# History of the Dundee Library

The Dundee Library has evolved from a group of women who began to meet once a week in 1902 to study civic government. In 1903, the women formed the Woman’s Study Club. From the dues gathered, they bought books for use in preparing programs for their meetings. In March 1908, Mrs. E.L. Bailey gave the Club 40 books and suggested that a library be opened. On May 2, 1908, the Dundee Circulating Library, owning 290 books opened on Saturday afternoons. In 1912, a building fund was set up. When Mrs. Delia Cooper died in 1917, she bequeathed her house and lot on Water Street to be used for a library and educational purposes. The present building, costing just under $10,000 was erected, and opened its doors to the public on January 1, 1920.

A provisional charter was granted to the Library by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York in August 1912, under the corporate name of the Woman’s Study Club and Library. The library was registered to receive tax money in 1918. Its Absolute Charter was granted on July 18, 1946. The library’s name changed to the “Dundee Library”, and its service area was enlarged to include the entire Dundee Central School District, when its charter was changed in 2000.

Area libraries began to study a multi-county library system in 1956. The Southern Tier Library System was established, and in 1959, the contract was signed with STLS serving Steuben, Yates, Schuyler, Chemung and Allegany Counties.

The “Friends of the Library” organization was formed in March of 1971 to promote interest in the library and to provide it with additional financial assistance.

The Children’s Room was opened in November of 1971. The building was enlarged in 1979, adding two rooms at the basement level and one room on the main floor, costing a total of $80,000. A local history corner was developed in the 1980’s, and in 1994, space was added to accommodate a lift for people with disabilities.

The Library received New York State Library Construction funding to add a multi-purpose room and renovate other parts of the library to enlarge the children’s and young adult areas. A second accessible rest room will also be added. Construction took place in 2020-21.

Renovations continued until 2024 with the addition of an emergency generator, new front steps and a sidewalk on the south side of the building, raised flower beds, a fence between the parking lot and back garden, new windows in the 1979 building and restored windows with new storm windows in the 1920 building.

In 1996, a grant was awarded to the library, leading to the automation of access to the collection and the holdings of other libraries. The Dundee Library materials include books, audio books, videotapes, music on disks, DVDs, and large print material and magazines. Equipment includes Internet-access computers, printer, and a TV/VCR, copier and fax machine. The library is the repository for the weekly Observer newspaper with bound volumes from 1983 to the present. The Yates History Center began digitizing the volumes in 2019.

The library is open to the public thirty-five (35) hours a week. The staff includes a Library Director, Director of Operations, library clerks, building and grounds and an account clerk.

The Library Board consists of seven to eleven trustees.

Created 2014

Revised 2019, 2024