



Mrs. Gertrude Melbourne

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR

For a librarian who intended to never be one, Gertrude Melbourne does a pretty fine job keeping the bustling Bradford Public Library on an even keel.

An avid reader, Mrs Melbourne is charged with selecting all the books that are stocked in the 5,000 book library located on John St.

It's not an easy task as she must keep a weather eye out for books in demand and at the same time select books that she feels will suit the tastes of her borrowers.

Right now, readers are enthusiastic about books dealing with the occult sciences--witchcraft and the like.

Most of the older readers enjoy reading light fiction but Mrs. Melbourne finds that more and more people are demanding non-fiction books to satiate a hunger for knowledge.

It all began back in 1933 when Mrs. Melbourne came to Bradford from her home-

town of Creemore, and never got a chance to return.

She married Bill Melbourne and raised four children in the intervening years. Bill gave up his transport business in 1943 and the family moved to a farm on the Sixth concession of West Gwillimbury in the Scotch Settlement.

"I'd never farmed in my life and it was a whole new experience... one that I'll never forget," said Mrs. Melbourne.

Her interest in books started when she came to Bradford. In those days the library was located in the Evans Block on Holland St.

"I was their best customer but I never dreamed that some day I would be the librarian," she said.

In 1965 the Melbournes decided to give up farming and the couple sold the farm and moved to Bradford. Mrs. Melbourne was asked to take over the librarian's post after Miss Birdie Webb retired. She started as an

assistant to Miss Webb, and never looked back.

"It's a hard job buying books but we try to get the books that people want," she said. "We don't want any lemons on the shelf."

Right now, the library has 6,000 volumes on the shelves and in storage. Last year more than 19,000 were circulated and already in the month of January more than 2,000 have been circulated as more and more people use the library.

And as a librarian, how many books does she read?

Her current rate is about one a week but she reads scores of synopses to try and determine what the borrowers would enjoy.

In the future, Mrs. Melbourne would like to see the library incorporate a film and audio visual service.

Right now she just enjoys meeting the people especially the children.