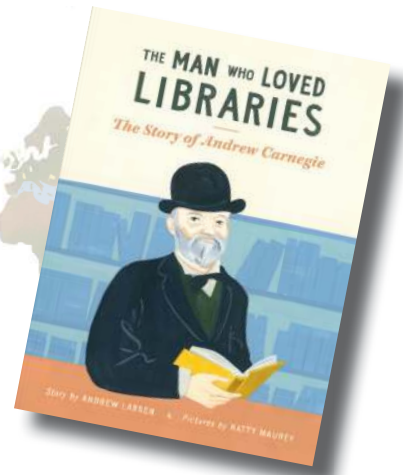


CARNEGIE LIBRARIES

Quick Facts



WHO WAS ANDREW CARNEGIE?

Andrew Carnegie was 12 years old when he moved to the US from Scotland in 1848—right in the middle of the American Industrial Revolution—along with his working-class family. He immediately found work in a factory and, with hard work and an entrepreneurial spirit, succeeded and started investing his money. He was able to start his own steel company and eventually became one of the richest men in the world. Carnegie decided to use his wealth to help others, becoming known as the “father of philanthropy.” He remembered being able to use a private library as he was working his way up, so from 1883 to 1929 he donated \$55 million to fund the construction of over 2,500 libraries around the world. Carnegie’s reputation is not without blemish—his steel company was not responsive to demands from his factory workers for better pay, working conditions, and hours—but his philanthropic work still has impact today in many ways, not the least of which is the growth of public libraries.



HOW MANY LIBRARIES WERE BUILT IN CANADA?

- Canada was awarded grants for 125 Carnegie libraries. Of those, 63 are still used as libraries today.
- 111 were in Ontario, four in Manitoba, three in each of Alberta and British Columbia, two in Saskatchewan, and one each in New Brunswick and the Yukon.
- In all, Carnegie donated \$2.5 million to fund Canadian libraries.

WHERE WAS THE FIRST LIBRARY IN CANADA OPENED?

- Windsor, Ontario was the first city to receive a Carnegie donation, but the first library to open was Chatham Public Library in Chatham, Ontario, in 1903 (which was torn down in 1983 to make room for Chatham’s current Chatham Public Library building).

WHICH CITY HAS THE MOST CARNEGIE LIBRARIES?

- Toronto received grants for 10 libraries, and seven are still used today as libraries.
- The first grant to the city of Toronto, \$350,000, was the largest grant given anywhere in Canada. It funded a new central library and three branches: Yorkville, Queen and Lisgar, and Riverdale.

WHAT WAS THE SMALLEST CITY/TOWN THAT GOT A GRANT?

- Ayr, Ontario, with a population of only 807.

Note: All currency is reported in historical, not present day, values.

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HOW MANY CARNEGIE LIBRARIES WERE FUNDED AROUND THE WORLD?

2,509 libraries were built between 1883 and 1929 in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Serbia, South Africa, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean, Malaysia, Mauritius, and Fiji.

WHERE WAS THE FIRST-EVER CARNEGIE LIBRARY BUILT?

In Dunfermline, Scotland, Carnegie's hometown.

HOW DID CITIES/TOWNS GET FUNDING?

Carnegie would give grants if local governments could show they:

- needed a public library
- had a site for the building
- would pay staff and maintain the library
- would use some public funds to run the library
- would make sure service was free for everyone

THE OPEN-SHELF/SELF-SERVE LIBRARY POLICY

In the 1880s, all libraries were closed-stack: a librarian had to get books from behind a door where the public didn't have access.

To save money when building libraries, Carnegie created the open-shelf system—which was started in Pittsburgh—where people could take books off the shelves themselves.

And how did libraries make sure nobody stole a book? The library's substantial circulation desk was placed right by the front door.

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