

REMEMBER WHEN...

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Mt. Pleasants first library was organized on March 15th, 1879. It was known as the Library, Literary and Musical Association of Mt. Pleasant and housed wherever there was an available space. Being an association, its materials were only available to members. After a fire destroyed most of the books in 1895, the Library, Literary and Musical Association faded away.

In 1909 a movement, championed by the Mt. Pleasant Woman's Club, began to establish a public library in Mt. Pleasant. The first board was named on December 6th, 1909 and the library opened on March 19th, 1910 in a building on South Main St. over Jamison and Young's office. The library later moved into the house of Mr. and Mrs. L.N. Smith at 412 E. Broadway. In a few short years the library had outgrown that building and was relocated to the First Congregational Society of the City of Mt. Pleasant (formerly known as the Unitarian Society) on the Southeast corner of Illinois Street and Normal Avenue (subsequently named College St. and now University Ave.), Veterans Memorial Library's current location. The Mt. Pleasant Women's Club raised \$2,693.12 for equipment to furnish this new location.

In 1953 plans for financing and constructing a new library building were studied by community leaders. Money from a special library building fund, municipal court funds, a postwar building fund and a loan from other municipal funds were put together, and with the old church building literally falling down, a new library building was placed into service in April of 1957. Not only was there a new building, but a new name as well. On May 24th, 1957, the library was dedicated to Mt. Pleasants veterans of all wars – Veterans Memorial Library.

By 1974 the library was running into space limitations. As the community continued to grow, so did demand for library services. After years of exploring multiple possibilities, voters approved a \$1.2 million bond in June of 1983 to expand Veterans Memorial Library into the building we use today.

As demands for technology continue to increase, so does the response of the Chippewa River District Library. The Veterans Memorial Library Computer Training Center was implemented in 2000 with the assistance of a LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant and a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Since then, nearly 7,700 patrons have improved their computer skills at free computer classes offered at the library.

When the Mt. Pleasant Post Office relocated to a new facility in 2002, the old Post Office and the parcel of land it sat on became available. Feeling the pressure of increasing demands for library services, the library board took advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, purchased the former Post Office in 2003 and along with it a much needed parking lot. The former Post Office was renovated just enough to make the building usable, attached to the Veterans Memorial Library, and named the Library Annex.

On August 5th, the Chippewa River District Library will ask voters to simply re-approve the same 1.75 mills they approved ten years ago just to keep the library's doors open. Without this millage, Veterans Memorial Library in Mt. Pleasant and Faith Johnston Memorial Library in Rosebush will close and leave this community without library services for the first time since 1910. For more information stop into any branch of the Chippewa River District Library or click crdl.org.