

Peoria Public Library

Est. 1880

In 1872, E.S. Willcox, Peoria Library Director, wrote a law that permitted the establishment of a free, public library supported by the taxpayers. In 1880, the Peoria Public Library was established with collections and space donated by the German Library and the Peoria Mercantile Library, which has been established in 1855 and 1857, respectively.

The first Peoria Public Library building was erected in 1897 on the site of the present Library parking lot after the Mercantile Library sold its property and donated the proceeds for the construction of the new building. The new library remained in service until 1966. The present building was erected on the corner of Main and Monroe after citizens approved two referendums and a bond measure. Many changes have occurred over the years, including the opening of new branches and the delivery of free databases over the Internet – with a Library card, of course.

Major developments in the 131st year of the Library include a completely remodeled Main Library, a greatly expanded Lincoln Branch, a brand new North Branch, enhanced services at McClure and Lakeview, and continuation of the Bookmobile.

For over one hundred years, the Peoria Public Library has been a trusted source of information to the community and it continues to enrich the lives of all of those who utilize its resources.