

Mount Prospect Public Library Brief History

1929 – The membership of the Mount Prospect Woman’s Club voted at their second annual meeting in March 1929 to start a movement toward establishment of a public library. By September, the club members had secured fifty books on a three month loan from the Illinois State Library Extension Division.

1930 – The first Library was established by the Mount Prospect Woman's Club. Consisting of one tier of shelves holding about 300 books, the collection was located in a one-room schoolhouse on the corner of Main Street and Central Road and was staffed by volunteers from the Woman's Club.

1932 – The Library moved to the old Mount Prospect State Bank building on the northeast corner of Busse and Main Streets. The Mount Prospect Woman's Club was still in charge but employed Mrs. Irma Schlemmer, who was permitted to keep the Library open eight hours a week.

1943 – A referendum was passed enabling the foundation of a tax supported Village Library. The 1940 population was 1,710 – by 1943 it probably was about 3,000. The young Library received much assistance from the Chicago Public Library in the form of professional suggestion, furniture and books. Chicago Public gave the Library 1,000 books for \$200 per year, which it then returned to us to enable the purchase of children's books. This help continued for twenty years.

1944 – The Library moved to a paint store at 115 South Main Street as it was the only store open at night.

1950 – The first Library building was erected at 14 East Busse Avenue on land purchased with money – \$25,000 – donated by organizations and from individual gifts. A bond referendum for \$35,000 was approved. The 2,450 square foot building served a population of 4,009.

1961 – In March of 1961, a bond issue of \$198,000 authorized an addition to the Library. Between 1962 and 1965 two additions were made to the building, tripling the floor space. In 1962, the Library received .00854 cents per \$100 assessed valuation to provide for a population that by 1963 had reached 22,945 (1960 population 18,906). The collection consisted of about 20,000 books.

1966 – Voters approved a bond issue for further expansion, which increased the size to 12,000 square feet, and revenue was increased to .01150 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. An adjacent parking lot was purchased by the Library. A campaign was begun by the Library Board of Directors and Library supporters to acquire rights to the Central School property, where the present Library building now stands. The population was 30,200.

1974 – The population had risen to 46,525 when the Village Board of Trustees voted in September to purchase the 2.6 acre Central School property as a site for a new Library building and approved the expenditure of \$3.2 million for construction of a new building.

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1975 – The Groundbreaking Ceremony was held on April 19, during National Library Week. The Library was to be 45,000 square feet and to include a 125-seat Meeting Room. Architect: Wendt, Cedarholm and Tippens, Inc. Actual construction began on July 7. The Library by this time was receiving only .0126 cents per \$100 assessed valuation, the lowest of any library in the Northwest suburbs.

1976 – It was found in March that the Library would cost \$225,000 more than the original estimate, largely because of a sprinkler and larger ventilation systems. The building by this time was expected to cost \$3.45 million. In 1976, the Library was receiving .01500 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. The new Library opened its doors December 6, 1976, and the automated circulation system went online. An Open House was held on December 12.

1977 – On January 23, 1977, the formal dedication was held with Ralph Newman, noted Abraham Lincoln scholar and then president of the Board of Trustees of the Chicago Public Library, as guest speaker. On October 1, a referendum to raise the tax levy to .02840 cents per \$100 assessed valuation and to approve an \$850,000 bond issue for purchasing new books over a five-year period failed. The population served had reached 51,974.

1978 – In April, Mayor Carolyn Krause appointed a seven-member Citizens Panel to study methods of improving communications between the Village and the Library and to study the possibility of the Library's becoming a department of the Village. The advisory committee decided against the latter suggestion and made several proposals, among which was that a referendum be held to raise the tax levy to .03000 cents per \$100 assessed valuation.

1979 – A referendum to increase the tax levy to .02300 cents per \$100 assessed valuation passed on November 10.

1982 – The Library served a population of 52,634 with a collection of 135,031 volumes.

1986 – The Library served a population of 52,634 with collection of 174,000 volumes and circulation of 580,000 items. A long-range plan, "Blueprint for Excellence," was developed in 1985 and implemented. A space study was completed and an architect was hired to begin expansion drawings.

1987 – The Board of Library Trustees went before the voters in April and November 1987 to request additional funding for the operations budget and for funds to remodel the existing building and construct a 50,000 square foot addition. The funding requests were defeated.

1988 – Following the loss of two funding referenda library hours were decreased from 79 to 64 hours per week. With special funds from the Village of Mount Prospect, Sunday hours from 12-5 were restored bringing the total hours open to 69 per week. Reciprocal borrowing restrictions were implemented and charges for certain services and materials were instituted. A Long Range Plan 1989-1991 was adopted.

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1990 – The Library applied for and received the designation as a Federal Depository Library when the Northwest Municipal Conference who previously had the designation moved to a new location.

1991 – The Library's Administration Offices were moved to the second floor of the building. The adult Readers' Advisory service was begun. A drive-up book drop was installed. The music file housing the Blaine Music Collection was completed.

1992 – Marilyn Genter was appointed Executive Director of the Library. The number of reference transactions in adult and youth departments increased significantly as did total circulation. Financial and space constraints became critical.

1993 – The Library celebrated its 50th anniversary. Circulation of audiovisual materials increased significantly. An 18 month long range planning process was completed.

1994 – The Library Board sought a \$15.5 million bond referendum. It did not pass. E-mail became an important method of staff communication. Major shifting was done to accommodate the growing collection and to provide more efficient service.

1995 – The Library offered the public access to the Internet and launched its own homepage. The Library's print collection passed the 300,000 volumes mark. The Library Board sought a 9.5 million bond referendum but it did not pass.

1996 – The Library received the ILA/Highsmith Innovation Award for the Teen/Senior Computer Tutor program. Access to the World Wide Web was made available to the public through the graphical browser Netscape. All the audiovisual materials were moved to the Adult Services area. The collection included 364,978 items.

1997 – The Mount Prospect Public Library Foundation was established. Large scale shifting was done to make room for the collection, especially audiovisual materials. 30% of total materials circulated were audiovisual. Public computer use increased 90%. A vendacard system for printing from public terminals was installed as was an Internet software filter.

1998 – The Library's Internet connection was upgraded to a T1 line. MPPL also became part of a system-wide local history materials digitizing program. The impact of the Internet on Reference services began to be felt. Government documents increasingly were being distributed electronically.

1999 – All systems were upgraded to comply with Y2K. The Library's homepage averaged 34,124 hits per month. The Collection Management department was created. Over 615,000 items circulated, a decrease from previous years. A special monthly program for senior citizens was initiated. Use of the public computer stations in Adult Services increased 90%.

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2000 – The Library's lobby and Circulation and Registration Desks were renovated. The 20th Anniversary of the Teddy Bear Walk was celebrated. Over 161,000 questions were answered in person, by telephone, or through the Internet. The collection numbered over 426,000 items serving a population of 56,265 residents.

2001 – New service desks were installed in the Adult Services and Youth Services departments. New audiovisual shelving was installed. The local library cable TV program was revamped to become "Library Life". Circulation increased for the first time in four years totaling almost 653,000 items. Over 48,000 Mount Prospect residents had library cards.

2002 – A \$20.5 million referendum was passed on March 19. Plans for the renovated library building were drawn up. The Library moved to temporary quarters at 852 Feehanville Drive in the Kensington Business Center.

2003 – A Beam-Raising ceremony was held on April 11 to mark the start of construction on the Emerson building. Construction on the building continued throughout the rest of the year. All programs and services were provided at the Feehanville building. The Library migrated to a new library automated circulation and catalog system (Dynix). The 60th Anniversary of the Library was celebrated in September. Annual circulation was 612,649 items with a total collection of 433,906 items.

2004 – Construction of the library building on Emerson Street was completed. The Library moved back to its permanent home in August. It opened to the public in September. Grand celebration was October 17, 2004.

2005 – Patrons used WiFi to connect to the Internet. Circulation hit an all-time high of 802,000. A new electronic book and audio book service was started called MyMediaMall.

2006 – "Peace Sculpture" by Erik Blome on the northeast corner of the library land was commissioned and dedicated in 2007. Two commissioned artworks were purchased and placed: Youth Duck Bench and four pieces of Raku pottery. The walls of the lower lobby stairwell were designed to display historic photos of Mount Prospect and famous quotations. Annual checkouts reached an all-time high of 817,620 items. The collection totaled 468,263. Library Life was awarded the prestigious Telly Award. The photo of the Library's entrance graced the cover of the Sirsi/Dynix international calendar. *Ask Away* a national virtual reference service was offered. The Library was the recipient of a very generous donation to purchase and make available a complete collection of the Teaching Company, *Great Courses* materials.

2007 – The redesign of the Library's web page, www.mppl.org was launched. *Preview*, the library newsletter format was totally revamped. It became an eight page tabloid with more room for articles. Several pieces of art were added: Turkish rugs and paintings, gift of the Niagara Foundation; "Celestial 2" painting by Sam Evans; the whimsical TetraFoil mobile by Marc Ricketts. New collections added: Playaways, De Filippis Collection (a donation of all the Great Courses). Library Life again was awarded the

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prestigious Telly Award.

2008 – Internet was upgraded to a 10M fiber circuit; a major all-day training session for staff on Web 2.0 application for library use and the beginning of a Wiki as a form of communication for committees and departments was held; new collections this year included videogames for youth and teens, teen non-fiction graphic novels, elementary textbooks; Live Homework Help subscription was instituted; Library brand was developed – Mount Prospect Public Library, “Explore the Opportunities”; new artwork – an acrylic contemporary work by Paul Sable was mounted in Youth Services and a series of hand woven metal compositions by David Paul Bacharach were mounted along the north wall of the second floor.

2009 – Annual circulation hit one million for the first time; first permanent offsite location, South Branch located in Community Connections Center; new catalog using Web 2.0 technology was unveiled in summer; new artwork including “Wild Curiosity” by Greg Gove and “Four Seasons” by Jeff Rutter; shared a fiber optic circuit with Village Hall and increased bandwidth to 20M; *Your Guide* section of the newsletter was introduced; Professional Online Desktop (POD – instant messaging) and Pbworks (Wiki) helped streamline internal communication among staff.

2010 – First ever transcontinental book discussion in partnership with Sister City library in Sèvres, France called the Book Crossing (Lectures Croisées); visit of Sèvres library staff for one week in June; e-newsletter initiated to supplement the bimonthly *Preview*; coffee and soda machines added to the second floor for public; new stained glass artwork to complement the mural located in the Youth Department.

2011 – Visit of MPPL staff to Sèvres as part of the Mount Prospect Sister City Commission delegation; installation of new security gates with RFID security and application of RFID for circulation check in and check out; 85% of collection has been tagged with RFID; second floor was redesigned to improve patron access to collections; the Sunrise Rotary of Mount Prospect built a storybook house for the youth services early literacy area; weather brought blizzard, tornado and flooding all of which affected the Library; e-book revolution was in full swing after the 2010 holiday season with gift e-readers; Jackie Hinaber was honored with the ILA Trustee of the Year award; Harold Weary, age 102 was given the Founders’ Award by the Library Board for his contribution of over 40 years of volunteer work.

2012 – A new strategic plan for 2013-2015 was completed; Express Checkout began May 8; credit/debit ability to pay fines started with the Express Checkout; a completely redesigned website (mppl.org) – new look and functionality – was rolled out in June; first ever Skype visit with an author (Avi); teen e-newsletter for school librarians was initiated; South Branch space was increased as part of the Community Connections Center expansion.

2013 – Library celebrated 70th anniversary; received 3 star rating by *Library Journal*; was selected as one of the *Chicago Tribune*’s Top 100 Workplaces for 2013; installed three Express Check out stations for checking out materials; Facebook page for Library

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was rolled out; teens initiated Instagram account; Library became charter member of LIRA (Libraries of Illinois Risk Agency) insurance consortium; was nominated by patron for \$1,000 elfa makeover from Container store and used the award to improve the youth programming niche; completed the RFID and CD case conversion projects; hosted author Holly Black presentation; artwork of Enrique Suarez was hung in the South Branch.

2014 – Selected again as one of the *Chicago Tribune's* Top 100 Workplaces for 2014; installed the automatic materials return sorter; rolled out Enterprise for the new online catalog; honored Sharon Grieger with the 2014 Founders' Award; honored as Mount Prospect Chamber's Community and Business Partner of the Year; 10 year anniversary of the renovated and expanded building; began a Twitter account; received Digital Grant, Dimensions of Life in Mount Prospect; received ALA Building STEAM with Día Grant; passing of Harold Weary at 105.

2015 – Selected for third year as one of the *Chicago Tribune's* Top 100 Workplaces; completion of the Discovery Zone for grade school children in Youth Services; second floor construction to reconfigure spaces was completed by December; received the Business Partner of the Year from the Mount Prospect Chamber of Commerce; completed the strategic plan for 2016-2019; Mount Prospect Entrepreneurs Initiative (MPEI) was formed based on pre-existing partnership among Library, Chamber, Downtown Merchants Association and Village; initiated a Pinterest account for the public; received Building STEAM grant from ALSC (Association for Library Service to Children) to expand Día programming; received digital grant from the State Library for *Dimensions of Life in Mount Prospect* project; combined the Information and Reference service desks; started the Library-Wide Technology Training Initiative to improve staff technical skills; first mini golf fundraising event by the Mount Prospect Public Library Foundation; upgraded the public Wi-Fi system.

2016 – Selected for fourth year as one of the *Chicago Tribune's* Top 100 Workplaces; main page of mppl.org was redesigned; strategic long range furnishings plan was completed; hosted the unveiling of the contents in Village time capsule from 1975 as part of the Centennial celebration; circulation and renewal policies were simplified; partnered with the Village Sister City Commission and VFW to bring the Sèvres produced D-Day film to Mount Prospect; retirement of Cathy Deane, Deputy Director Public Services.

2017 – Selected for fifth year as one of the *Chicago Tribune's* Top 100 Workplaces; Library was chosen to be included in the *Tribune's* magazine accompanying the awards and was highlighted in an article on meaningful work; local Bulgarian residents partnered with Library to provide a Bulgarian collection and to celebrate, the Bulgarian Consulate General of Chicago came to speak at the grand opening; began offering RBdigital audio e-books; significant changes to the Leadership team because of retirements of Larry D'Urso (Head of Fiction/AV/Teen), Nancy Prichard (Head of Collection Management), Jo Robinson (Assistant Head of Research) and Martha Johnson (Head of Registration); changed reservation software to SignUp/Spaces; Library played a key role in the Village's Centennial celebration e.g., 1992 time capsule

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opening, compiling resident messages for the future into a book for the inclusion in 2067 time capsule, and other joint programming.

2018 – Celebrated the Library’s 75th Anniversary with several events and a final program with Gerry Kern, retired Senior Vice President and Editor of the *Chicago Tribune* as keynote speaker; John Zulaski, former library trustee was honored with the Founders’ award at the 75th program; selected for sixth year as one of the Chicago Tribune’s Top Workplaces; Anne Shaughnessy, Genealogy and Local History Librarian was awarded a Shining Star by the Village of Mount Prospect; formed the Collection and Bibliographic Services Department to manage all aspects of collection management from acquisitions to cataloging to processing to paging; certified as a Foundation Center Funding Information Center; staff committee crafted a Culture Statement which was added to the Library’s shared values and mission highlighting what makes MPPL unique; the Strategic Plan was revised highlighting five initiatives to guide the Board and Staff until 2023; completion of the lobby and youth entry renovation.