



Photo courtesy of History Center of Olmsted County

A library may look like a single building, but please don't be misled by the walls. It's a single link in an enormous chain. It's a single being in a gigantic ecosystem of words and thoughts and ideas.

-- Anonymous

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The celebration of the Sesquicentennial of the State of Minnesota, May 11, 1858, and also the City of Rochester August 5, 1858, gives one time to reflect on the idea of "Library in Rochester".

On December 28, 1865, seven years after the incorporation of the city and eleven years after the founding of the city, library service began in Rochester when interested citizens organized the Rochester Library Association. W. W. Ireland's bookstore was the location of the library which consisted of 1,000 books that had been purchased with donations by private individuals. There was a \$3.00 annual fee to use the books. The organization was a purely private affair and supported entirely by dues, private subscription, donations, and sums received from entertainments. Yet the library was open to the public 3:00 - 5:00 Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, and 7:00 - 9:00 every evening, and circulation in that first year of operation was 10,744 volumes.

From those humble beginnings and the generous donations from a handful of people, the library has consistently grown in use and complexity. Today, circulation is over 1.5 million items a year.

Over 400,000 items are available for check out, including books, audiocassettes, videos, compact discs, DVDs, and CD-Roms. Over 600 magazines and newspapers are available, including several in foreign languages such as French, Chinese, Somali, and German.

Ex Officio

Cynthia Daube
Chuck Hazama
Phil Henoeh
Frank Iossi

Free classes are available to help you learn how to use today's modern technology including Basic Computer, E-mail, Google and More, Digital Camera, Electronic Greeting Cards, and Editing Digital Photos to name just a few.

The library provides useful information for Internet users such as Auto Repair Reference Center, Business and Company Resources, Encyclopedia Online, Health and Wellness Resource Center, Heritage Quest Online, and many others.

People who are homebound and cannot get to the library can sign up for a regular book delivery service. The library has a bookmobile that travels to more than 80

locations in Rochester and Olmsted County, with stops in Byron, Dover, Eyota, and Oronoco.

While much has changed over the past 140 years, one thing has remained the same: the dedication of providing the community with access to information, literature, and ideas. Rochester Public Library is one of the most technologically advanced, service-oriented, and innovative public institutions that can be found anywhere.

The Rochester Public Library Foundation has taken the place of the original small group that funded the Rochester Library Association. It has kept the idea of soliciting and accepting donations from the citizens of the city and county. Your donation continues the tradition of wanting a library and helps to transform your library from a good library to an awesome library.





Every gift, no matter the amount, is greatly appreciated and will be acknowledged in our upcoming newsletter and annual report. Gifts of over \$500 will also be acknowledged on our donor wall on the main floor of the library.

Sincerely,



Michael McNeil
President

PS. Book plates will be placed in all of the items purchased with your donation.

			
1898 - 1937	1937 - 1972	1972 - 1995	1995 -

Purchase of this book was made possible by a donation to the Rochester Public Library Foundation from

Your Name Here

(Shown actual size)