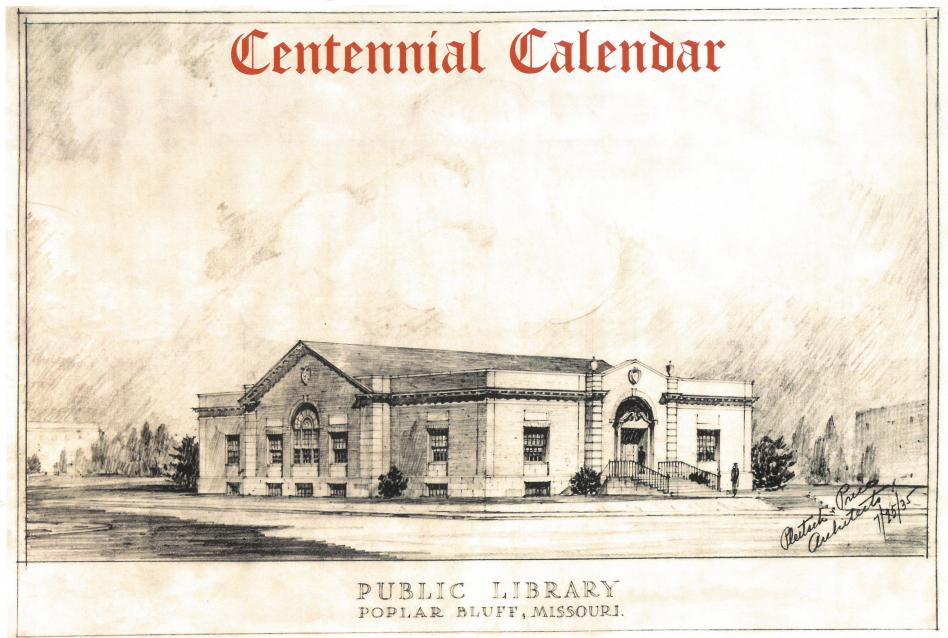
Poplar Bluff Municipal Library: 1916-2016

Celebrating the past...embracing the future



Original architects' drawing of library's permanent home

Prints of drawing suitable for framing available at the library



Poplar Bluff Mayor J.C. Allen turns the first spade of dirt at the corner of North Main and Elm streets as ground is broken on December 17, 1935, for a permanent home of the Poplar Bluff

Public Library at 318 N. Main St. Citizens had passed a \$30,000 bond issue by a vote of 716 to 57. The building was completed the following September.







Helen Cain

Annie Horton

Mae Lindsay

Public Library Pioneers

Community leader **Annie (Mrs. M.C.) Horton** called a meeting at her home in 1915 to organize a public library. Patrons paid \$1 per year to participate. Opening in the Criterion Theater in April of 1916, the library was staffed briefly by volunteers until Mrs. Horton's adult daughter, Lucy Horton, was hired for \$10 a month. Miss Horton was succeeded in 1918 by **Mae (Mrs. J.L.) Lindsay**, who led the library through moves to three more temporary locations over 17 years. In that period she also helped many neighboring communities establish their own libraries. After

leading the successful campaign to pass a bond issue and build the permanent (now expanded) building still in use, Mrs. Lindsay retired in 1935. Her assistant, the able **Helen Cain**, was named librarian in 1936 and became the iconic face of the library for the next 28 years. Feeling ill one day in 1964, she stayed home from work. Although she sought medical assistance, she died later in the day. A new children's area later was named the Helen Cain Youth Library in her honor.



The Poplar Bluff Municipal Library as it stands today after more than \$2 million in expansion and renovations in recent years.

Poplar Bluff voters in 2012 overwhelmingly approved a 1/4-cent sales tax to ensure library funding into the foreseeable future.



The Criterion Theater, which stood on the southwest corner of Main Street and Pine Boulevard, was the first home of the library from 1916 to 1919.



Children dressed as book characters in front of the former William E. Perkins home, 204 N. Broadway, which housed the library from

1919 to 1930 on the site of the present Rodgers Theatre. The house later was moved to 630 W. Pine Blvd., where it still stands.



Dressed up club ladies gather in front of the former Elks Lodge building in the 200 block of Poplar Street, which served as the

library from 1930 until 1935, when the Daily American Republic moved there from the 300 block of South Main Street.



Fraternal Opera House-4th St. [Broadway] N.W. corner at Poplar

The Fraternal Building on the northwest corner of Broadway and Poplar, shown here when the streets were still dirt, served

as the library from December of 1935 until the new permanent facility opened in 1936 at its present location.





Helen Cain, Poplar Bluff's longest-serving librarian (1936-1964), works at her cluttered desk (above) in the office that still serves current library Director Sue Crites Szostak. At left, Mrs. Cain tends to two of her favorite patrons, granddaughters Lianne and Lisa Fridriksson.



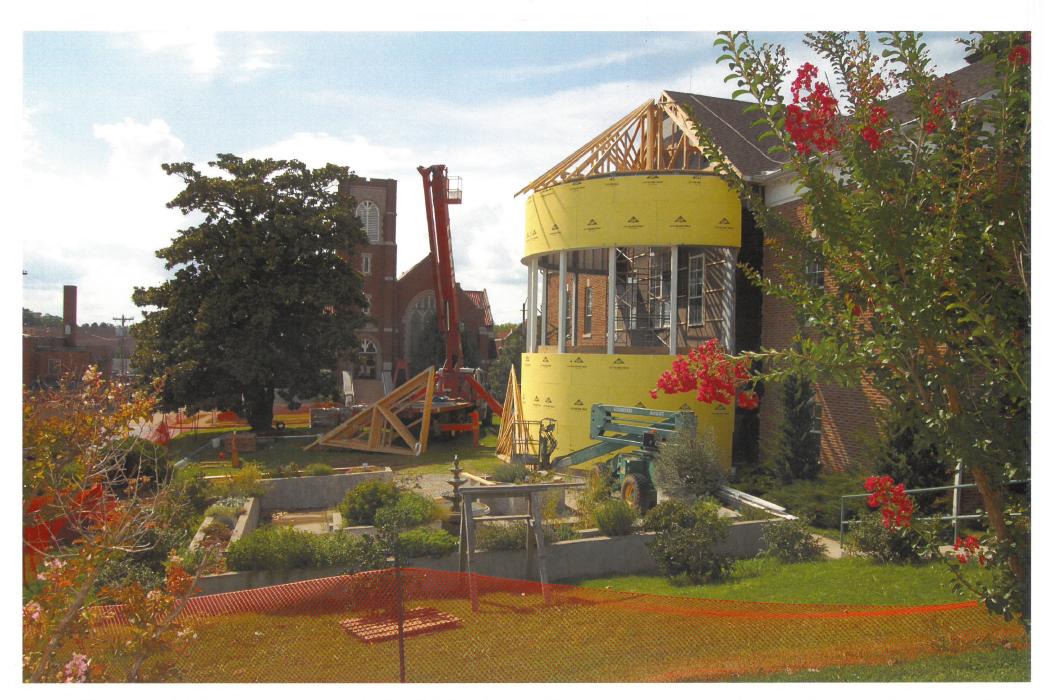
George Toombs, (right) still a patron of the library, is waited on by staff at the circulation desk in 1966. The original cork flooring,

state-of-the-art material for sound-proofing in earlier times, later had to be replaced.



Costumed as Harry Potter characters for a children's event in 2005, library staff members are: (back row from left) Tonya Raymer, Brandy Luebben, Kay Keeney, Shon Griffin and Ashley

Robertson; (others from left) are Leslie Sanchez, Lindsey Wickham, Director Jackie Thomas, Amanda Majerowski, Fredia Christian and Shannon Mangrum.



A \$1 million donation from the estate of Mrs. Kay (E.K.) Porter, plus \$150,000 in other private donations, enabled the library to revamp the floor plan and double the space in the Children's

Library. View above, during work by Lewis Construction Co. in 2008, is looking west across Main Street with First Presbyterian Church in the background.



The Sensory Garden, made possible by the Rotary Club and maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department, enhanced the landscaping on the south side of the library. The sidewalk to

the left winds under the historic southern magnolia tree, which dates to the time of the original building in 1936.



Fascinated children gather in the auditorium to watch a magic show, one of a myriad of children's events scheduled regularly at the Municipal Library. After the Children's' Library was moved to a

new space in the 2008 renovation, the auditorium and stage were restored to the original 1936 floor plan.



Tropical fish in the Children's Library hold the attention of these young patrons. The circular staircase in right background leads

up to the main floor of the library. Both floors also are served by an elevator.



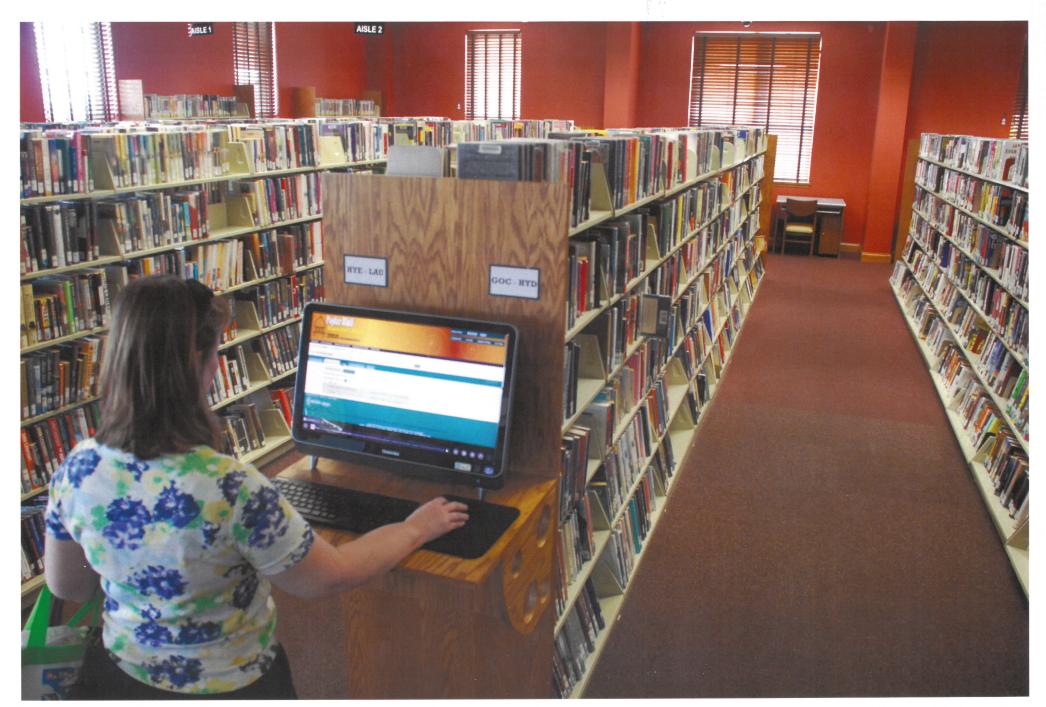
A story hour in 2009 was led by former Children's Librarian Rene Myers, left. The book of the day was Dr. Seuss' *Mr. Brown Can*

<u>Moo! Can You?</u> Children and parents are seated on the carpeted bleachers in the curve of the staircase.



The circular facade on the south side of the library accommodates the winding interior staircase that connects the lower level

Children's Library to the main floor.

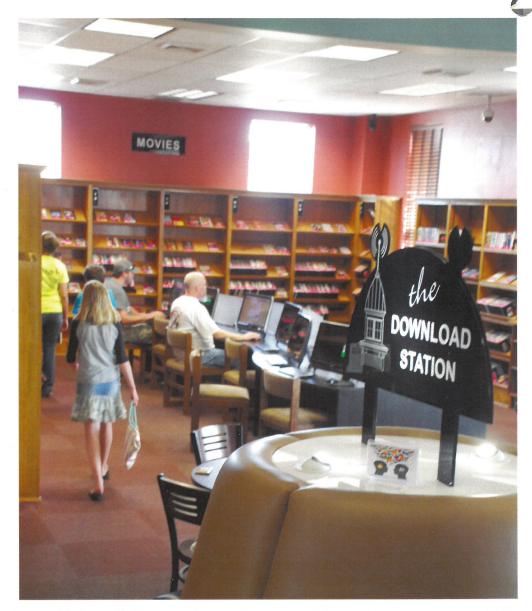


A patron uses one of the several screens in the stack areas to view the computerized card catalog that accesses the various collections.

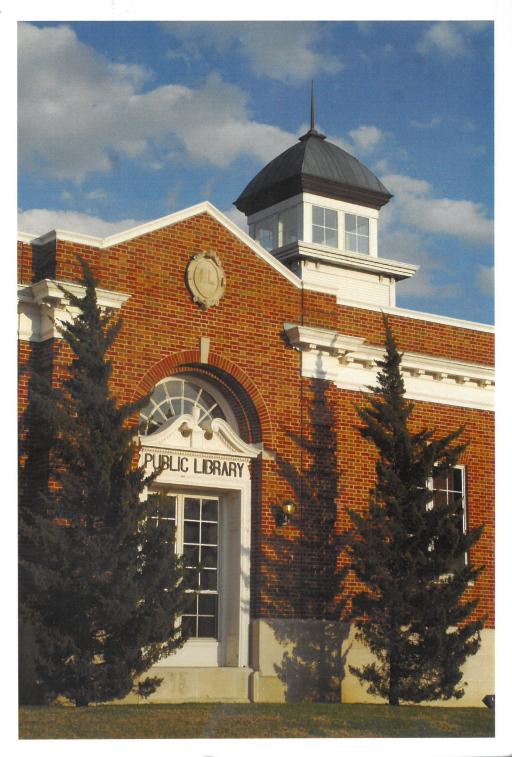


The garden area on the library's south lawn was chosen as the site of the historic plaque recognizing Poplar Bluff's brick streets.

More than three miles of brick paving was completed in 1913 for less than \$87,000.



The 1936 entrance (right) was abandoned when a bond issue in the late 1990s funded a library expansion that doubled the floor space. St. Louis Design Alliance architects, guided by the library trustees, matched the exterior brick pattern and installed an authentic cupola that matched historic Downtown Poplar Bluff architecture. **Above**, the Download Station is a popular service utilized by patrons with a myriad of hand-held electronic devices.





The parking lot (east) facade of the library now represents the "front" of the building to many patrons after the 1998 expansion doubled the floor space. An elevator at this entrance provides

access to both the main and lower library levels. The part of the building to the left of the brick chimney is the portion added in 1998.









Thomas

Beckemeier

Keeney

Szostak

Modern Library Leaders

Jackie Thomas, a visionary director who served 15 years, retired in 2012. She conceived and guided to fruition the sales tax funding for the library to ensure a stable revenue stream for the future. She also initiated many computer services for both the adult and children's areas, fine-tuned floor plan designs, obtained the Sensory Garden, enhanced patron and collection security, oversaw the 2008 \$1.15 million renovation project and started a landmark website with online public access. **Dewayne Beckemeier** served as librarian for 25 years and retired after the completion of the major library expansion in 1998. Kay Keeney, reference librarian and later assistant director, was a loyal employee for 32 years, retiring due to illness in 2006. The Kay Keeney Local History and Genealogy Room was established in her memory. Sue Crites Szostak, a native of the Qulin area who grew up as a patron of the local library, was named director in 2013 and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her new position. She holds a master's degree in library science from the University of Missouri and had a previous career in both college and public libraries in Tennessee.

STATE OF MISSOURI

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Historic Preservation Program

Poplar Bluff Public Library

has been officially listed in

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

December 1, 1994

National Park Service Department of the Interior

In recognition of the outstanding historical significance of this property and to encourage its preservation, we hereby affix our signatures



Mel Carnahan, Governor State of Missouri

> Rebecca M. Cook Secretary of State

David A. Shorr, Director Department of Natural Resources

State Historic Preservation Officer