

## **Library Creates Connections**

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Throughout history, public libraries have contributed to the lifelong education and connection of the citizens and communities they serve.

Established in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC in Egypt, the Library of Alexandria was the most important “library of the ancient world.” The Imperial Library of Constantinople had 120,000 volumes and was the largest library in Europe. It was rebuilt several times due to fires. In England, The Francis Triggée Chained Library was established in 1598. It still exists today, and is referred to as the “forerunner of the public library.”

The founding of what some consider to be the first actual public libraries were built in New York and Boston anywhere from 1713 – 1725. After the Civil War, the number of public libraries in the United States expanded. Newly formed women’s clubs were often the champions. They contributed their own collections of books, led fund raising campaigns and sought financial support. Their efforts resulted in the establishment of 75–80 percent of the libraries across the country. With the financial support of American philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, over 2,500 Carnegie libraries were built by 1929. The U. S. Library of Congress, established in 1800, is the largest library in the world. Collections include: over 162 million items on approximately 838 miles of bookshelves; more than 38 million books/print materials; 3.6 million recordings; 14 million photographs; 5.5 million maps; 7.1 million pieces of sheet music and 70 million manuscripts.

In Columbus, the ever-changing progress of the public library started with a “library association” in the 1870’s, which established a lending library. In the 1890’s, the Columbus Woman's Club sought pledges of financial support and donations of books. The City Council allowed the Woman's Club to add bookcases in the City Council chambers to be used as a public library. A small Carnegie Library was built in 1915 and expanded in 1961. That space was also outgrown. In 1977, a former Nebraska Public Power District building was purchased and remodeled and serves as the library’s present location. In the span of about 40 years along with the progress that Columbus has experienced, the current space has presented some

limitations and challenges. Our library, as well as others, will be impacted by changes in service trends and technology for years to come. Planning is ongoing in finding ways to meet these challenges and in funding a new location.

The Columbus Public Library plans and provides for varied and valued, current and future, resources and services for all age groups. Visit and join your library; participate in children's story times, author talks, book discussions, cultural and educational programs, performance and art exhibits, and get assistance in using government services. Digital literacy and equitable access is critical to every community. Check out all that's available and attend Tech Tuesdays. Individual appointments can be booked with a librarian.

Stay connected to your community and discover all that the Columbus Public Library has and plans to offer. Visit in person or online at: [www.columbusne.us/library](http://www.columbusne.us/library) -- Connecting People and Ideas.