



After 37 years, Gerry Noble says she's loved every minute of the Lebanon Library.

### Lebanon Library Director Observes:

# Libraries Becoming Automated

Gerry Noble, director of the Lebanon Public Library, says the best part of her job is "getting people and books together."

And, she's been doing that since March 21, 1946.

There was a break, 1965 to 1969, when her husband was transferred and she worked at the Michigan State Library in Lansing, Mi.

"I cried all the way to Lansing" and, upon learning of the transfer back, "felt I was lucky enough to get back," the director remembers.

Gerry came to Lebanon from Chillicothe during WW II. "After the war was over," she relates, "I had not planned on working, but they needed somebody at the library. They asked me to come in part-time, but I never have worked part-time," she says with a laugh.

She's been head librarian, or director as she is now called, since 1949.

Her responsibilities include supervising the staff, implementing library policies, making the library board aware of special problems, preparing special reports as requested, coordinating meetings for SWORL (Southwestern Ohio Rural Libraries), participating in professional and community activities and presenting state annual reports and monthly local reports.

"The main function of the director," she maintains, "is to plan and administer the programs of the library."

Or, as she so aptly puts it, "I do a bit of everything. I've even done a bit of janitor work in my day."

In the 30-some years, Gerry has been with the Lebanon Library, she admits to observing changes -- changes in the library and changes in readers.

"We've grown quite a lot," she states, "not physically, as you can see," she adds pointing to the full house of books. "Our circulation has grown."

"I remember one day counting the number of books circulated for that day when it was less than 75 and the librarian said we had had a good day," she recalls. "If we don't circulate 500 in a day now, I feel we've had a poor day."

The librarian observes there has been "a big change in public awareness of the library as an information center. 'Libraries are doing much more public service acts,' she claims. She points out the Lebanon Library has registered voters and provided income tax forms "when there weren't any to be found."

The library has also added the distribution of films to organizations and clubs to its offerings.

"We're just busier generally in all areas," she remarks.

Readers, she says, are more interested in the do-it-yourself books than they once were. "You wouldn't believe the requests we get for books on car repairs."

"I think," she reflects, "people are reading to be informed almost more than for recreation nowadays."

"And," she agrees, "it is somewhat a reflection on the times. When the economy is down, the library is busier."

Gerry's favorite task, though she may not call it that, is that of

working with the public. "Although I don't get to do it so much anymore," she notes, "I try to work on the desk each day."

Things have changed on the desk since her early days as a Lebanon librarian. "There was a time when we knew everybody who came in and their card numbers without looking them up, that's not so true anymore," she contends.

Things will continue to change, she guesses.

"There's so much automation now in charging things out," she confirms. And she sees that continuing into the future.

As for the future of the Lebanon Library, a new addition is in the making.

"We have high hopes for that addition," she proclaims, "we just have to raise the money somehow."

The addition will include more book space, meeting rooms and extra staff space, the librarian hints.

"There will be some money coming into Ohio on the Jobs Program," she says, "I hope we're eligible."

When asked if she were to choose careers again, would she make the same choice her answer was a bold, "I certainly would!"

"I've just loved every minute of it, but would not have enjoyed it nearly so much without the staff I've had over the years or the supportive library boards," she continues.

"I used to tell them (the library board of trustees) I should pay them for letting me work here," she concludes.