

Mission Statement

The Covina Public Library's mission is to provide an institution where informational, educational and recreational materials will be easily accessible to the entire community; to meet the library's ever changing needs via the latest technology; to develop a staff that is responsive to the needs of the residents of Covina – a staff that is well able to select, organize and maintain the library's collection and who can interpret the library's contents and relate them to individual needs – and; to encourage use of the library as a community information and activities center.

History

The Covina Reading Room and Library Association, started by private subscription, opened its doors on May 10, 1897.

On September 26, 1903, the city's local paper, The Covina Argus, reported a "special meeting of the trustees of the Covina City Library [...] to consider the wisdom of asking Mr. Carnegie for a subscription of \$6,000 for the erection of a public library building. All the trustees were present, and by request Dr. H.E. Herron, a recent arrival from Pittsburg and an intimate acquaintance of Mr. Carnegie, also met with the board and offered many valuable suggestions. It was decided that the necessary papers should at once be forwarded to Mr. Carnegie's secretary..."

The President of the Library Association, E.H. Lahee, began corresponding with the office of Andrew Carnegie in New York.

Carnegie replied in a letter dated April 11, 1905: "Responding to your communication on behalf of Covina – if the city agree by resolution of Councils to maintain a free public library, at a cost of not less than \$800 a year, and provide a suitable site for the building, Mr. Carnegie will be pleased to furnish \$8,000 to erect a free public library building for Covina."

On April 22, 1905, a Covina Argus reporter stressed the importance of soon determining the location of the new library site. "An opportunity now presents itself for some of our public spirited citizens to assist in this good work," urged the writer. "We have such amongst us, as has already been shown by the generous offer made by Mrs. B.F. Cook to present to the library trustees a lot with 50 feet frontage on the east side of Second Street, just north of the Baptist Church. This lot fronts on the broadest street in our city and is only 850 feet from the First National Bank. There are other suitable sites and it is hoped that before a selection has to be made [that] other citizens will be heard from."

Nearly eight months later, the new Carnegie library, on Second Street, opened on December 4, 1905. The December 2nd issue of The Covina Argus announced the grand opening "On Monday evening, December 4th, with a public reception and shower."

"The opening services will be in the nature of a public reception and book shower, between the hours of 8 and 10 p.m.," continued the article, "and it is earnestly hoped by the members of the trustees that every citizen will honor this notable occasion by their presence, for by so doing

they can honor and publicly express their appreciation of the generous gift of the donor, Mr. Andrew Carnegie."

Concerning the "book shower," the trustees stated that "any book suitable for general circulation will be accepted [...] history, biography, travel, essays, poetry, science and good fiction -- the library has need of them all. Many people have [...] works of fiction, which having been once read, are of no further use to them. Bring them along; what has given you pleasure will give enjoyment to others."

A large crowd assembled for the opening of the new library, and a total of 1,100 people signed a register.