

The first library was suggested by Miss Mamie Miller in 1876, and the first meeting of the proposed Library Society was held at home of John Maloy. Each person in attendance, donated a book for the small library which was established in the home of W. A. McCollum, first minister of the Congregational Church. The Library came into the possession of the Ancient Order of United Workmen lodge in 1881 where it remained until it was destroyed by a fire in 1886. A Library Association was formed by several "talented and energetic women" one of whom was Mary Rebecca Miller, wife of future Congressman James Monroe Miller, who called for a meeting in 1897, and a stock company was formed for a library.

Over a dinner, Mrs. Miller told Andrew Carnegie about the history of Council Grove and its unique place in Kansas history as a point along the Santa Fe Trail. She told Carnegie of the fire that destroyed half the town, including the library, and Carnegie asked if the town had started another library. Mrs. Miller then explained that they had started again, but they were lacking a building. As the Congressman's nephew, William A. Miller, later explained in a letter to A. H. Strieby, "He [Carnegie] immediately turned in his chair and beckoned to his secretary who sat at another table. He told the secretary to write out an order for a library building for Council Grove." The date that the Carnegie Corporation papers show that he offered \$10,000.00 for a building was March 27, 1903.

The Council Grove Guard featured an article on their front page on April 3, 1914 titled "The Library Proposition." The author is unknown. It was not until then that voters went to the polls to vote on two library propositions; the first, to decide whether the city should take over the old library and support it; the second, whether they wished the commissioners to petition Andrew Carnegie for a public library building. The vote passed on both measures, and on July 14, 1914, the board formally applied to the Carnegie Corporation, and the offer of \$10,000.00 was made (or renewed) in October of that year.

In late April or early May of 1914, the Mayor, Mr. James Sharpe, appointed nine directors who made up the Library Board. The following is an excerpt from the newspaper article on May 1, 1914. "The First Ward appointments are Judge M. B. Nicholson, Mrs. M. E. Harris and Will Young. Second Ward Mrs. A. J. Pullins, Mrs. J. M. Miller, Supt. E. W. Wells and Mayor Sharpe, the latter being by law as Mayor a member of the board. The Third Ward directors are Mrs. A. J. Kenwell and M. F. Amrine. This week Judge Nicholson resigned and C. M. Loy was appointed in his place."

In August of 1916, it was announced in the newspaper that construction on the new library would begin immediately. Contractor Joe Axe was given the general contract and S. L. Hinton was hired for the plumbing and heating work. The committee included Mayor W. F. Shamleffer, Mrs. J. M. Miller, Mrs. A. J. Kenwell, Mrs. A. J. Pullins, Mrs. C. H. White, Mrs. A. R. Kinkle, J. J. Rhodes, and Supt. E. W. Wells.

Finally, on the evening of September 6, 1918, there was an informal opening of the new library in the Carnegie building. The Council Grove Public Library remained there for 84

years, until the expanded collection and new ADA regulations forced the staff to find a larger location.

On January 22, 2002, Gail Daugherty, President of the Board of Trustees, attended a City Council meeting to address some of the concerns. In the meeting she stated that the Board had received several complaints about the Library not being handicap accessible and that injuries had occurred when people were climbing the stairs into the Library and climbing the stairs between floors. Since the city of Council Grove owned the building, Daugherty requested that Council members come to meet with the board and staff while touring the building to see the concerning areas first-hand. It was at this time that Wayne Criser said that he would like to see an elevator added to the Library, but Jan White mentioned that any changes would have to be approved by the Kansas Historical Society, since the Carnegie was listed as a historical site, and meet ADA requirements, which would make any improvements very expensive.

A month later on February 5, 2002, Gail Daugherty appeared before the City Council again and stated that the former Russell Stover Customer Service Center was available, met ADA requirements, was set up with central heating and air-conditioning, had a basement, and a large parking area for patrons. Jan White announced that she had spoken with the owner of the building and the original asking price of \$250,000 would be lowered to \$125,000 for the city to purchase the building as a library.