

Michigan Time Traveler

An educational supplement produced by Lansing Newspapers In Education, Inc. and the Michigan Historical Center.

KIDS' History

Michigan Libraries

One of the best ways to be a Time Traveler is to read a book. This month's Time Traveler explores the history of places filled with books — libraries.



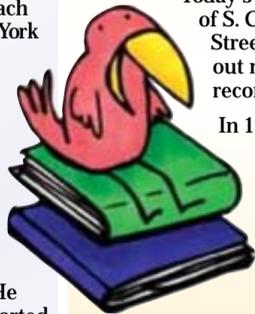
Our Early Libraries

European immigrants to North America brought the idea of libraries with them. Our first libraries were subscription libraries (you paid a fee to join). In 1657 the city of Boston opened a subscription library with books donated by a founder of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In 1731 Benjamin Franklin started a library in Philadelphia. Fifty subscribers each bought a share in it. They paid in shillings, and the books came from England.

In Detroit, Territorial Governor Lewis Cass, other public officials, educators and friends started a subscription library in 1817. Ninety subscribers each paid \$5 to join, and one member traveled to New York City with \$450 to purchase books.

Boston established the nation's first public library in 1848. Sometimes civic improvement groups, clubs or a philanthropist would start a free library. But most governments did not want to tax people to build a library.

One man, Andrew Carnegie, changed that. Carnegie was an immigrant from Scotland who became an American steel tycoon. Too poor to go to school, he had learned from borrowed books. He wanted everyone to have access to books, so he started the Carnegie program for public library construction. If a city provided the land and agreed to support a library, he would pay to construct the building. Between 1893 and 1919 he gave communities more than \$68 million dollars to build more than 1,600 libraries in the United States. He funded more than 60 Carnegie Libraries in Michigan.



During the 1950s, library bookmobiles such as this one in St. Clair County brought books to readers. (State Archives)

At the Michigan Historical Museum

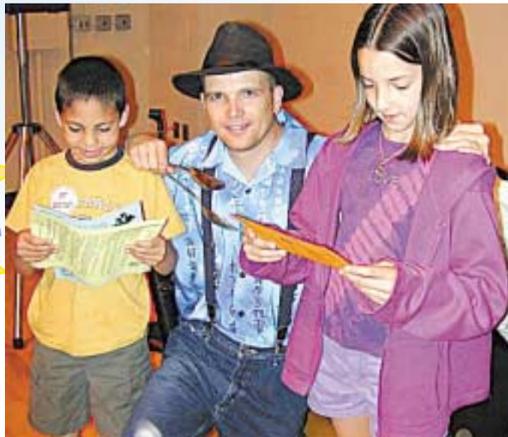
- ◆ See books written by Michigan authors in the 1920s bookstore window.
- ◆ Find a Michigan topic to read about this summer such as lighthouses or lumberjacks.
- ◆ Visit the Library of Michigan next door.

The Michigan Historical Museum, 702 W. Kalamazoo Street, is located two blocks west of the Capitol in downtown Lansing. Museum admission is free. Hours: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. The museum telephone hotline: (517) 373-3559. The museum is part of the Michigan Historical Center, Department of History, Arts and Libraries. Visit us on the Web at www.michiganhistory.org.



Lansing Newspapers In Education (NIE) provides Lansing State Journal newspapers and supplemental teaching materials for area classrooms at little or no cost to the schools. The newspaper becomes a "living textbook," providing students with timely and relevant topics for discussion in class and at home.

If you are interested in sponsoring classroom papers or using the newspaper in your classroom, please contact Patricia O'Hearn, NIE Manager at (517) 377-1242.



Read This Summer!

Until the 20th century, children under the age of 10 were not allowed to use most libraries. Other than nursery rhymes, there weren't many books for kids. Today that has changed! Libraries have neat areas for kids with books, activities, even computers!

Every summer millions of kids read for fun. By joining a summer reading program at their local library, they get free stuff and win prizes. Jim — "the Spoon Man" — Cruise (photo, center) says reading is like exercising. "Whenever you read a book, I call it 'lifting weights for your brain.'"

This year many Michigan libraries are celebrating "Laugh It Up @ Your Library." These libraries have lots of books good for laughing, learning and just loafing this summer. The Spoon Man had everybody laughing at the Capital Area District Library Summer Reading Program kickoff. After the program Marcus and Lindsey (above left) joined him to look at information about the program.



Lansing's Libraries

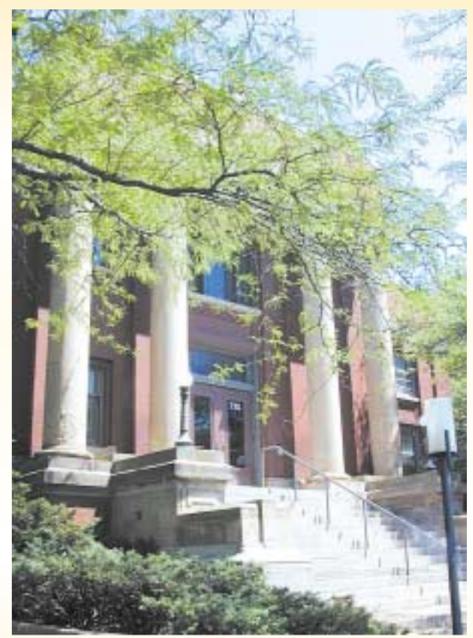
Lansing's first library was a subscription library. During the 1860s, the Ladies' Library and Literary Association started a library on West Michigan Avenue for its members. It cost \$2 to belong, and the library was open only on Saturdays. Then, in 1871, the Lansing Board of Education began a small library in the high school. When the Ladies' Association closed its library in 1882, it donated the books to the school library — with the understanding that both students and adults would use it.

In 1897 the library moved into bigger space in City Hall (then at the southwest corner of Capitol and Ottawa Streets). The number of books and readers kept growing. State librarian Mary C. Spencer wrote a letter to Andrew Carnegie asking for money for a new public library building for Lansing. In 1902 Carnegie gave \$35,000. The new library opened in 1905.

Many Lansing schools also had their own small library, and during World War II there were temporary libraries for workers at the Reo and Oldsmobile plants. After the war, Lansing's population boomed. It needed a larger library.

Today's main library opened at the corner of S. Capitol Avenue and W. Kalamazoo Street in 1964. Its users could check out not only books, but the latest in LP records, art prints and films!

In 1997, the Lansing Public Library and the Ingham County Library systems combined to form the Capital Area District Library. It includes 13 libraries, a bookmobile and a Web site.

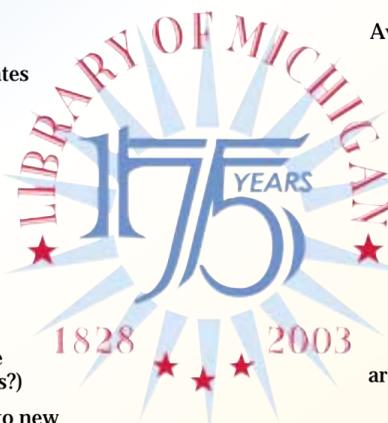


The original Lansing Carnegie Library building at 210 W. Shiawassee Street is now Lansing Community College Office Unit F.

Your State Library

The Library of Michigan celebrates its 175th birthday this year. It began in the Territorial Capitol in Detroit with a collection of law books and government documents. When Michigan became a state in 1837, this collection became our first state library. The capitol moved to Lansing in 1847, and the library moved too. (Can you imagine hauling all those books in horse-drawn wagons over the rutted and muddy pioneer roads?)

As the library grew, it moved into new homes including the present State Capitol, the State Office Building (now the Lewis Cass Building) and a former warehouse on E. Michigan.



Avenue. It even lived in a field house at the Boys Vocational School for a while after a fire at the State Office Building. It moved to the new Michigan Library and Historical Center building in 1988.

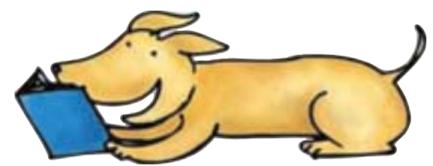
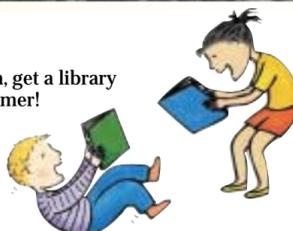
The Library of Michigan was in the State Capitol when these photos were taken. State librarian Mary C. Spencer is seated at the desk in the 1895 photo at the left. The picture below shows the Reference Department and Reading Room around 1915. (Photos, State Archives)



Things to Do

- ◆ Go to a library program, get a library card and read this summer! Get books to read to your preschool brothers and sisters, too!
- ◆ Search Michigan's Historic Sites Online at www.michiganhistory.org to find libraries and library-related buildings in Michigan that are on the National Historic Register. Use the Search Wizard and type "library" or "Carnegie" into the SITE NAME search category.
- ◆ Learn more about Andrew Carnegie at Carnegie for Kids: www.carnegie.org/sub/kids/.
- ◆ Teachers and parents, find activities to accompany this page in "For the Professional" — "Teacher Resources" at www.michigan.gov/hal.

Comments or suggestions? Write to timetraveler@michigan.gov.



The Capital Area District Library and Newspapers in Education have partnered this summer to promote reading!

- ◆ Register at any Capital Area District Library.
- ◆ Earn points by reading and having fun together.
- ◆ Get coupons for free ice cream cones.
- ◆ Qualify to win a \$25 Meijer gift certificate.

