

EARLY LOUISVILLE LIBRARIES

the Chamber of Commerce; but business and professional men, a little while back so generous, now were cold and unsympathetic. There is record of legislative permission in 1847 to change the name of the defunct Mercantile Library Association to "the President, Directors, and Company of the Louisville Library, authorized to carry a capital stock of \$25,000 in 1,000 shares of \$25 each."(21)

Durrett relates that Thomas Anderson, William B. Belknap, Isaac Everett, and Grandison Spratt endeavored to place the shares in the enterprise, but with only partial success; and "it was not long before the books began to be a burden to the stockholders." Toward the close of 1849 a committee composed of Chapman Coleman, former member of the Mercantile Library Association, and James Traube sought a conference with representatives of the city government about what should be done with the library. The city was petitioned to erect a library building, sixty feet long and thirty feet wide, on the northeast corner of the Courthouse lot. Historically this is significant--it was the first agitation in Louisville of the idea that a library, like schools, should be a municipal responsibility.(22)

The city refused to put up a new building; but subsequent conferences led to its agreement, on July 1, 1850, to accept conveyance of the library and house it in the old Courthouse building at Sixth and Jefferson Streets, or in some other suitable building, and keep it open to shareholders, subscribers, and visitors on payment of reasonable assessments.

The city first appointed as directors of the