



Bartholomew County Public Library



A Brief History of Bartholomew County Public Library

August 1894 The Columbus School Board authorized a levy to fund a public library.

February 1899 Columbus City Council made two rooms available in the City Building for library purposes.

August 1899 The Columbus Library opened to the public with Jennie Elrod, Librarian and Josie Sayre, Assistant.

December 1901 The two-room library was serving 9,000 residents of Columbus, and its holdings included 4,500 volumes. Annual budget was \$1,500. Funding for a library building was sought from Andrew Carnegie who replied on December 30, 1901 with a donation of \$15,000 for the construction of a library building.

January 1902 The Commercial Club appointed a committee to assist the School Board in securing a library site. The corner of 5th at Mechanic (now Lafayette Avenue) was chosen. J.W. Gaddis of Vincennes (IN) was chosen as the architect for the Carnegie building.

June 1, 1903 Dedication of the Carnegie Library was held.

1922 Library service was extended to all Bartholomew County residents.

1923 The library was re-named the Columbus-Bartholomew County Library. Various businesses in the town of Hope served as library "stations" from this time until 1966.

1959 Responsibility for levying the tax and maintaining the library was transferred from the school board to a separate city-county board of control. County-wide Bookmobile service was established.

1962 The library reorganized as Bartholomew County Library with a seven-member board of trustees.

1963 I.M. Pei was chosen as the architect for a new library building to be built on property adjacent to the Carnegie library building. The land currently occupied by the Main Library and the Visitors Center was donated to Bartholomew County Public Library by J.Irwin Miller and his family,

June 1966 Hope Branch Library acquired rented space on the west side of the Hope Town Square.

November 1966 Construction began on the present Main Library building.

October 1969 The Main Library, known as the Cleo Rogers Memorial County Library, was opened. Columbus Subregional of Talking Books for the Blind and Physically Handicapped was established.

April 1971 The Large Arch, by sculptor Henry Moore, was donated to the library by Mr. and Mrs. J. Irwin Miller.

May 1971 The dedication ceremony for the Main Library was held.

1980 Bartholomew County Public Library joined the OCLC consortium which is now known as WorldCat. Technical Services became the first department to be equipped with work space computers.

1983 A Macintosh "Lisa" was the first computer available for public use at the Main Library.

1985 The library system was re-named the Bartholomew County Public Library.

August 1986 Construction began on an addition to the main library. James K. Paris was the lead architect.

June 1987 The new addition including an Indiana Room plus an expanded nonfiction and reference area was opened.

October 1990 Automated circulation, public access terminals, and dial-up catalog were established.

October 1994 Planning began for a new Hope Branch Library. Deborah Berke was hired as the architect.

June 1998 Hope Branch Library on the east side of the Town Square was dedicated.

July 1998 The new Hope Branch Library began service to the public.

September 1998 The library website www.barth.lib.in.us was established.

1999 The online public catalog became accessible via the library website.

2004 Online databases were added to the library website.

2008 Downloadable books and music were introduced.

January 2011 BCPL entered into Reciprocal Borrowing privileges with more than 160 other Indiana public libraries.

October 2011 The current Bookmobile was delivered and began serving 40 stops in townships through the county.

2012 BCPL began promotions via social media including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, as well as an app for Apple and Android devices.

2013 Online services offering downloadable movies and downloadable magazines were introduced.

July 2013 The Teen Services area at the Main Library was created.

June 2014 The renovation of the Library Plaza was completed. Modern Totem, sculpted by Martin Beach, was dedicated.

April 2015 The Digital Underground media lab for video, music, and computer creativity was open to the public at the Main Library. It is now known as BCPL Create.

2018 The Book Express program began. It makes neighborhood stops to help residents in low-income neighborhoods foster a love of reading through the distribution of new and gently used free books. Book Express has expanded its services and is now the BCPL Express.

Today Bartholomew County Public Library serves more than 80,000 residents and houses over 180,000 items at its Columbus, Hope, and Bookmobile locations, including books, audiobooks, magazines, and an ever-expanding Library Of Things of games, instruments, craft equipment, and much more. Helpful online resources and downloadable books, music, movies, and magazines are available 24/7.

Fourteen librarians have served as Library Director:

Jennie Elrod	1899 – 1902
Annie Owen	1902
Josie Sayre	1902 – 1903
June Deming	1903 – 1906
Carrie Ong	1906 – 1910
A. L. Dipboye	1910 – 1919
Lenore Bonham	1919 – 1925
Mary R. O'Bryan	1925
Gladys Walker	1925 – 1936
Cleo Rogers	1936 – 1964
Gerald M. Born	1964 – 1966
Stephen W. Suckow	1967 – 2003
Elizabeth Booth Poor	2003 - 2015
Jason L. Hatton	2015 -

