

# The Door County Bookmobile

A Short Story With A Lot Of History



From **1950** To **1996**

## The Door County Bookmobile Story

Compiled by Giz Herbst  
for the Egg Harbor Historical Society  
(originally for a slideshow presentation)  
2015

**Reference was gathered from material in the Door County Library's Laurie Center and the book "Reading Places...Literacy, Democracy, and the Public Library in Cold War America", by Christine Pawley.**

A search of old county newspapers for the word 'bookmobile' in Door County's vocabulary came up with it's first reference in the Classified Ad section of the Door County Advocate's Jan. 10, 1941 issue, but it had nothing to do with Door County. The word "bookmobile" applicable to Door County would not appear in any form in the Advocate for another 7 years.

Door County's first services were in the form of "Traveling Libraries" (books in a box) as early as 1903. These boxes of books were circulated and dropped off at various locations throughout the county. Listed below are samples of locations, dates and related information.

### The Traveling Library

#### Jacksonport – 8-1-03

Miss Mary McQuaid has taken the "Traveling Library" and all those wanting good reading material will find it there.

#### Sawyer - 5-4-07

The new books for the traveling library were received Saturday, and Jos. Jirtle, who has charge of them, says the selection is a much better one than the first. The people of Sawyer appreciate this opportunity to read good books and are not slow to take advantage of it. There are fifty-eight volumes in the library at this time.



#### Baileys Harbor - 4-26-12

The Wisconsin Library Commission has placed a collection of books, constituting a traveling library at the store of Roger Eatough in Baileys Harbor. Every person in the community is invited to borrow books from this library, for which there is absolutely no charge. The books can be borrowed at any time that the store is open. There is an excellent list of books in English, about fifty in all, besides a good group of German and Norwegian books. The books are all new and in the best of condition. They deal with many different practical subjects, as well as including a number of stories. Mr. Eatough has taken considerable trouble to secure these books, that the community might have free library privileges, and the books will doubtless be in big demand.

#### Little Sturgeon – 11-19-15

School Notes: A new traveling library is opened at school. Books may be drawn on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 4 to 5 o'clock. It is hoped that the people of the district will take up this great advantage.

#### Sister Bay – 12-15-22

Books for the traveling library have arrived, and are in charge of Carl Carlson at the office of the Barker Lumber Co.



"Bookmobile service" progressed from the horse drawn stagecoaches in 1903 circulating 'Books in a Box' to today's modern buses and up-to-date technologies.

### Wisconsin Bookmobile History

Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the WFLC (Wisconsin Free Library Commission) as part of their mission of promoting and establishing public libraries was circulating a "travel library – books in boxes" to rural areas. Around 1922 the Racine Public Library used it's "library car" to extend its service to Racine

County. In 1940 three bookmobiles were purchased by the Wisconsin Free Library Commission, one used for a demonstration in Shawano County, following that demonstration the first bookmobile service in the state was established in Shawano County which continues today. In 1940 other bookmobiles served Grant, Iowa, Crawford and Rock Counties, but only served children. Funding was provided from contributions from 26 American Legion posts. In 1948 Brown County Library implemented a bookmobile service which continues today. Racine modernized by converting a school bus for use as a bookmobile. Marathon County also implemented bookmobile service around this time.

### **Door County Bookmobile History**

The first 'state funding' for a bookmobile service in Wisconsin occurred in Door and Kewaunee Counties in 1950-52. Although it received some public resistance it eventually led to a 40+ year service to the rural children and adults in Door County. Christine Pawley, director of School of Library Studies – UW-Madison studied and wrote extensively about the project. In Christine Pawley's book, "READING PLACES: Literacy, Democracy, and the Public Library in Cold War America", she really gets into what was going on in our society. This was the Cold War period after WWII and during the Korean War, it was the time of McCarthyism and the "witch hunters' on the lookout for subversive and communist activities in the movies, books, media, etc.

Ethnic, religious and social status had heavy effects on feelings toward a literate society; some positive, some negative.

Pawley covers the process that the WFLC went through to address what a report in 1948 stated, "the per capita book circulation in Wisconsin was decreasing". The WFLC lobbied for and got a law passed to establish a single demonstration project in a predominately rural area lacking an efficient coverage by existing library systems. The goal was to cooperate in ordering books, cataloging and sharing a common pool of materials that could not only circulate in local libraries, but also on a bookmobile so communities could iron out differences between wealthy and poor districts, and could reach even the most remote readers. Door and Kewaunee counties were selected because they were similar in that both were heavily rural with similar industry, yet had differences with strong agricultural influences to the south and tourist influences to the north.

"Wider Library Service", a newspaper article by the WFLC, was the first article to mention the word bookmobile in any Door County newspaper since the one in the Classified Ad section in 1941. In the Advocate of Sept. 14, 1948, a statement read... "efforts were to be made to provide Bookmobile Service by an experienced librarian to areas remote from libraries". A County Library Plan was presented – Nov, 9, 1948. General discussion at the first meeting centered about the possibility of uniting Door County with Kewaunee County to form one unit. The possibility of uniting with Kewaunee County was generally considered too great by those present because of the distances involved...from Washington Island down to Kewaunee and Luxemburg and places further south such as Stangelville and Tisch Mills.

A Bookmobile was displayed at the Door County County Fair. Miss Jane Livingston, librarian at Sturgeon Bay, got ahead of the cause by borrowing a bookmobile and displaying it at the County Fair during August of 1949. Her theme was "**Wheels of Learning, Keep Them Turning**". She spoke of the virtues of bringing the library to everyone. The week after the fair she took the bookmobile on a county tour: Egg Harbor, Fish Creek, Ephraim, Sister Bay, Baileys Harbor, Jacksonport, Institute, Brussels..."**Wheels of Learning, Keep Them Turning**". After touring the Door County schools Miss Livingston took the bookmobile on a tour of the Kewaunee schools what with Door and Kewaunee Counties being the state's possible choice for the state library demonstration project. She was out to sell first hand what a bookmobile is and the service it offers.

It was announced in the December 4, 1949 Advocate, **“Door and Kewaunee Counties Granted State Bookmobile Demonstration”**. \$28,500 was to be funded by State with \$28,500 to be funded by the two counties. Operating expenses for the project were as follows: One director, two bookmobile librarians and two drivers; plus other expenses: books, vehicle expenses, cataloguers, typist, etc. Door County ended up allotting \$15,000 and Kewaunee \$13,500 = \$28,500 for the counties’ share, which the State would match. Jane Livingston was named Library Head on February 9, 1950. As director, Miss Livingston stated that the regional library personnel will be hired as soon as possible. A budget of \$58,000 was approved with half to be paid by the state.

Granting the Demonstration Project did not necessarily make it a go. The respective County Boards of Supervisors had to vote yes on the project and budget their share of the expenses. Jane and her assistant Robert Pohl had started promoting the project back at the 1949 County Fair and then taking the borrowed display bookmobile on a tour of the rural schools. Ratification of the proposal by the County Boards of Supervisors was scheduled for November 9, 1949. Livingston and Pohl had put in their work by using the borrowed bookmobile and taking it around to the schools in early 1949 and also having it on display at the 1949 county fair. It was reported how Jane and Robert actually took the bookmobile out to a supervisor's rural home who had not seen the demonstration and the wife sent them out with the bookmobile into the woods where her supervisor husband was logging so they could show and explain the project to him.

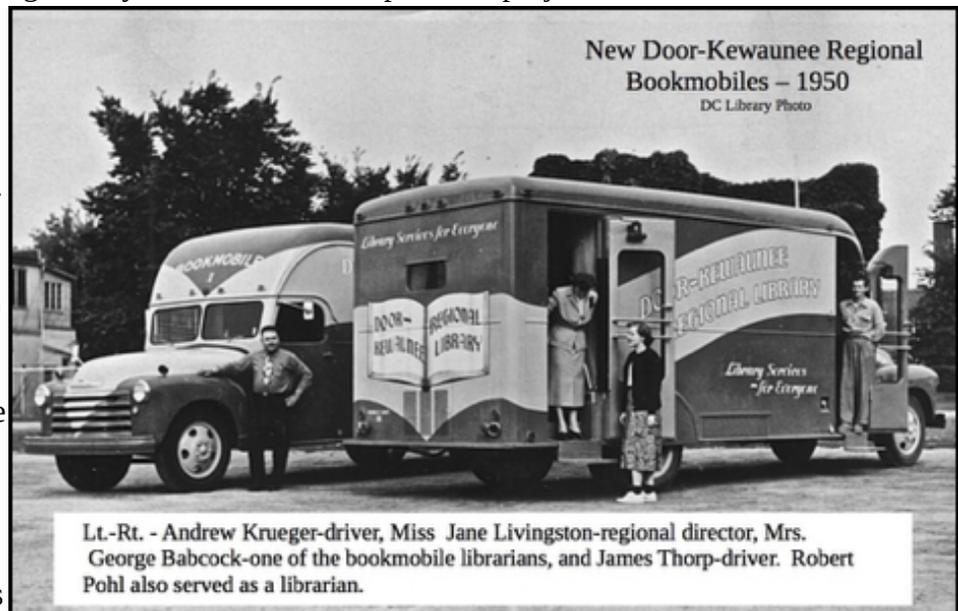
A 'yes' vote from Kewaunee vote was questionable, but early in the day Kewaunee was the first to pass it and Door County quickly followed. The State Commissioner stated that the Library Commission was “betting a lot on the Door-Kewaunee Demonstration Project. Rural Library services in the state in the future rests on this demonstration”. It was a first in the state. Especially for Door County, its newest and proudest achievement was its regional library.



The borrowed bookmobile that Jane Livingston used as a demonstration model at the 1949 county fair and rural schools to educate the County Supervisors before their vote buying into the project in November of 1949.



Jane and her assistant Robert Pohl in the bookmobile.



Lt.-Rt. - Andrew Krueger-driver, Miss Jane Livingston-regional director, Mrs. George Babcock-one of the bookmobile librarians, and James Thorp-driver. Robert Pohl also served as a librarian.

Bids were accepted for two Chevrolet chassis for the regional bookmobiles. Felhofers of Valmy got the Door County bid and Sell Motors in Luxemburg the other. The bookmobiles were completed in Wooster, Ohio and delivery expected about July 1<sup>st</sup>. The loaner bookmobile had visited 82 of the 99 schools in Door and Kewaunee County by April 8, 1950.

The bookmobile project was headquartered out of the Sturgeon Bay Library. Andrew Krueger was the Kewaunee route driver and James Thorp the Door County driver. Mrs. George Babcock and Robert Pohl were librarians. The inside of the bookmobiles could be crowded. The original demonstration project included a driver and a librarian for each bookmobile. Slanted shelves held the books, they were necessary to prevent books from sliding off the shelves when the bookmobile was on the road. A 'checkout' counter was included. There was an entry door and an exit door.



Summer and school year stops could differ. Schedules changed over the years as interest and needs changed. Some of the stops were simply at a crossroads out in the country with people hiking to the stop or coming by bike, car, truck, or maybe even a farmer's tractor or on horseback. These stops are what made for social gatherings and some of the memories that have been expressed to us. Washington Island is in Door County, so that meant a trip by the bookmobile aboard the car ferry Richter. To name just some of Door County's stops: there were all of the villages and places such as; C & W Auto Salvage, Peninsula Center Store, The Mill, Gigot's Store, Garrett Bay, North Bay Cross- road, Bley's Corner in West Jacksonport, even at Peninsula State Park for summer campers.



The Door County Advocate printed numerous accounts of personal bookmobile experiences...Mrs. John Monard, Luxemburg, Wisconsin..."There were several new faces again among the "regulars." Every week I notice two or three people who hadn't been there before. The newcomers of a month or two ago are now among the regulars. The reason is apparent. Where else can one obtain so much for so little? Children's books, so many, so interesting; adult books - romance, adventure, mystery. Fiction of all kinds, cook books, books of manual arts, science, biography - name it and you can have it."

As the first of such a project in the state, the shared bookmobile service brought a good number of dignitaries and visitors to check out its operation and pros and cons. Madison reported a circulation increase of 60% after the first year. Over the 3 year demonstration period, use increased by 160%.

Below are two samples of a weekly schedule, one during the school year, April 19-23 and the other a summer schedule from August 27-31. Note that many of the stops were at public schools.

**Sample  
Door County Library  
Bookmobile Schedules**  
(Door County Advocate)

Bookmobile will stop at the following places the week of **April 19, 1954: (school year)**

**Monday, April 19**

Egg Harbor school 10:30-12:00  
Egg Harbor 12:15-1 30  
Juddville school 1:45- 2:45  
C & W Auto Salvage 3:15- 3:45

**Tuesday, April 20**

Brussels school 9:00-12:00  
Fairland school 1:00-3:00

**Wednesday, April 21**

Morning Star sch. 9:00-10:13  
Hainesville school 10:30-11:15  
Pleasant View sch. 11:30-12:66  
Stevenson Pier sch. 1:00-2:30  
Waniger school 2:45-3:30

**Friday, April 23**

Newport school 10:00-12:00  
Newport store 12:05-12:40  
Gills Rock 12:45- 1:30  
Ellison Bay school 1:45- 2:50  
Ellison Bay 3:00- 3:45  
Fish Creek 4:15- 5:45

Bookmobile will stop at the following places the week of **August 27, 1956: (summer)**

**Monday, August 27**

Groveland sch. 9:-9:30  
Pen. Center store 9:40-10:00  
Pershing sch. 10:10-10:35  
Nippert's store 10:45-11:15  
Juddville 11:30-12:30  
Egg Harbor 12:45-2:00  
Horseshoe Bay 2:15-2:45  
Sunny Point sch. 3:00-3:30

**Tuesday, August 28**

Lincoln grad. sch. 10:30-11:30  
Roosevelt cons. sch. 11:45-1:00  
Rocky Glen sch 1:15-1:45  
Pleasant Rid. Sch. 2:00-2:30  
Fairland 2:45-3:45  
The Mill 4:00-4:40  
(near Brussels)  
Brussels 4:45-5:45

**Wednesday, August 29**

Gigot's Store 10:45-11:15  
Stevenson Pier sch 11:30-12:00  
Little Sturgeon 12:15-1:30  
Jenquin's store 1:45-2:15  
Four Corners sch. 2:30-3:15  
Sugar Creek sch. 3:30-4:15

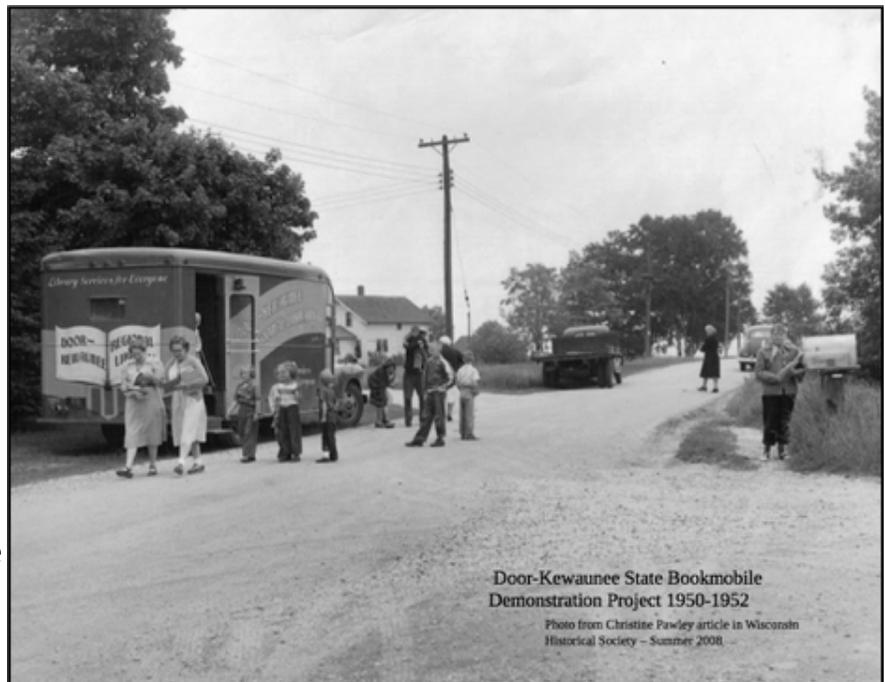
**Friday, August 31**

Gills Rock 9:45-10:45  
Newport store 11:00-12:00  
Garrett Bay 12:30-1:00  
Ellision Bay 1:15-2:30  
Liberty sch. 2:45-3:05  
North Bay crossrd 3:20-4:00



**The project flourished through 1950-51-52...1952 was the end of the State funded demonstration project.** The general election of November 4, 1952 in both Door and Kewaunee County included a referendum question asking whether to continue supporting the bookmobile program, or not; the state funding had run its course. Discussion raised concerns that even with the increase in use, the figures did not bode well for the political future of the bookmobile. In the city libraries of Sturgeon Bay, Algoma and Kewaunee circulation divided evenly between adults and children. But in bookmobile service to the rural population, children constituted 88% of the total in 1951 and 91% in 1952. In 1951 the average child borrowed 23.3 books a year.

Women and girls tended to use the service more than men and boys. BUT, politically in the 1950s who was going to make the decision, the male county supervisors at their county board meetings, or the women and children back home?



Door-Kewaunee State Bookmobile  
Demonstration Project 1950-1952

Photo from Christine Pawley article in Wisconsin  
Historical Society - Summer 2008

There were comments such as my father and I built our farm without the need of books so my kids don't need anymore than what they get in school textbooks. There were also concerns raised over the types of books purchased, what kinds of ideas were they putting in the kids' minds. Ethnic and religious groups also differed in support, or not. One of the Southern Door Catholic priest preached against the bookmobile and its adverse influence on the children even though the bookmobile librarians had never seen him on the bookmobile. This was true of many of the objectors, they had never been on the bookmobile, but because of their ethnic, religious or social status they objected to it, to the extent that they were afraid of it. Christine Pawley's book describes some nasty meetings that Miss Livingston attended to support the bookmobile service. She and her assistant many times took the bookmobile to the meetings and at one, the bookmobile was sabotaged with spark plug wires disconnected on the bookmobile while they were meeting. As was previously mentioned, this was the Cold War period after WWII and during the Korean War, it was the time of McCarthyism and the "witch hunters" on the lookout for subversive and communist activities in the movies, books, media, etc.

The results of the Nov. 4, 1952 referendums whether to continue the operation of the bookmobile without state funding support were; Kewaunee County voted no while Door County voted yes. So the respective County Boards voted as their non-binding referendums suggested. Kewaunee County ended its bookmobile service, Door County voted to continue the service and even went to quickly designate \$30,000 to establish its own Door County Bookmobile Service. Washington Island Township led Door County by showing its support with a ringing endorsement, 330 yes to 85 no – 80% in favor.

Kewaunee's decision led to some repercussions. The Algoma Record-Herald newspaper, hoping to shame and reverse the decision of their County Board of Supervisors printed: "We blush as we write this. Kewaunee residents over 25 years of age have the lowest education median in the state with half of them having completed 8.4 years of schooling". The cities of Algoma and Kewaunee went back to city library status and also chastised the decision of the County Board by imposing a \$3.00 rural fee use card for their libraries. Before the Demonstration Project there was no charge for rural residents to use the Algoma and Kewaunee 'city' libraries. Before the Demonstration Project, Sturgeon Bay was charging 50c for non-city residents, but now as a Door County Service with the bookmobile there was no charge to rural Door County users.

So, Door County was now on its own, financing and operating a county wide bookmobile service. They already had a bookmobile, the one used for the demonstration project. The county hired a recent

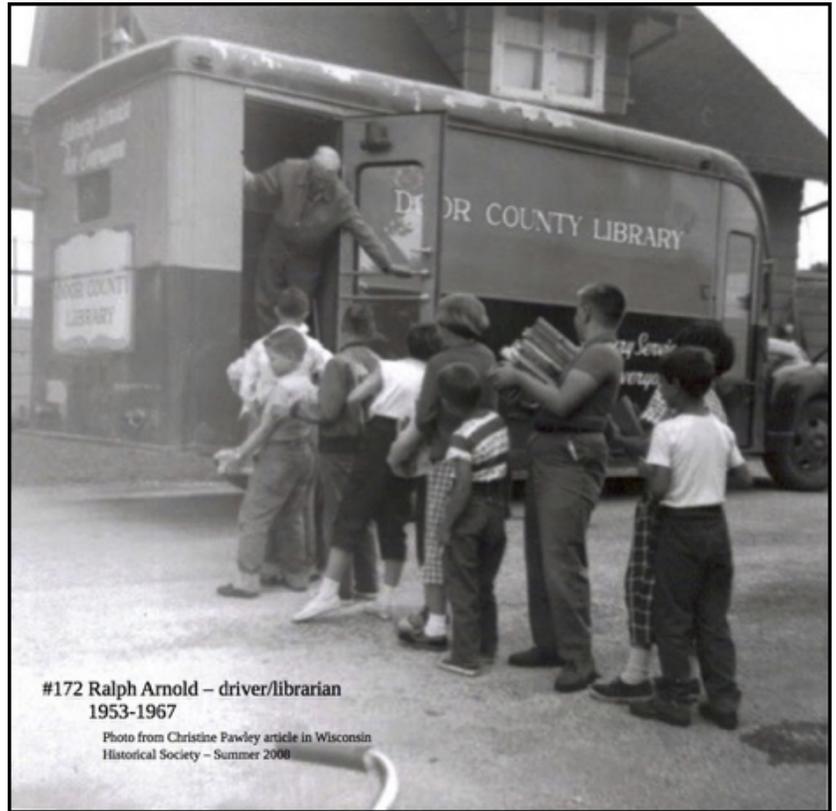
graduate in library science from the University of Wis. Madison, Mr. Eli Ferris. Mr. Ferris and Door County's Bookmobile literally got off to a 'rolling' start on its new driver's first trip on June 23, 1953. Eli rolled over the bookmobile, fortunately all was well except for some needed body work.



Door county's new bookmobile driver had an unfortunate beginning. Eli Ferris of Sturgeon Bay, traveling librarian, tipped over in the bookmobile on his first day out about three miles south of Brussels, Wis., near the Roosevelt school. Ferris said that when the brakes failed the truck went into a ditch and turned over. Door county will try to borrow Kewaunee county's unused bookmobile while its truck is being repaired. —E. W. Camody

Mr. Ralph Arnold, retired chemical engineer, replaced Mr. Ferris. Arnold was hired as both driver and librarian, a job that he and his patrons enjoyed from 1953 to 1967. No longer was there a librarian on the bookmobile. The change was one of the first to help reduce the expenses, and besides Ralph had the disposition of a good librarian, he got along with the many kids he served for 14 years. He was a quiet, likeable person.

The Door County Advocate continued to promote the bookmobile with weekly articles and notices. The bookmobile became an extension of the school's classrooms even to the point of displaying school projects and activities for other schools' children to view. During the summer months the Door County Bookmobile service reached out to our visitors in the county including tourist and our migrant work force.



#172 Ralph Arnold – driver/librarian  
1953-1967

Photo from Christine Pawley article in Wisconsin Historical Society – Summer 2008

There was a need to replace the aging bookmobile, a new bookmobile on a Ford chassis was budgeted for and ordered and in September of 1964 a telegram was received from Wooster, Ohio stating that the new bookmobile was ready for pickup.

Retirement was in line for Arnold in 1967, and at that time there was much discussion from the County Board about discontinuing the service, but that sentiment was met with great protest from the public and the service continued on into the 1990s.

Bob Heilman a veteran of 21 years as a parts manager in a car dealership was hired in 1967 and he was now dealing in books instead automobiles. Like Ralph, Bob was a people person, a necessity to being a good libraian.

Controversy did come up from time to time. The December 3, 1974 Advocate reported such a controversy. The County Supervisors again considered dropping the bookmobile service. The "Letters to the Editor" read, "It seems to many of your readers that the "sacrifice of the bookmobile so that \$5,000 could be allocated to the art center costs deserves more mention than one paragraph as reported in your November 20<sup>th</sup> issue.



#170 – Bob Heilman – driver/librarian  
1967-1987 Karen Castel-Schilse photo

There are priorities involved here and if a poll were taken, we believe you'd find more Door County residents use the bookmobile than an art center.” The December 10<sup>th</sup> issue of the Advocate followed up with, “The county board hasn't met yet, but I suspect that when they do the bookmobile will be restored. The amount of flak that greeted the announced discontinuance was more than anyone anticipated...The protests have shown just how much the bookmobile is used and how highly it is valued by those who do”. And finally the December 23<sup>rd</sup> issue followed with, “the county board took one look at the stack of mail piled up before County Clerk Norman Stegman at Thursday's meeting and voted with one exception to continue the bookmobile for one more year.”

“To be continued for one more year”...The bookmobile service in Door County would actually continue for over 20 years. And over those years many more memories were made of the bookmobile, and rural children expanded their world with the use of the bookmobile services. It should be noted that not only did the bookmobile serve the rural public school kids, but visits were made to St. Joe's, Corpus Christi, and St. Peter's schools in Sturgeon Bay, Zion Lutheran in West Jacksonport, and St. Peter and Paul's in Institute. School stops were expected, but even a little old town hall such as the one for the Township of Union in southern Door County on old highway 57, or the parking lot of Salem Lutheran Church south of Sturgeon Bay, could warrant a spot on the schedule if there was interest and a need.

Times were changing in the 1980s with many of the northern villages putting together branch libraries operating out of the Door County Library in Sturgeon Bay. Technology was changing and this included that of library services. The public unlike the 1950s, when this all started, now had personal use of multi-media forms of communication. Public schools were expanding their own libraries.

Listed below is the circulation of the bookmobile service 30 years after the that listed on page 4. Note that in the earlier schedule there were many public schools on the list while the 1986 circulation below list only one public school. The rural public schools had consolidated and the larger single district elementary schools had developed their own libraries.

### 1986 Bookmobile Circulation

(at 34 stops, 3 years before dropping the service)



#175 Girls on the run to the bookmobile  
Photo from Catherine Freely article in Wisconsin Historical Society - Summer 2008

BayView Terrace	938	Namur	724
Bley's Corner	110	Peninsula Center	487
Brussels	833	Pleasant Ridge	60
Carlsville	99	Rosewood	97
Christian Haven Acad.	38	SCAND (Sister Bay)	106
Community Child Care	101	Sevastopol School	637
Corpus Christi School	4340	Seven Day Advent. Sch.	346
Duval	1204	St.Peters Luth. School	3952
Ellison Bay	1366	S.S. Peter & Paul School	6536
Ephraim	1194	Stevenson Pier	781
Four Corners	1319	Co. TT & Mathy Rd.	88
Institute	-	Co. U & Ebb Tide Place	260
Jacksonport	930	Co. U & Cedar Creek Pl.	522
Kolberg	-	Valmy	942
Liberty	1003	Vignes	360
Maple Ridge Apartment	360	Whitefish Bay	491
Maplewood	276	Zion Lutheran School	2974

In 1988, Bob Heilman retired from driving his aging bookmobile and Gary Bellin took over to serve as driver and librarian. A notice for preparation for a change in bookmobile service was sent out.

TO BOOKMOBILE READERS:

AS YOU KNOW, THE BOOKMOBILE IS READY FOR RETIREMENT. AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, A HARD LOOK AT COSTS AND MUCH DISCUSSION, WE HAVE DECIDED TO CONTINUE VERY LIMITED BOOKMOBILE SERVICE FOR SUMMER.

BRANCH LIBRARIES IN THE NORTH ARE OPEN 5 OR 6 DAYS EACH WEEK IN THE SUMMER. BECAUSE SERVICE IS AVAILABLE THERE, WE WILL CANCEL NORTHERN SERVICE FOR THE MONTHS OF JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST.

THE BOOKMOBILE WILL PROVIDE SERVICE IN SOUTHERN DOOR, BUT WILL GO OUT ONLY ONE DAY A WEEK. STOPS WILL BE COMBINED WITH ONE STOP IN EACH OF FIVE LOCATIONS: UNION, CLAYBANKS, NASEWAUPEE, GARDNER AND BRUSSELS. EACH STOP WILL BE LONGER AND WILL FOLLOW A FOUR-WEEK SCHEDULE. LOCATIONS ARE STARRED ON THE MAP.

THIS SUMMER WE WILL TEST A NEW SERVICE WITH VAN DELIVERY. ONE DAY EACH FOUR WEEKS A MINI-BRANCH WILL OPERATE IN JACKSONSPORT. SERVICE WILL BE FROM A BUILDING WITH BOOKS ON CARTS. WATCH FOR DATE, SITE AND TIME. VISIT THIS MINI-BRANCH TO SEE THIS NEW SERVICE.

PLEASE CALL IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS. 743-6578.

DOOR COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD  
JEANNE DESOTELLE,  
DIRECTOR, DOOR COUNTY LIBRARY  
GARY BELLIN  
BOOKMOBILE LIBRARIAN/DRIVER

It was 1988, the aging 1964 bookmobile would be replaced with a cargo van containing books on carts that would be wheeled into a building. That wasn't the only change, the service now was geared to Door County's aging population at the various senior citizens gathering places...where had all the kids gone?

The "retirement announcement" for the bookmobile was posted on August 4, 1989. The bookmobile retirement party was planned for September 16, 1989 in the parking lot of the court house – 25c was to get you a last walk through, a sad ending to a Door County icon.

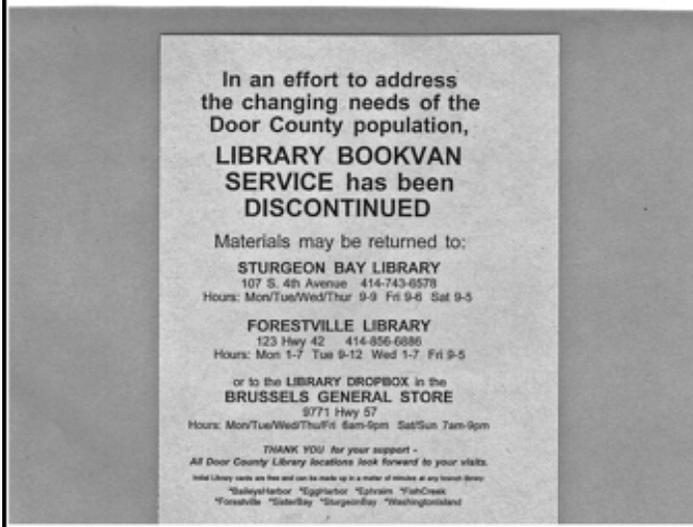
Finally the end came what with consolidated school districts, new main and branch library services, advanced technology, as well as improved school libraries, the era of the bookmobile in Door County was over. The Bookmobile Service as it was known for 40 years slowly came to an end and was replaced with a cargo van in 1990, delivering bookcase carts to what would be basically branch libraries at town halls, post offices, or wherever.



Stops were fewer, where children were once the main customers, now it was mainly ‘seniors’ using the service. There were very few, if any, kids racing their friends to be the first to the bookvan. Gary Bellin was the last bookmobile driver and finally the bookvan driver from 1988 to 1996.



As a last straw, in the Tuesday, October 29, 1996, Door County Advocate it was announced that the bookvan had also taken its last trip. The ‘traveling library’ of Door County was now history.



## **The Future of the Bookmobile**

John Enigl of Carlsville purchased the 1964 retired bookmobile and moved it to his farm where it sat until on November 28, 2014 when the Egg Harbor Historical Society took possession of the bookmobile that had served Door County for the last 25 of the 43 years of bookmobile service. John Enigl, retired teacher, writer for local news, and amateur historian had purchased a big part of history in Door County, and now it was the Egg Harbor Historical Society’s turn to prepare, preserve, and present that history for the people of Door County.

With the bookmobile came countless books of all nature. The shelves were loaded as if the bookmobile was to leave on one of its trips around the county. Surprisingly most books were in fair shape. Just a few of the books were actual library marked books. Evidently, Mr. Enigl attended many garage and estate sales with his eye looking for books. In the collection were Egg Harbor's Dr. Eames' medical books. There were many foreign language books, mainly German and Scandinavian, and a number of books from the late 1800s and early 1900s. Without its books, the bookmobile was moved into a repair shop at Carlsville to start the restoration process on February 19, 2015.

It will be a major process to restore the vehicle and its historic story. Presently the Historical Society's goal is to get the bookmobile back onto the highway and out to the people to tell the bookmobile story and serve as a 'historymobile', a new word in Door County's vocabulary...in 1948, 'bookmobile' was the new word. Every Village has its parades and festivals that the bookmobile could participate in. Visits to the elementary schools for educational programs could be in line. Special programs at the historic Vignes School at Cross Roads, the historic Waniger School at Southern Door Elementary School, and the branch libraries throughout the county would be fun. How about special announced stops at some of the 'old rural' sites like the grocery store in Ellison Bay, or Washington Island?

The restoration of the bookmobile will be a long challenging process. Restoring the 'body' of the bookmobile into a Door County HISTORYMOBILE will be just a start. It's the preparing, preserving, and presenting of history that's of most importance and will be an on going project.

### **Memories From Past Book Worms**

What's become really neat is the memories that have come the EHHS's way since the announced purchase of the bookmobile. The bookmobile is a county treasure owned by the EHHS, with plans to again have it be used by the citizens of the county. A number of those citizens stated the following.....

"It stopped at 'the corner' in West Jacksonport between the bar and the old store, we would sit on the steps of the old store the whole two hours it was there to be sure we saw everyone who came and went." (Lisa Bley Bieri – from Jacksonport Township)

"I would take my five children and a wagon for the books across the highway at the 42/57 intersection to the old Scandia Supper Club when the bookmobile stopped there." (Judi Haen Dexheimer – from Sevastopol Township)

"She went to school at Maple Grove and Cty. F. Her school only had encyclopedias to read and the bookmobile was a highlight in her life. Her brother Russell would load his arms with books to take home....." (Jean Desotelle – from Gibraltar Township)

"I have many fond memories of the bookmobile. I couldn't wait for a new selection of mysteries and teen romances! When it was parked by Haberli's store in Egg Harbor my mom packed me a sandwich and I would sit on the bookmobile and have lunch with Mr. Arnold (the driver)." (Barb Herbst Kramer – from Village of Egg Harbor)

"We didn't have much for reading materials other than textbooks when I started teaching at the Juddville School so the bookmobile was very helpful." (Adeline Haberli Zak – Teacher at Juddville)

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### **Credits**

- Christine Pawley's book, "Reading Places: Literacy, Democracy, and the Public Library in Cold War America"
- Door County Library – Laurie History Room, and Website – Newspaper Archive
- Wisconsin Library Heritage Center
- Photos courtesy of the Egg Harbor Historical Society
- Slideshow by the same name as the book produced and presented by Giz Herbst

**Photos of the 1964  
Door County Bookmobile**

The bookmobile was purchased by the Egg Harbor Historical Society in 2014. The plans of the 'EHHS' is to get the bookmobile restored and back on the road to serve the historical society and Door County as a historymobile.....a new nomenclature. "Making Our History Come Alive For Future Generations".

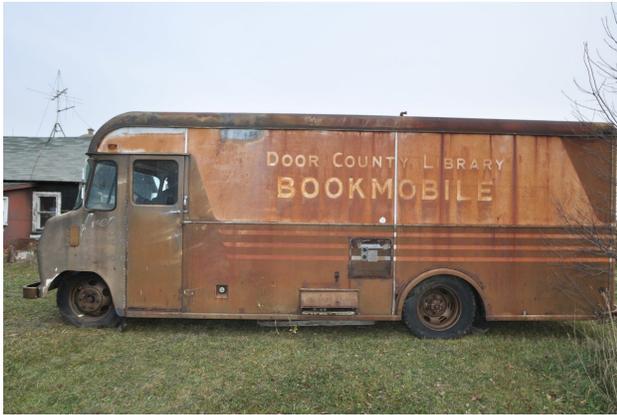


After many years the bookmobile got to really become close to the tree.



The first step in the restoration process was to separate the two.

Appendix (A con't.)



After years of sitting under its protective tree, the bookmobile was towed and on its way to making her into a historymobile.



The interior of the bookmobile with shelves still stacked with books.



Finally, in a garage after so many years. Time for a makeover.

## Appendix B

### Specifications For Fabricating A Bookmobile

Bookmobiles were not vehicles that you could just go to a dealer and purchase off the lot. They were special ordered from speciality manufacturers. One such company was located in Wooster, Ohio.

The Gerstenslager Company of Wooster, Ohio built speciality vehicles such as special firefighting equipment, rescue vehicles and bookmobiles. The company was to fabricate two bookmobile bodies that were to be built on the two Chevrolet chassis provided by Felhofers in Valmy, Door County and Sell Motors of Luxemburg in Kewaunee County, Wisconsin. The bookmobiles were to serve the Door-Kewaunee Counties' state funded free bookmobile library demonstration project for the three year period 1950-51-52.

In 1964 a second such vehicle was ordered for the continuing Door County program. Kewaunee County had opted out of the bookmobile program after 1952. The following specifications were those from 1950 and were for three different classifications; small, medium and large, according to the projected number of volumes that the bookmobile was to carry.

(Thanks to Julie Frank, Lake Ledge Naturalist, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, for finding the information in the University of Illinois Library School)

#### Small Classification

(1000 - 1500 volumes' capacity; 10' - 12' in length from back of driver's seat to rear end; 72-5/8" in width from wall to wall with single rear tires and 86-5/8" with dual rear tires; and 6'3" in height from floor to roof lining at low point.)

#### Standard Equipment

Service doors: side entrance doors extreme front and rear of side panel on right side; 26" door opening equipped with steel safety-plate step-wells, 9" treads, bottom step folding down 12" from ground; doors equipped with ventilating window 12" x 18".

Rear end: panelled solid with 15" x 36", three section windows installed and with center section, 24" wide, ventilating.

Roof: all-steel turret-type roof equipped with two skylights, 18" x 20", constructed of safety plate glass sealed in rubber and waterproof; roof area insulated with 2" Fibreglas insulation and underside of roof beneath insulation lined with 20 gauge auto body sheet steel.

Cab: compartment equipped with bucket-type driver's seat, adjustable and reversible; two windshield wipers, one rear view mirror, one sun visor, safety plate glass in windshield, rubber floor mat.

Lighting: body wired according to commercial electrical standards for 110 volt light system; six 24" fluorescent fixtures installed to give proper light diffusion; outlets for appliances installed front and rear; entry box for outside current located in upper left corner of rear panel with 100' special type extension cord for outdoor use, for connection to outside power source; body wired with 6-8 volt battery current and two dome lights installed for auxiliary use; all exterior marker lights, reflectors, stop and tail lights to meet all ICC requirements and individual state laws.

## Appendix (B con't.)

Heating: cab area equipped with special bus and truck type heater and defroster equipment, furnishing 12,000 BTU when truck motor is running; Hunter gasoline heater, model UH-43 (30,000 BTU), installed on left side of body ahead of wheelhousing, in bottom shelf for proper heat distribution, with grille cover for air intake and exhaust. This heater may be operated independently of the truck motor.

Shelving: wood and steel shelving installed according to ALA standards, pitched at 15 degree angle, and with shelves covered with corrugated rubber mats to hold books in place; special sections include magazine racks, space for children's books and oversize books, and clothes closet in left rear corner.

Charge-out desk: to be built of 1" plywood back of driver's seat; 18" x 36" top covered with battleship linoleum to match floor; card well 12" x 12" built into right side of desk; shelves and drawers beneath desk top; 12" x 18" cupboard installed above desk for supply space.

Floor: double construction with 7/16" long leaf pine sub-floor, 13/16" kiln-dried, center- and end-matched hardwood top floor, and black waterproof paper between floor layers; wood floor covered with heavy duty battleship linoleum, metal bound around all open edges for maximum serviceability, and color of linoleum to harmonize with interior trim; floor level kept as near ground as possible by heavy gauge steel wheelhousings, square in shape and sealed water- and dust-tight.

Painting: one solid color chosen by customer, of highest grade automotive enamel, applied in accordance with standard commercial practice; understructure (including all chassis parts, all exposed body framework parts, and floor understructure) thoroughly coated with heavy asphalt waterproof coating; interior finished in enamel or varnish.

Lettering: applied to right and left side panels, front roof quarter, and rear panel in accordance with customer's approved sketch.

#### Optional Equipment

Gasoline electric light generator: An Onan generator, model 07DH-IR, 750 watt, 115 volt, 60 cycle, may be specified to provide 110 volt light current independent of outside sources. This generator is housed in a special steel compartment, in the rear panel beneath floor level, specially insulated and ventilated to keep noise and heat at a minimum. This generator is controlled by a switch located at the charge-out desk, and 110 volt current is instantly available.

Insulation: In addition to the basic insulation provided by 2" of Fibreglas in the roof area, the same material may be installed in all side wall areas and in the floor area.

Ventilating skylights: The standard safety plate glass skylights may be equipped with special mechanism to render them ventilating. This mechanism is operated by a crank and seals itself in rubber when closed.

Roof ventilators: Evans type motor-driven exhaust ventilators may be installed in the roof to facilitate movement of air; quiet motors and smooth plastic blades make these ventilators practically noiseless. Control switches are mounted on instrument panel.

## Appendix (B con't.)

**Tool box:** A steel compartment may be mounted in the left-hand panel below the floor for storage space, for tools and for necessary service equipment. This compartment is enclosed with a door equipped with continuous type hinges and slam type burglar-proof lock.

**Special paint:** The exterior panels may be painted in more than one color as chosen by the customer.

**Special full vision service doors:** Service doors with full-length safety glass may be secured to give added natural lighting and improved appearance. These doors are equipped with chrome-plated hand bars both outside and inside. Heavy-duty door checks keep doors closed, and night locks secure them when bookmobile is out of service.

**Hand rails:** Chrome-plated hand rails are available to be mounted on the ends of shelving sections at each service door at entrance and exit.

**Adjustable shelving:** All or portions of the shelving may be made adjustable with standard library-type fixtures used to keep equipment uniform.

**Book-ends:** Each shelf may be equipped with specially designed book-ends to keep books firmly in place on the shelves. These book-ends are well engineered, yet simple and inexpensive in construction.

**Seats over wheelhousing:** The wheelhousings, on units where dual rear wheels are used, may be built up to the height of the second book shelf and covered with a hinged, upholstered seat. This seat is covered with textile grain leather to match the driver's seat. This space beneath the seat, created by its added height, may be used for storage.

**Record cabinet:** A cabinet may be built beneath the rear window with shelves to carry a supply of record albums. The top of the cabinet provides space for a record player. The appliance outlet at the rear of the vehicle provides an electrical connection for this purpose.

**Battery charger:** Where a gasoline heater is used without operating the motor, a battery charger is recommended. This equipment may be fastened to the battery posts and plugged into an electrical outlet in the garage. An overnight charge will build the battery up to peak power by morning, and consumes an inexpensive amount of current.

**Special lights:** Deluxe type fluorescent light fixtures may be specified, to improve interior appearance and to secure more diffused light. These may be mounted in two parallel rows or in one center row.

**Sloping rear panel:** To enhance appearance and provide additional storage space the rear panel of the bookmobile may be made to slope outward at a 9 to 12 degree angle. The bottom corner of the panel is turned inward on a 12" radius to conform with modern design. The extra space thus created between the back shelving and the rear-end panel can be utilized for storage. An opening into this space would be provided by a special door in the back panel.

**Step-well covers:** To provide full floor area when side doors are not being used a hinged cover may be installed over the wheel-well opening. In the closed position this cover is flush with the floor and covered with a matching floor material. It is reinforced to carry normal traffic. In the open position the cover

## Appendix (B con't.)

swings up and is secured against the end of the shelf section. A chrome-plated hand railing is mounted on the cover to facilitate entry when door is opened. The opposite side thus exposed is also covered with serviceable matching material, bound with chrome moulding.

Chassis Specifications

Capacity of 1000 volumes, 10' body; one ton conventional chasis rating; wheel-base of about 137" and cab-to-axle length of about 60"; 7.00 x 18 (dual rear) tires; 7 leaf, 39-13/16" semi-elliptic front springs and 2 stage, 12 leaf, semi-elliptic rear springs; double acting front shock absorbers; I beam type front axle and full floating rear axle; hypoid gears with a ratio of 5.14 to 1; hydraulic service brakes, 12" x 2" in front, 14" x 2-1/2" in rear, and with a braking area of 248 square inches; hand brake with a braking area of 147 square inches; 4 forward speeds transmission; head, parking, tail, and stop lights; 2 heavy duty truck batteries of 150 ampere hours each, hooked in parallel; and heavy duty, 50 ampere generator with low cut-in.

Capacity of 1500 volumes, 12' body; one ton, forward control chassis rating; wheelbase\*; tires\*; 7 leaf, 39-13/16" x 2", semi-elliptic front springs and 2 stage, 12 leaf, semi-elliptic rear springs; shock absorbers\*; axles\*; brakes\*; transmission\*; lights\*; batteries\*; and generator\*.

Medium Classification

(1500-2500 volumes' capacity; 15' - 16' in length; 86-5/8" in width; and 6'6" in height.)

Standard Equipment

Service doors\*; rear end\*; roof\*; cab: cab compartment equipped with two bucket type seats, one for driver and one for helper, both seats are adjustable and reversible. Two windshield wipers, two rear view mirrors, two sun visors, safety plate glass in windshield, and rubber floor mat.

Lighting\* except that eight 24" fluorescent fixtures are used in this class of vehicle; heating\*; shelving\*; charge-out desk\*; supply cupboard: back of driver's seat with upper and lower sections, and each section of two shelves and a door with friction catch. Top of lower section to be of equal height to top of charge-out desk, and opens out to meet charge-out desk, forming full service area across front of bookmobile.

Floor\*; painting\*; lettering\*; battery compartment: relocated, with special door, in side panel or cab floor for convenient servicing.

Optional Equipment

Gasoline electric light generator\*; insulation\*; ventilating skylights\*; roof ventilators\*; tool box\*; special paint\*; special full vision service doors\*; hand rails\*; adjustable shelving\*; book-ends\*; seats over wheelhousing\*; record cabinet\*; battery charger\*; special lights\*; sloping rear panel\*; step-well covers\*; auxiliary desk: where the bookmobile librarian desires to divide the service area an auxiliary desk may be built at the rear of the bookmobile similar to that used in the front, and with a bucket type seat as used in front or an upholstered two-passenger seat built directly beneath the rear window.

## Appendix (B con't.)

Outside service panels and shelving: where added book capacity is desired without increasing the overall dimensions of the bookmobile the exterior panels of the body may be converted into two section doors which open into special shelves facing outward. These doors are equipped with braces which hold them safely in position when open, and with a slam type lock with removable handle. The upper door section is equipped with a fluorescent light fixture to provide light for dusk or night operation. This feature will increase book capacity by 25%.

Chassis Specifications

Capacity of 1500 - 2500 volumes; 1-1/2 ton conventional, flat face cowl chassis rating; wheelbase of about 179" - 185", and cab-to-axle length of 108" - 115"; 7.50 x 20, 8-ply (dual rear) tires; 7 leaf, 39-13/16" x 2", semi-elliptic front springs; 10 leaf, 46" x 2-1/2", semi-elliptic rear main springs, and 6 leaf, 31" x 2-1/2", semi-elliptic rear auxiliary springs; shock absorbers\*; axles\*; hypoid gears with a ratio of 6.17 to 1; hydraulic service brakes, 14" x 2" in front, 16" x 3" in rear, and with a braking area of 330 square inches; hand brake with a braking area of 215 square inches; transmission\*; lights\*; batteries\*; generator\*.

Capacity of 1500 - 2500 volumes; 1-1/2 ton, cab-over-engine, flat face cowl chassis rating; wheelbase of about 158" - 161" and cab-to-axle length of 108" - 115"; 9 leaf, 40" x 2" front springs; 10 leaf, 46" x 2-1/2" rear main springs and 6 leaf, 31" x 2-1/2" rear auxiliary springs, shock absorbers\*; axles\*; hypoid gears with a ratio of 6.17 to 1; brakes as in the paragraph above; transmission\*; lights\*; batteries\*; generator\*.

Large Classification

(2500 - 3500 volumes' capacity; 18' - 24' in length: 86-5/8" in width; and 6'8" in height.)

Standard Equipment

Service doors\*; rear end: panelled solid with 18" x 48" three section window installed, and with center section, 24" wide, ventilating.

Roof\*; lighting\* except that ten 24" fluorescent fixtures are used in this class of vehicle; heating\* except that in units longer than 20 ft. two model UE-43 heaters are used, one on each side of body and located to give proper heater distribution; shelving\*; charge-out desk\*; supply cupboard\*; floor\*; painting\*; lettering\*; battery compartment\*.

Optional Equipment

Gasoline electric light generator\*; insulation\*; ventilating skylights\*; roof ventilators\*; tool box\*; special paint\*; special full vision service doors\*; hand rails\*; adjustable shelving\*; book-ends\*; seats over wheelhousing\*; record cabinet\*; battery charger\*; step-well covers\*.

Chassis Specifications

Capacity of 2500 - 3000 volumes, 18' - 24' body; 13,000 - 17,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight, conventional chassis rating; wheelbase of about 190" - 229" and cab-to-axle length of 118" - 158"; 8.25 x 20 (dual rear) tires; 7 leaf, 45" x 2", semi-elliptic front springs; 10 leaf, 52" x 2-1/4" rear main springs, and 6 leaf

## Appendix (B con't.)

rear auxiliary springs; shock absorbers\*; axles\*; hydraulic service brakes, 14-1/8" x 2" to 16" x 2-1/2" in front and 16" x 3" in rear; hand brake; transmission\*; lights\*; batteries\*; generator\*.

Capacity of 2500 - 3000 volumes, 18' - 24' body; 13,000 - 17,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight, cab-over-engine chassis rating; wheelbase of about 170" - 212" and cab-to-axle length of 118" - 158"; 8.25 x 20 (dual rear) tires; springs as in above paragraph; transmission\*; lights\*; batteries\*; generator\*.

#### Semi-Trailer Classification

(3,000 - 5,000 volumes' capacity; 24' - 32' in length; 86-5/8" in width; and 7'0" in height.)

#### Standard Equipment

Service doors: double doors in low center of right hand side panel of body; each door 26" wide and with full-vision glass, chrome-plated hand rails inside and outside, heavy duty door checks, and night locks; each door opening equipped with a steel safety place step-well, 9" risers to steps with bottom step folding down 13" from ground; and chrome-plated guard rails flanking step-wells on interior.

Rear end\*; roof\* except that four skylights are used in this class of vehicle; lighting\* except that twenty 15" fluorescent fixtures are used in this class of vehicle; heating: three Hunter gasoline heaters, model UH-43 (30,000 BTU), installed in bottom shelf area with steel grille concealing heater and providing for intake and exhaust of air; these heaters are powered by batteries connected to truck generator and have battery charger for use in replenishing stored power.

Shelving\* except that clothes closet is adjacent to charge-out desk; charge-out desk: a double-duty desk (of standard library specifications) built opposite the service door to control the entire book area.

Floor\*; painting\*; lettering\*.

#### Optional Equipment

Gasoline electric light generator: An Onan generator, model 105BE-1A, 1500 watt, 2 cycle, 115 volt, 60 cycle engine, may be specified to provide 110 volt current for lights and appliances. This two-cylinder model is quiet and free from vibration, and is entirely automatic and starts when a 60 watt incandescent lamp load (or its equivalent) is exerted on the line. This generator is housed in a special steel compartment, in the rear panel beneath floor level, insulated and ventilated to keep noise and heat at a minimum.

Insulation\*; ventilating skylights\*; roof ventilators\*; tool box\*; special paint\*; adjustable shelving\*; book-ends\*; seats over wheelhousing\*; record cabinet\*; battery charger\*; special lights\*; sloping rear panel\*.

#### Chassis Specifications

Capacity of 3000 - 5000 volumes, 24' - 32' body; 16,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight, conventional chassis rating; wheelbase of about 137"; 8.25 x 20 (dual rear) tires; 9 leaf, 40" x 2", semi-elliptic front springs; 10 leaf, 46" x 2-1/2", semi-

## Appendix (B con't.)

7

elliptic rear main springs and 6 leaf, 31" x 2-1/2", semi-elliptic rear auxiliary springs; shock absorbers\*; axles\*; hypoid gears with a ratio of 6.17 to 1; hydraulic service brakes, 14" x 2" in front, 16" x 3" in rear; transmission\*; lights\*; batteries\*; generator\*.

Capacity of 3000 - 5000 volumes, 24' - 32' body; 16,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight, cab-over-engine chassis rating; wheelbase of about 110"; 8.25 x 20 (dual rear) tires; springs as in above paragraph; shock absorbers\*; axles\*; hypoid gears with a ratio of 6.17 to 1; brakes as in above paragraph; transmission\*; lights\*; batteries\*; generator\*.

## Appendix C Eventual Demise of the Bookmobile

One of the elements that was a demise for the bookmobile system was the development of branch libraries throughout Door County. These smaller libraries working under the direction of the Door County Library located in Sturgeon Bay appeared in many of the villages including Egg Harbor. Egg Harbor's branch was first set up in the Stage Coach Junction complex in 1969, Ruth Kiehnau was in charge of the unit.

The Stage Coach Junction complex was part of what was once John Bertschinger's home, lumber yard and feed mill operation in the center of Egg Harbor. The library was housed along with other businesses in the old remodeled feed mill. Harold Dannhausen of Palatine, Ill., purchased the property in 1967. He planned making the property into a business center with provision for space for leases, the library ended up taking one of the spaces. The name Stage Coach Junction came from a business the Dannhausens ran, a touring horse drawn stage coach ride.



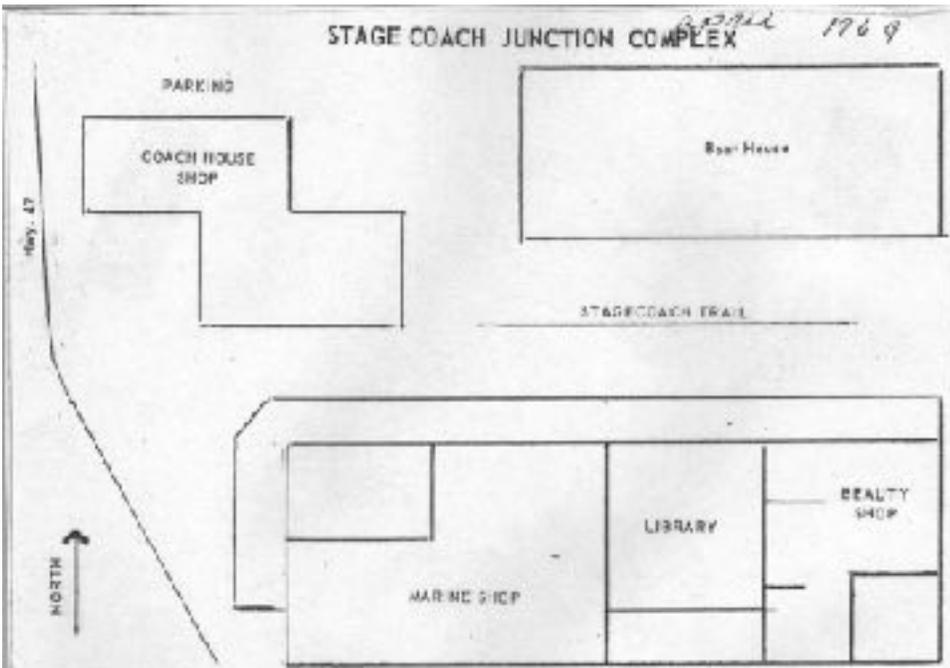
**EGG HARBOR LIBRARY** is the latest in branch libraries of the Door county system. In charge of the unit which is located in the Stagecoach Junction building is Mrs. Donald (Ruth) Kiehnau, shown above with part of the books available. This is National Library Week. Visit the nearest library unit and get acquainted with the advantages waiting for you.  
—Shea



Over time the branch libraries through the county budget and donations provided appreciated services. In November of 1984 the village along with donations from the Bertschinger family proposed the building of a community center, (Paul Bertschinger Community Center). It would include a library which would serve the community into the start of 2018 when the new Library/Kress Center was completed.

STAGE COACH JUNCTION COMPLEX

203111 1969



Above is a plan of STAGE COACH JUNCTION located in Egg Harbor. In a separate building is a display of boats and trailers. In the long building is located a complete line of Evinrude Outboard Motors, Outdoor furniture, Samsonite and Gold Medal Wicker line, Butterfly Seal Beets made in Kamaha, Tractor equipment for Garden tractors. This is known as the Marine Shop. Next is the Egg Harbor Branch of the Deer County Library with about 2500 volumes. This room is all carpeted. Next is a modern, newly decorated Beauty Shop with a spacious waiting room. Mary Lohere is the Operator. Next is the Coach House in a separate building which contains Gifts for every occasion, exciting new gifts for the bathroom and new ideas in Kitchenware. Interesting designs for dining, Toddler wash & wear clothing. You are invited to come in and browse anytime. This is a welcome addition to Egg Harbor.



Egg Harbor Lions and Women's clubs have given \$200 and \$300, respectively to the library campaign. Mike Murphy is Lion treasurer and Mrs. Dan Kiehnau is Women's club treasurer and also Egg Harbor librarian. The treasurers gave their checks to Mrs. Henry Gilson, who is helping to coordinate the Egg Harbor area drive. --Advocate

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The Door County Bookmobile  
was a welcome place, a place  
where inquisitive children  
could come and safely  
explore their world