

# History of the West Lafayette Branch Library

From its opening over seventy-five years ago to its current location today, the West Lafayette Branch of the Coshocton County District Library has



undergone many significant changes. The West Lafayette community received the gift of a public library on October 10, 1936 with the opening of the West Lafayette Branch in a vacant room in the Main Street School basement. It took the efforts of a committee of local citizens consisting of Mrs. Russell Berlean, Mrs. Josephine Carr,

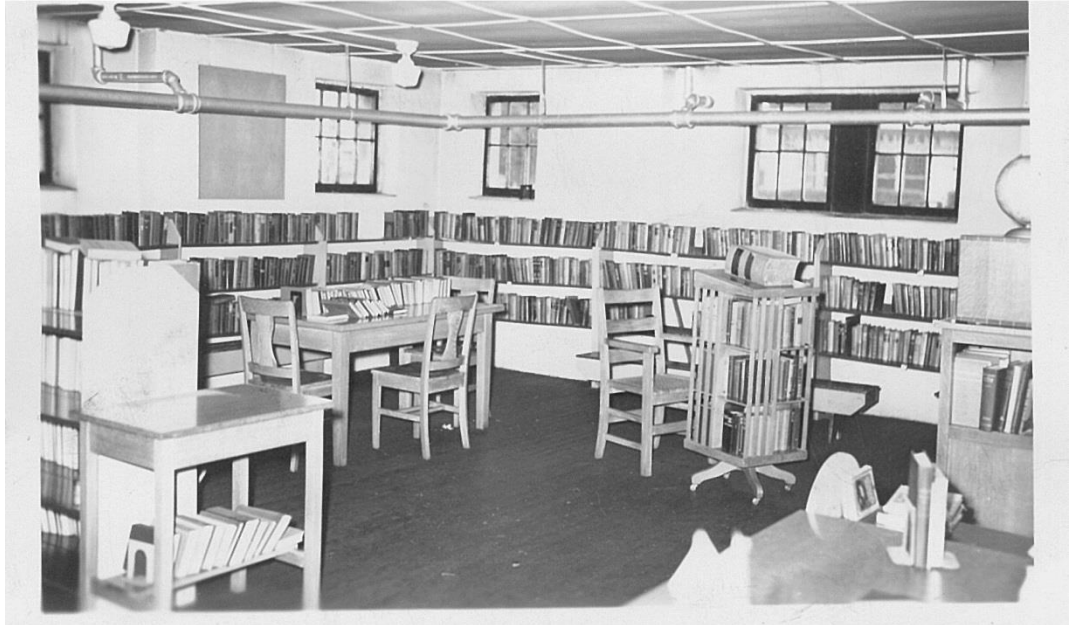
Mrs. R.L. Rehard and Harold Pence along with many community service organizations and individual volunteers working together to provide the funds and services needed to supply books and equipment for the library. Shelves and racks were built by the West Lafayette High School Industrial Arts class. Volunteers, such as Nellie Moore (Guilliams) and Mary Ellen Moore (Powell) to name a few, staffed the library throughout the first winter until Mrs. Jerry Newman was appointed as the first librarian.



She was followed by Mrs. Elmer Kobel, Mrs. Carl Hawk, Mrs. Harvey Buker (pictured to the left), Mrs. Walker Babcock, Nellie Guilliams, Margaret Lowe, Linda Yoder, and presently Andrea Schweitzer Smith.

Nellie Guilliams served as Branch Manager for forty-two years, with a total of 64 years of library service. The current staff today includes Andrea Schweitzer Smith, Margaret Reveal, Amanda Geary, and Cindy Baker.

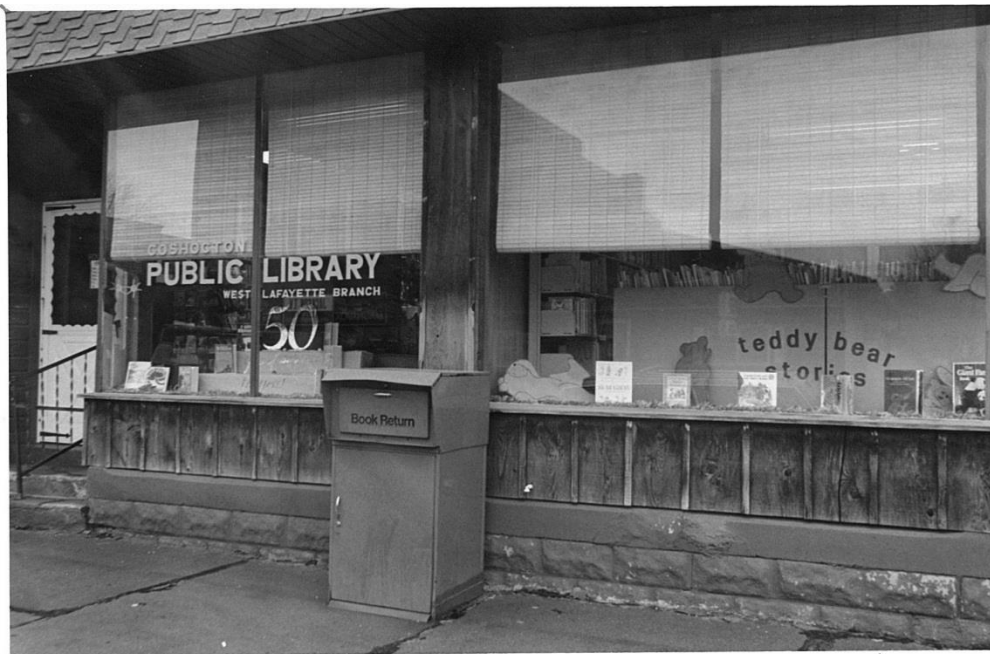
Several years after opening, the library was moved into a different room in the basement of the Main Street School. In August of 1946 when the basement classroom was needed by the school, the library moved to a rented room on the south side of Main Street in the Rehard building, also known as the old Dale Gress Real Estate building.



Glazier's Barber Shop was located in the left side of the building with the Branch Library located in the right. Located at 117 East Main Street, the Branch library stayed in that location for twenty-nine years.

The Branch collection in 1946 included 3,000 volumes.

In October 1975, the library was relocated again to 108 East Main Street.



At that time the library collection was increased to over 7,000 books and the library broadened its materials to include books on cassette and videocassettes.

The building provided space for story time sessions, which were and are still quite popular with local children.

As time passed, the Library Board and Director began discussing the option of moving the Branch Library to a different building since the library on Main Street was becoming too small for the collection and parking was difficult.



(Nellie Guilliams, seated, and Ruth Pritts)



At last, it was decided that the library would be housed in the former Apple's Pennzoil Station at the corner of Main Street and State Route 93. With much excitement, the station was transformed into a pleasant library with a new interior, designed by Pamela Maxfield-Ontko and constructed by Carl Cognion Construction. The library staff, as well as members from the West Lafayette Rotary Club, West Lafayette Lions Club, and West Lafayette Junior Guild joined together to transport thousands of books to their new home. Members of the Junior Guild have assisted with each move.



On July 15, 1991, the new West Lafayette Branch Library opened at its current site of 601 East Main Street. A Grand Opening Celebration was held on August 24, 1991.

During the 1990's the library collection grew to 15,000 books, thirty magazines, three newspaper subscriptions, 430 videocassettes, and a copy machine was added as a public service. Junior Guild members continue to provide a monthly display at the Branch for over fifteen years. During 2005, the West Lafayette Rotary Club gave an outdoor Reading Shelter to





the Branch library as its Centennial project with seating provided by two Eagle Scouts. This provided a much needed space for library programming and continues to be available for public use. In 2009, the West Lafayette Janusian Club and the West Lafayette Junior Guild provided patio tables and seating for an outdoor Reading Garden area.



Today, the West Lafayette Branch Library has grown beyond its walls as it participates in the over 200 member library SEO Library Consortium, making available to the community over 6.7 million items. eBooks, digital audiobooks, digital magazines, music, and videos are also available for

loan through the Ohio Digital Library. The Branch maintains a rotating collection of materials to keep the local selection updated.

It provides computers and laptops for public use while being the only location in the village of West Lafayette with free Wi-Fi Internet access and wireless printing. Last year the Branch served over 43,000 customers, meeting the informational and recreational needs of the community in a variety of media for lifelong learning opportunities.





The addition of the Rotary Reading Shelter continues to enable the Branch to offer programming for teens, adults, and children throughout the spring, summer, and fall months.



From a tiny, basement classroom staffed by volunteers, the West Lafayette Branch Library is, over 75 years later, a community landmark with a friendly and dedicated staff, still serving the citizens of West Lafayette, eastern Coshocton County, and surrounding areas with

enrichment opportunities and resources for lifelong learning.

Andrea Schweitzer Smith  
Branch Manager  
c.2015

