

On March 24, 1915 James Russell Lowell wrote to the local newspaper:

"The opening of a free public library is a most important event in the history of any town. A college training is an excellent thing, but, after all, the better part of every man's education is that which he gives himself, and the means. All that is primarily needful in order to use a library is the ability to read; primarily, for there must also be inclination, and after that, some guidance in reading well."



Marshall Public Library

612 Archer Avenue
Marshall, IL 62441

Phone: 217-826-2535

Fax: 217-826-5529

Website:

www.marshallilllibrary.com

Hours:

Monday—10am to 6pm

Tuesday—10am to 6pm

Wednesday—10am to 6pm

Thursday—10am to 8pm

Friday—10am to 5pm

Saturday—10am to 5pm



Marshall Public Library

*A short history of the library
1916-present*



"Your Downtown Window to the World"



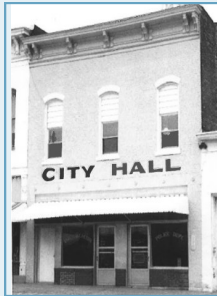


The beginning...

In 1915, the Walter Burdick Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution led a campaign to establish a public library in Marshall. Their efforts were successful, and in April 1916, the community approved the proposal. By October of that year, the library officially opened on the second floor of the Claypool Building, located at the southwest corner of 5th and Main Street (now Archer Avenue). The only access was an outdoor staircase on the building's north side. Today, this location is home to Casey State Bank.

To improve accessibility and comfort for patrons, the library moved in 1929 to a room above City Hall. This new space offered an indoor stairway and rent-free use. That building now houses the Chamber of Commerce.

Still, library services remained on upper floors, limiting access for many. In 1963, the Marshall Women's Club began discussions about relocating the library to a ground-floor location. The Civic and Welfare Committee worked closely with the library board, but financial hurdles and the challenge of passing a tax levy threatened to stall progress.



In 1964, a Friends of the Library group formed

and launched a campaign to "work toward relocating the library to a downstairs." Thanks to community support, funds were raised, and the former Wilfond Clothing Store at 612 Archer Avenue was purchased. This location served the public for the next 25 years.



By 1993, the library no longer met the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. That same year, a successful referendum established the Marshall Area Public Library District, expanding services to all residents within the Marshall school district. The number of patrons immediately doubled, highlighting the need for a larger, more modern space.

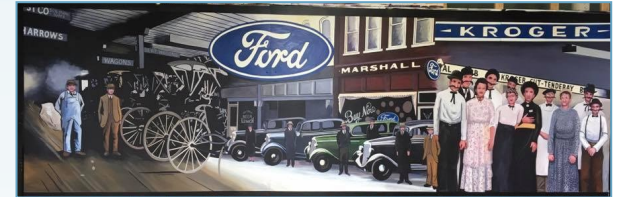
The library expands reach, doubles size...

In 1995, the Friends of the Library reorganized to raise funds for the purchase of the adjacent building at 614 Archer Avenue—once home to C.A. Dixon Farm Implements, Ford Auto, and Kroger. The acquisition tripled the library's size. By 1996, both buildings had been fully remodeled to include a meeting room, accessible restrooms, a periodical room, a young adult area, and office space.



In October 1998, the meeting room was dedicated in honor of Dale McConchie, and in 2001 a renovation added an Activity Room and additional office space, along with much-needed tuck pointing to preserve the building's exterior. In October 2014, the young adult area was named in honor of Janet Hasten and in 2019 the library underwent a major update that added a study room, dedicated in memory of Edwin "Sonny" Daly, a head librarian office, a computer lab, and a new vestibule. Significant improvements were also made to the main

level, including updated flooring, fresh paint, and new shelving—enhancing both function and aesthetics for patrons. A large-scale Walldog mural was painted telling the history of the library building. The renovation was beautifully capped off with a custom train depot-themed children's area, complete with a suspended train, and a Gaslight Art mural.



The Library Today: Expanding Horizons...

In the summer of 2023, the library acquired the Clark County Genealogy Library collections and dedicated them as the Genealogy and Historical Collections housed in the library's Activity Room.

In December 2024, a long-held dream became a reality with the expansion to the library's upper level. Thanks to the support of local organizations, the Illinois State Library and the Department of Economic Commerce grant funds, as well as the City of Marshall, the library secured the necessary resources to install an elevator—finally making the upstairs space accessible to all. With the addition of 3,000 square feet, the upper level opened for community events, exhibits, public use and a portion of the library's local history collections. This vibrant new space was named the Illinois Room, honoring the library's deep roots in local history and its continued commitment to serving the people of Marshall and the surrounding area.

