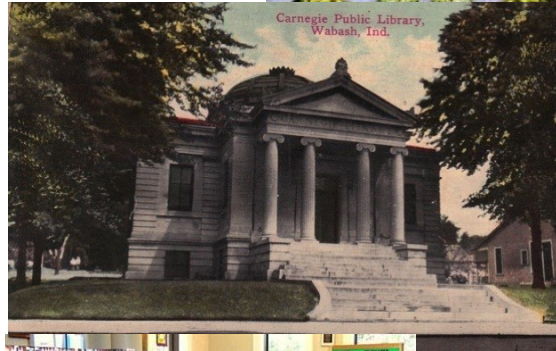
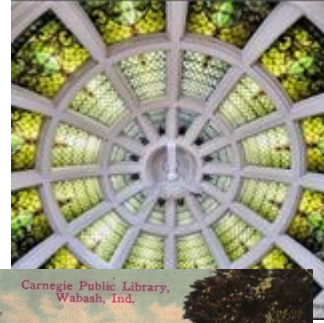




188 West Hill Street
Wabash, Indiana 46992

260-563-2972
<http://www.wabash.lib.in.us>

Hours:
Monday-Thursday 9-8
Friday & Saturday 9-5



Wabash Carnegie Public Library

A short history of the library
1903-present





As early as 1848 there was evidence of a library in Wabash. The librarian, John U. Pettit was personally responsible for the 300 books, and had to pay for those that were not returned. In 1890, the Woman's Library Association organized by the Round Table Literary Club was opened in the Probate Court Room in the Wabash County Courthouse. The services of the first librarian, Mrs. Anna Zeigler and her assistants were donated.

In 1895, the books were moved to the old Wabash High School building and in 1900, the Women's Library Association was dissolved due to a consolidation with the high school library and the new Wabash Public Library was organized. Crowded conditions in the high school forced the library to move again, this time into Memorial Hall where they stayed until the opening of the Carnegie Library.

Word of success of other towns in securing funds from the Carnegie Foundation for library buildings moved members of the local group to seek help for a building in Wabash. A number of letters were written without much success. However, one written by the late Warren Bigler, then president of the school board, and another by Mrs. Cowgill, who gave the history of Round Table's efforts to foster and maintain a library, brought response from James Bertram, Mr. Carnegie's secretary.

Becoming a Carnegie Library

The terms were that Mr. Carnegie would give \$20,000 for the erection of the building, provided the City of Wabash would furnish the site and agree to spend \$2,000 a year on its support. This transaction occurred in 1901 and the Board of Library Trustees was organized under the Indiana Library Law. On April 30, 1901, the Board resolved that the cost of the new building was to be limited to \$17,000; the actual contract (awarded to John Hipskind & Son) amounted to \$17,795---without heat. That problem was taken care of later by the Honeywell Corporation. The building was completed in 1903 and 3000 volumes were installed.

The building is a Neo-Classic design with Grecian lines and is one of the oldest Carnegie libraries in the state. Before added construction in the 1970's, twenty-three steps led up to the main doors of the library where inside six 20-foot pillars still grace the area under a beautiful stained glass dome, which is protected on the outside in copper. The stained glass dome is the highlight of the library with pure colors of green, cream, brown, red and shades of lavender, blues, and greens. A fireplace is an added attraction along a north wall. Built on solid limestone rock with thirty-six inch walls, the Wabash Carnegie Public Library continues to stand strong and tall. The firm foundation and formidable construction accounts for the library's withstanding years of the passage of rumbling trains.

The Library now

Remodeled in 1972, an addition was constructed, expanding the facilities to 14,000 square feet from 5,000. Now, at the beginning of the 21st Century, the Wabash Carnegie Public Library stands at the forefront of the electronic age. Our WebPacs have replaced the card catalogue, and videos and DVDs have replaced 16 mm films. CDs have replaced records, while CDs have provided another format for books. The library's collection contains over 82,800 items, of which 90% are books, over 190 periodicals, over 7,300 audio-visual materials, including CDs, DVDs, and videos. The library subscribes to several online databases and an e-library. The library is fully automated with Polaris library system.

