

Library History

In the spring of 1896, a group of Canastota citizens began a rally for a public library. They consulted with the Board of Regents and soon steps were underway to establish a facility for the village. By August of 1896, the local school board had appointed a library board and had voted to start the library with a fund of \$200. New York State matched these funds and private subscriptions also added to the kitty.

An agreement was reached with Miss Julia Perkins to furnish a room and to care for the books. The Canastota Library officially opened on September 4, 1896 in Miss Perkin's home (which became the White Elephant Restaurant in the 1950s). When the library first opened, its collection consisted of 774 books and 11 magazine subscriptions.

The Board of Regents issued the library's charter on October 15, 1896, establishing the Canastota Public Library as a school district library.

The popularity of the library soon demanded more space. In 1902, the Carnegie Fund offered the village \$10,000 for the construction of a new facility. Carnegie's stipulation was that the community raise \$1,000 per year for the maintenance of the building and the purchase of library equipment. A special election was held and both propositions were passed by a 341-25 vote. Plans for a new building were quickly underway.

A plot of land at the corner of Center and Main Streets was purchased from Clarence P. Colton for \$900. As it turned out, this new site was a mere quarter mile from Miss Perkin's Center Street home. The Syracuse architect Archimedes Russell was commissioned to design the facility and construction was completed by William Funda and Dellamonica Brothers of Syracuse.

Nearly 300 people attended the opening of the new library in 1903.

More Recently:

- 1951: First major library renovation. "Antiquated" furnishings from the 1900s Were replaced. (If we only knew then what we know now!)
- 1960: Canastota Public Library joins the "Tri-County System," which is now known as the Mid-York Library System
- 1984: Library Automation. Bar codes are added to all materials and the Mid-York on-line catalog
- 1988: Second major library renovation. Basement renovations result in new meeting Rooms, staircase to lower level and repaired ceilings.
- 1993: Elevator installed.

- 1996: 100th Birthday of Library Charter.
- 1998: Minor renovations including new carpeting and repainting on main level. Graphical Internet terminals provided for the public.
- 2003: Grand Re-Opening Gala to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of our Carnegie Library Building.
- 2004: Stairs at the front entrance were replaced and the railings were redesigned and built to match the transom window pattern of the building.
- 2006: The Local History Room was reorganized.
- 2008: Circulation Desk was renovated and the Lawson Room Kitchen was renovated.
- 2010: The Magazine Room was re-established as “Pete’s Place” in memory of long-time Library employee, Pete Leggett. The room houses our DVD, Science Fiction and AudioBook collections. The Magazine collection was relocated to the Fiction Section.
- 2012: Public Computer Center Training with Mid-York Staff for three months led to Establishment of a computer center on the main floor with three public laptops and a printer.
- 2013: Second floor Children’s Room was renovated with fresh paint and a new floor plan for the collection. The wall to wall carpeting was removed and the hardwood floors were refinished. New mobile shelving was added and wheels installed on tables and book shelves for easy re-arrangement for programming efforts. Renovations were paid for by the generous donations of local residents. The room was named the Chariton Memorial Children’s Room in memory of long-time director, Helen Chariton.