

History



The original planning of the Dickinson Free Library was begun in 1908 by the first library board consisting of John F. Davis, Dr. V. H. Stickney, Father Robstenick, R.H. Johnson, and W. L. Richards. This original board, now known as the Dickinson Library Association, wrote to Andrew Carnegie proposing the building of the library with an original gift estimate of \$15,000, further reduced to \$12,500. A library tax was submitted to the people of Dickinson on April 6, 1908, and passed by a vote of 576 to 140. Butler & Soules was

awarded the building contract for \$9760 on October 29, 1908. W.S. Russell drew up the plans and specifications. On September 10, 1909, Josephine Hargrave was elected as the first librarian at a salary of \$60 per month. The library is located at the corner of 2nd Avenue West and 3rd Street. The original book collection consisted of about 1000 volumes chiefly donated by the Commercial Club, the public schools from the community, and other generous donations. The library was opened for circulation on Monday, January 3, 1910.

During the years 1910 to 1926, the library entertained various librarians who facilitated the library for short terms lasting from 1 to 4 1/2 years. In 1926 Gertrude Voldal became the librarian, dedicating herself for 36 years, retiring on April 5, 1962. In 1928 there were approximately 6700 volumes contained in the library. When Miss Voldal resigned in 1962, there were approximately 21,000 volumes housed in the library.

In April 1938 work began on the west wing addition—a WPA building project. The plans were drafted by L.W. Veigel. The project was completed in 1939. Open house for the public was held in March 1940. The cost of the new addition was \$21,246.65; labor was furnished by the WPA and the cost of materials (approximately \$7,900) was paid by the city. The new wing is 20 by 40 feet with a full basement. The main floor added to the adult space and the basement provided children's space. The original interior was also remodeled and redecorated with new floor covering and light fixtures in the remodel/addition project.

In 1956, the library interior was redecorated. There were approximately 19,000 volumes housed in the library at this time.

An east addition was constructed in 1975 for \$224,541, adding 5500 square feet of space.

In 1986, the windows were replaced in the original building and WPA (west addition), along with the renovation of the existing basement meeting room.

To better serve our rural patrons, it was decided that some sort of mobile library was in order. In 1982, the Dickinson Eagles Aerie 2328 donated the first new bookmobile van. Rural area routes were established to Stark and Billings counties.



A project Library Renovation Phases I and II were completed during 1989-90 which included; painting, carpet replacement, electrical work, refinishing the woodwork, restoring the dome and the leaded glass over the original entryway, replacing desks and history cabinets, landscaping, sidewalks, and drainage system replacement.

The Friends of the Library Garden Plaza entrance, located on 2nd Avenue West, is ground level and is accessible to the elevator. The beautifully landscaped plaza features cast stone benches, trees purchased by donors, and a newly laid stamped cement to provide better traction in the winter months and wet periods. The “Grand Opening and Renovation Celebration” was held in September 2007 with remarks and tours of the new/renovated facility.



In the fall of 2009, the house and lot across the street to the north from the Library were purchased by the Library Foundation. A new and larger parking lot will be constructed on this plot. Demolition of the existing house was done in April 2010. The construction bid was awarded to Tooz Construction and was completed in late October 2010. Landscaping of the surrounding areas was begun in the fall of 2011 and was completed in the spring of 2012.

In the fall of 2012, an amplification system was installed by Tricorne Audio Systems to enhance our paging system.