The Library Reconsidered: Not Just a Place for Books Anymore

Robert A. Young
Associate Professor
University of Utah
College of Architecture + Planning

Early Libraries in the United States

- Academic libraries for faculty and students
- Library societies
- Private collections of wealthy citizens

Redwood Library, Newport RI, 1747

First Public Library in America

- Boston Public Library 1854
- When the American Library Association formed in 1876, there were only 188 public libraries

Boston Public Library
Mason Street Library, 1854

"Patron Saint of the Public Library"

"Free libraries maintained by the people are cradles of democracy, and their spread can never fail to extend and strengthen the democratic ideal, the equality of the citizen, the royalty of man. They are emphatically fruits of the true American ideal."

-Andrew Carnegie, 1903

Carnegie Library Building Program

- 1886-1917
- $41,748,689
- 1689 libraries
- 1419 communities (in America)
- 42 states

Carnegie Library, Millbank, SD, 1907

A Question of Philanthropy?

Libraries...

"...only help those who help themselves"

-Andrew Carnegie

Main Branch
Detroit Public Library, 1901
A Simple Composition

- Adult reading room
- Children’s reading room
- Reference section
- Book storage
- Library office
- Auditorium
- Restrooms

By Mid-20th Twentieth Century

- Adult reading room
- Young adult section
- Children’s section
- Reference room & Special collections
- Periodicals
- Meeting rooms
- Support spaces for staff and special needs

ARPANET, Internet, and the “World Wide Web”

- ARPANET…1969
- Internet and “World Wide Web”

80% of households by 2003

Dire Threat or Potent Ally?

Shifting Gears for the New Millennium

- Entrance
- Circulation desk
- Reference facilities
- Children’s facilities
- Young adult facilities
- Multimedia facilities
- Special collections/archives
- Literacy center
- Meeting/seminar rooms
- Collaborative study rooms
- Convenience facilities
- Library store
- Displays
- Workrooms/offices
- Staff Lounge
- Friend of the Library
- Interior storage
- Remote storage

Subsequent Trends

- Popular materials
- Local history
- Genealogy
- Donor recognition area
- Art gallery and display areas
- Community/multipurpose rooms
- Entrepreneurial space (cafes, bookstores, ancillary services)
Case Studies

Burton-Barr Central Library
Phoenix, AZ

Salt Lake City Main Library
Salt Lake City, UT

Burton-Barr Central Library
- Designed by Will Bruder
- Opened 1995
- “Book warehouse”

Burton-Barr Central Library

First Floor

Second Floor

Third Floor

Fourth Floor

Fifth Floor
Fourth Floor

Fifth Floor

Solar Candle

Burton-Barr Central Library

- Detachment
- “Mesa” in the desert
- Internally activated
- “Book Warehouse”

Salt Lake City Main Library

- Designed by Moshe Safdie
- Opened 2003
- “Urban Room”

Salt Lake City Main Library

- Lower Level

- Library
- Meeting Rooms
- Central Area
- Fourth Street Area
- Children’s Area
- Book Warehouse
Lower Level—Children’s Section

Crystal Cave
Grandma’s Attic

Second Floor
Reading Gallery
Canteena

Third Floor

Fourth Floor

Fifth Floor
Conclusions

- Libraries are attracting new users while retaining their traditional user base.
- Libraries continue to serve as a free and public access point for the written word and now provide many learning opportunities for their modern communities of users.
- Libraries still help “those who help themselves.”

Contact Information

Robert A. Young, PE
University of Utah
College of Architecture + Planning
375 South 1530 East Rm. 235 AAC
Salt Lake City, UT  84112-0370

Phone: (801) 581-3909
Fax: (801) 581-8217
Email: young@arch.utah.edu