m., Mondays and Thurs-days, and 10 a.m. to noon, Saturdays.

### LAKE ALFRED JUNIORS

Though Lake Alfred Junior Woman's Club has a membership of only 15, its projects speak of hard work. The Mrs. Richard Collins is club founded in the early '60's, was to buy a concrete picnic table and benches for the park. Mrs. Richard Collins is club. president.

Concentrating on the city's needs, the club founded the public library in 1962. At first, all books were donated and the City paid rent on a building used as the library.

When the City provided a building last spring, it turned the rent money over to the club as a book-buying budget. The library now boasts some 40,000 books.

Volunteers, a large number of them Juniors, staff the library. The Club has a committee in charge of the library. It processes books and sets up library hours according to the times when it will be staffed. It is open on an average of four hours a week. "Our biggest problem is having to arrange hours to suit volunteers," says Mrs. Adair Wheaton of the library committee. "Therefore the hours fluctuate, but we still try to set up specific times each week."

### They Volunteer Education

By DOLLY LUHRS

By DOLLY LUHRS
Tribune Staff Writer
LAKE ALFRED — It took a
at of cake baking, time and
udy, but members of the
ake Alfred Junior Woman's lub climbed over every ob-

because of their etermination to succeed, the lity of Lake Alfred is enjoy-ng a public library all its

erminated in 1958 and four cars later the club opened it. t was given life by these ivic-minded women who

ruided it faithfully through its infancy and are still with it today.

The library opened in October, 1962 — at the height of the Cuban Crisis—in a small store in the Dees Building. with approximately 1,000

books.
"We stayed in that original "We stayed in that original store less than a year, then moved a few stores away in the same building to larger quarters," Mrs. Jane Cook, chairman of the library commuter scalled

Since the club paid rent in those early premises, members, of necessity, needed to constantly come up with money-making ideas. They kept a steady stream of rum-mage sales, dances and ba-zaars going. They found bake sales to be the most lucrative and began to concentrate on

The library is currently housed in its third and largest quarters so far — an attractive white frame house at the entrance to Lion's Park, which the City of Lake Alfred partitis (for the executive sector). permits them to use rent free.

"We still wonder sometimes

how we decided to start such a momentous project," Mrs. Cook commented. "I think if we had been aware of all the pitfalls, we might not have been so self-confident."

The club had many projects, but considered most of them "minor." They included such things as placing a concrete picnic table in Rochelle Park.

So, the group cast about for some more "worthy" undertaking. "Someone, I can't remember who," said Mrs. Cock, "came up with the ide.; of a free library."

They did not learn, how-ever, until they were well into the project how many annoying little problems they would have to circumvent. The large ones, like collecting books, finding a place to house them and raising the necessary funds, they managed very neatly.

The trouble was the little unforseen obstacles like young mothers having to get b a b y sitters and wives convincing h u s b a n d s that they really were not spending too much time away from home. Just finding enough time was the biggest prob-lem they needed to solve.

Then, as they became more successful, they had to find ways to continue to gather and process books, keep pace with the consistent expansion of the library and keep it open to the public — all through volunteer labor.

"Sometimes we became discouraged because we felt we didn't have enough members to keep the library open as much as we all wanted to," Mrs. Cook continued. "Because of this, people weren't using the library as much as they would have liked to,"

After they had selected the After they had selected the library as their major proj-ect, members campaigned to collect books. They stored them in their homes and proc-essed them throughout the

The library has had to re-ceive most of the club's con-centration during the past several years. With limited funds and time, they admit-tedly have not been able to participate in any major way in the Federation of Women's Club projects.

On the financial side of the picture, the average cost per book, per year, according to American Library Association figures, is nine dollars.

"However." Mrs. Cook pointed out, "it costs the club less because of volun-teer help and donation of

Recently almost everyone in Lake Alfred participated in the donation of a set of reference books. Timewise, some 11 members of the club act as librarians, directly serving the public.

"Although the rest of the memor's can't actually work in the library because of scheduling conflicts, they do help in other ways, such as fund raising, book processing and library housekeeping which can be done at unscheduled hours," she added.

The library committee has worked the processing system down to a fine art. The six-step routine permits the designated personnel to work at their own most convenient

times.

When a member finishes her particular operation, she puts the book on the pile for the following step. This way the work is always waiting whenever a member finds time to dash in.

Mrs. Cook recalled that the club once expanded the li-brary hours after they had worked out a schedule — very carefully.

"But all sorts of unexpected problems arose," she said.

The main problem is always with them — not enough members with enough free problems arose, time to man the library and keep it on a consistent sched-

"Now we do not increase the hours unless we are rea-sonably sure the volunteers will be able to cover at their appointed times."

The present hours are from

7 p.m. until 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. There is no charge for a library card and membership is free of charge. The only cost is two cents per day for an overdue book. All books may be kept two weeks.

"We also schedule one mem-ber each month to be responsible for keeping the library clean. She selects her committee and they do the vacuuming, dusting, scrubbing and window cleaning," Mrs. Cook smiled.

Looking back, Mrs. Cook re-called, "We were shy at first about requesting assistance, But we are bolder now because we have come to realize we are not asking for ourselves. It is for the entire community.

"For instance, we sent out letters describing the li-brary's need for a set of encyclopedia. Almost before we knew it, business and civic organizations and individuals had donated them."

As to the future?
"Well, Mrs. Cook
commented, "our immediate
needs were more shelves, a
card catalogue and a book
drop. We have achieved the first two and expect to get the third shortly."

Of course, as long as the library continues growing, the women realize it will be an endless chain of more books, more shelves and more card catalogues. But, for this moment they are up to date.

Mrs. Cook sat quietly for a

moment, then said:
"Many people had told us
they were not able to use the they were not able to use the library because we did not have the books they needed. So, we added more books and we keep adding books. Each time we do, it enables more people to use it.

"People have also told us that we are helping to build an interest in reading. So, we can't help but feel that we are contributing a service to the community.

"That makes it all worth-while," she said with a smile.

### THE TAMPA TRIBUNE

### WOMEN In The News

TAMPA, FLORIDA, Thursday, July 13, 1967



-Staff Photos by Dolly Luhrs

The constant flow of new books are started on their way by The constant flow of new pooks are started on their way by Mrs. Robert Brooks (left) in charge of Group 1, sorting the new books, and Mrs. Jane Cook, in charge of Group 2, which numbers and stamps the books. Mrs. Brooks and Mrs. Cook were two of the five members with the club when the library project was started.



Checking catalogue cards are (left to right) Mrs. Donald Sutton, in charge of Group 4, which checks the catalogue card against the information in the book, and Mrs. Larry Sutton, in charge of Group 3, which types the catalogue cards and the pockets and lists them on the cross-reference cards.

Harriet **Brooks** (left) and Jane Cook (right)

Carol

Sutton

(left) and

Margalo

Sutton

(right)



LIBRARY DRIVE — Mrs. W. J. Cook, chairman of the Lake Alfred Library fund drive, accepts check from Mrs. R. J. Collins, president of the Lake Alfred Junior Wom—an's Club, which will help buy the World Book Encyclopedia and other books to be added to the shelves. The library, sponsored by the Junior Woman's Club needs volunteers to help staff the library and process books.

News-Chief 1967

The merchants of Lake Alfred, upon receiving a letter of request, donated a set of new encyclopedias. Local residents, businesses and civic organizations donated other books and reference works.

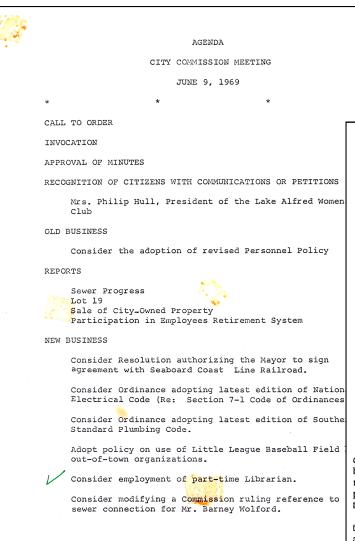


### New Reference Books

Mrs. Jane Cook, Lake Alfred Woman's Club library chairman, places new set of encyclopedias on shelves at Lake Alfred Public Library. Books were purchased by a number of local residents, businesses and civic organizations for the library.

—Staff Photo by Dolly Luhrs

In 1969 the city furthered its participation by employing Mrs. Betty Shinn as professional librarian, working part-time but regular hours. Mrs. Shinn had experience and a degree in library science and was able to provide advanced direction and services along with dependable hours. The city also began to help with part of the funding for purchase of new books and supplies, and later hired Ms. Cathy Parsons to be assistant librarian.





### Lake Alfred Finds Pay For Librarian

By GAIL GEARY Ledger Bureau

LAKE ALFRED — Digging deep into its tightly drawn budget bag, the City Commission here has found \$360 to pay a part-time librarian to staff the city library.

The money, which will allow the librarian to work ten hours a week at \$2 an hour until the end of the current budget year in October, will come from a temporary labor account. Further studies for continuing the job will be made when the new budget is devised.

In other business Monday, the commission:

Okayed a revision of its personnel policy which includes seven legal holidays a year and detailing the city manager's authority to dismiss a n y employe he is authorized to hire.

Granted tentatively a request from Charles Shinn to put a short wave antennae on

the city water tower provide he provides the city a release and indemnification agreement absolving it of responsibility in case of accident or damage. The same requirement will be extended to Growers Fertilizer which already has an antennae on the tower.

Voted to make up the difference in cost for a sanitary
sewer connection for resident
Marney Wolford between Lynndale and Cummings Street connection. Wolford was told in
1968 he could wait for the Lynndale line before hooking up
as it would be less expensive
than connecting at the Cummings Street line.

Meanwhile, engineers had decided not to run the Lynndale line past Wolford's home. He agreed to release the city from its earlier agreement if it paid the cost difference in the Cummings Street connection.

MRS. ERROLL FIELDING, left, president of the Lake Alfred Junior Woman's Club, receives a check from Mrs. Phillip Hull, president of the Seniors, for the Lake Alfred Library. Mrs. Gerald Evans, center, is chairman of the library which is sponsored by the Junior Woman's Club.

Local organizations provided generous support to the Lake Alfred Public Library, a project of the Lake Alfred Junior Woman's Club.

### Lake Alfred Junior Woman's Club

The Lake Alfred Junior Woman's Club held its May meeting at the home of Mrs.

John E. Burris. Co-hostesses
for the evening were Mrs.

Erroll L. Fielding and Mrs. Burris.

Plans were formulated for the installaton of newly elected

the installaton of newly elected officers who will be installed at a banquet to be held Tuesday evening, May 26, at Morrison's cafeteria in the Green Room.

Newly elected officers for the next year will be: Mrs. Robert P. Barker, president; Mrs. John W. White, first vice president; Mrs. Scott F. Austin, second vice president; Mrs. Robert L. Board Jr., recording secretary; Mrs. W. Wade Wiggins, Jr., correspon-

ding secretary; and Mrs. Robert E. Pyle, treasurer.

ert E. Pyle, treasurer.

New members welcomed into
the club were Mrs. Guy Cox,
Mrs. Bennon Bilbrey, Mrs. Jim
Wilson and Mrs. K. J. Jordan.

Members present were
Mesdames Scott F. Austin,
Robert P. Barker, Robert L.
Board Jr., Richard
Brumbaugh, John E. Burris,
Gerald D. Evans, Erroll L.
Fielding, Wilson Lowe, Gerald D. Evans, Erroll L. Fielding, Wilson Lowe, Raymond E. Pinner, Robert E. Pyle, T. Adair Wheaton, John W. White, W. Wade Wiggins Jr., Thomas Corlett and Miss Stephanie Housman.

### Library hours were announced in the local newspapers.

Mrs. Cynthia Evans, Lake Alfred Library chairn, reports no charge will be made for overdue ks this month. The library is in Lions Park i is open from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Monday dnesday, Thursday and Saturday. keland Ledger - March 15, 1998

Lakeland Ledger, March 15, 1970



BOOKS ARE PRESENTED To the Lake Alfred library by members of the Xi Zeta lotta Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi. The sorority has been helping the Junior Woman's Club of Lake Alfred with its library project. Shown at the presentation are, from left, Mrs. Jimmy Cox, service chairman; Mrs. Charles Shinn Jr., librarian; Mrs. Gerald Reeves, president; and Mrs. Gerald Evans, library chairman.

### New Library Hours Listed

LAKE ALFRED — The public library in Lake Alfred Lions Park has announced that new library hours are now in effect.

The library is open from 3:30 to 5

nm. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

The library also has announced that, this month, there will be no charge to the public for overdue books.

Orlando Sentinel, March 5, 1970

### Lake Alfred **Library Sets New Schedule**

The Lake Alfred Public Library located at the Lake Alfred Lions Park has new hours.

The library will now be open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

There will be no charge to the public during the month of March for overdue books. Those who have books that are overdue, are urged to turn are overdue, are urged to turn them in.

Winter Haven News-Chief March 3, 1970



STORY TIME — Lake Alfred children will gather at the Lake Alfred public libary on three Saturdays, July 11, 18 and 25 for a story hour conducted by Mrs. Edward Mansfield, right. Shown listening to a story are, left to right, Erroll Fielding Jr., Cynthia Fielding, Karen Cook and Laura Wheaton.

### Lake Alfred Library To Have Story Hour Tomorrow

Alfred Lions Park will hold a series of story hours for chilthree Saturdays on July 11, 18, and 25.

They will be held on the lawn in front of the library from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

The City of Lake Alfred Pub. charge. She is a retired first and their parents may tour it lic Library located at the Lake grade school teacher from the Baltimore Md. city schools and has 21 years of experience in dren ages 5 to 8 on the next reading and telling stories to children. Many of the stories Mrs. Mansfield will tell are fav. orites of children she has taught.

During and after the story hour, the library will remain

and check out books. Many new children's books will be on dis-

The library is a project of the Lake Alfred Junior Woman's

It is open to the public on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Mrs. E. D. Mansfield is in open in order that the children Saturday from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

By Ordinance 471 of June 12, 1972, the City of Lake Alfred established the creation of the "Library Board of the City of Lake Alfred, Florida," to consist of seven members appointed by the city commission and the city manager ex officio. The librarian, Mrs. Shinn, acted as advisor. The first board was made up of four Junior Woman's Club members and three other citizens.

The library was still located in the Lions Park building, and the Junior Woman's Club continued to be responsible for its physical and financial support.

### Lake Alfred Public Library

Sunday Feb. 14th The Junior Woman's Club held its open House Ribbon cutting ceremony at 185 East Pomelo St. the new home of the Lake Alfred Public Library.

For ten years the Library has been the primary concern of the Lake Alfred Junior Woman's club. During the first ten years the Library was located in a converted house in Lion's Park. The new building became available to the public in Dec. of 1973. Approximately 97 invitations were sent to former Junior Woman's club members and to many other who were active in making the library a reality. Speakers for the occasion were city Manager Joseph Mitchell and Mrs. Scott Austin. president of the Jr. Woman's club. Also participating in the ribbon cutting were Mrs. Charles Shinn, Librarion and Mayer Charles Long Jr.

Mr. Monroe Messer a city commissioner and citizen of Lake Alfred presented the Library with an Antique Bible which has been passed down for 141 years.

The refreshment table was decorated with a white embroidered linen table cloth centered with an arrangement of multi-colored snap dragons, orchids and glads.

Mrs. Dan Awinger and her committee served delicious refreshments of coffee, punch and cookies during the afternoon hours.

Library Hours are: 9:00 to 12:00 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 3:30 to 5:00 Monday, Wednesday & Saturday and Monday & Thursday evening from 7:00 to 9:00.

Resident of Lake Affred may use the Library facilities at no cost. Those living outside the city limits may join the Library for a \$2.00 membership fee.

In October, 1973, the City of Lake Alfred completed the then-new Public Safety Building on Pomelo Street. At that time the city took complete ownership and responsibility for the library. The Lake Alfred Public Library was moved into the central area of the new building, between the quarters for the police department at one end and the fire department at the other. It has remained there and thrived for almost forty years.



## Lake Alfred Junior Woman's Club Eager For New Library

By JEFF KLINE Staff Writer

When the new Lake Alfred Public Safety Building is finally ready, there will be one group of very happy people — the Lake Alfred Junior Woman's Club.

The women are going to be happy because the new building will house the Public Library.

Since the club was chartered in April, 1962, the Library has been its main project. Members organized it, ran it, and conducted money raising events for it. "It was something we were gooing to see through," said Mrs. Patty White, president.

The library was launched in October 1962 in the old Dees building on the corner of Haines Blvd. and Lake Shore Way. However, financial difficulties forced a move. The city gave them an old caretaker's house in Lions Park, which is the present location of the library.

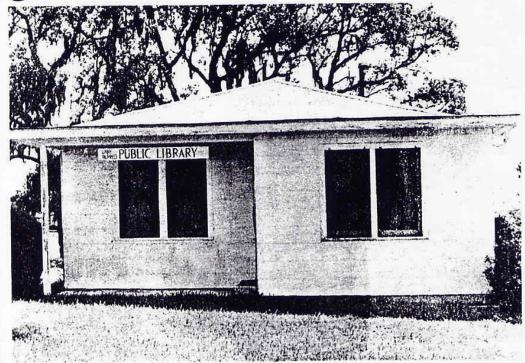
The first books were donated by the citizens of Lake Alfred. "Many community people pitched in to work." said Mrs. White. "The merchants in town donated a set of encyclopedias."

At first, the women ran the library themselves but as the collected more and more books, they realized they needed help. "We felt that we needed some basis for the right way to run a library. We took it to a commission meeting and the city officials agreed to pay for a part-time librarian." Mrs. White said. "They hired Mrs. Betty Shinn, who has a degree in library science."

Even then, the club members had to work. At the present time, the library is open four days a week, an hour and a half a day. According to Mrs. Cynthia Evans, library chairman for Junior Woman's Club, "each member works one and a half hours every three weeks."

Problems arose for some, "The library is hot in the summer and cold in the winter," said Mrs. Tom Corlett. "This was especially hard on the children who had to come with their mothers." To solve this problem, the women started baby-sitting for one another.

"It hasn't been easy," Mrs. Evans said, "The girls who started it had the roughest job." Mrs. White added: "Once



LAKE ALFRED LIBRARY — Is to move out of this building in Lions Park this year — hopefully for Christmas — into the new Public Safety building. Since its inception 10 years ago, the library has been sponsored by the Lake Alfred Junior Woman's Club.

you start working there, it gets in your blood."

Although Lake Alfred is a small community, the women felt a definite need for the library. "Winter Haven is too far for the children to ride their bikes," Mrs. Corlett mentioned. "And besides it's not safe on busy Lake Alfred Road."

The women said that the library is used a lot, especially by students.

The new library will be located at the corner of Pomelo and Seminole Sts. The Maranatha Heights Retirement Home is a block away. The women feel that the retired people there will be able to use the library more now.

the library more now.

City Manager Joseph
Mitchell said that the groundbreaking for the public safety
building may be sometime in
June, with completion around
Christmas time.

The eventual goal of the Woman's Club is to have the library completely city-operated. But for now they are happy for the new building. "It took almost to years, but it was worth it." said Mrs. White.

The women will still have to work and the hours will be expanded, but as Mrs. White said. "If we can move in by December, it will be a beautiful Christmas present."

In the years from 1962 to 1973 the Lake Alfred Junior Woman's Club successfully completed a major project, the founding and nurturing of the Lake Alfred Public Library.