



A Centennial Celebration: 100 Years of Life For Corbin Libraries

By Diane M. Mitchell

FOREWORD

Charlotte Vaughn, who served as a Trustee on the Corbin Public Library Board for a number of years, telephoned me in 2007 and requested that I consider becoming a member of that group. Glennis Hensley was ending her term of service, and a replacement was needed. My mother, who had been ill for almost a year, requiring 24 hour care each day, had recently passed away, and I told myself I was too worn out to take on another time-consuming venture at that time. I was already serving as President of the Ossoli Club of Corbin, which met at least once each month and sometimes twice, and I would have that job for at least another year. Charlotte did not accept my initial 'no' and gave many reasons why I should accept. Being a retired Corbin High School English teacher, I knew how valuable the library was and how important it was to have a good town library. "We only meet once a month, and you won't have to do much," she added. I accepted the call and stepped over the threshold into a world of library needs and desires! I am thankful now that Charlotte did not accept my negative answer and did not tell me how hard the job would become if we did what we soon realized needed to be done.

I joined the CPL Board of Trustees at an exciting time in the life of Corbin's libraries; the Board was aware of the need for a new library building; Bob Terrell had helped them begin a Building Fund for that purpose, and the Downtown Committee was encouraging the Board to consider moving the library into one of the unused buildings on Main Street. During my first meeting with the Board, the main topic of discussion was the condition of the downtown buildings being suggested and how difficult it would be to renovate them. During the following year, Board members did tour a number of the downtown buildings, however, and had a few of them evaluated for library use; none turned to be a feasible choice. Not long after I joined the Library Board, a needs assessment was completed, and the need for a new library was documented. We were so fortunate to find the Poynter building, which had been vacated by the Vintage House Restaurant. Jerry and Billie Jean Poynter loved the building they had designed and were happy that the library was interested in using it. The location was ideal, being next to the Corbin Post Office and within walking distance of the downtown area. The Poynter building, which became Corbin's third library building, is actually located in the neighborhood designated as the Corbin Renaissance Area, which is where Corbin's first businesses thrived for well over a decade. The Renaissance Area ends at the bridge separating Whitley and Knox Counties, and at one time, included the first Corbin Jail, City Hall, and the Carnegie Library. A structural engineer from the Kentucky Department of Libraries evaluated the Poynter building and deemed it a good choice for the library's needs. After the Poynter building was purchased, the long journey of planning a functional and beautiful library began. In my opinion, the library building is beautiful, peaceful and relaxing. At the same time, I feel it functions well as a library; many patrons must agree because circulation has nearly tripled since opening day! CPL Board members today face the task of renovating the adjoining building because the library is packed to the brim and already needs more room. How wonderful!

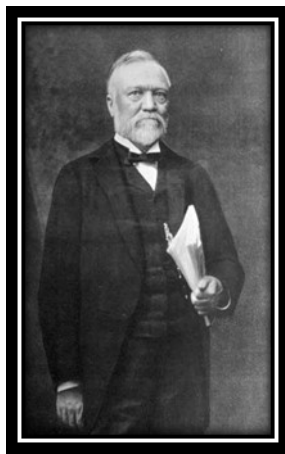
Corbin's Public Libraries began life in 1916 and remain healthy today, 100 years later. When I started the task of learning about the history of our libraries, my intention was just to document a few facts for the 100th Anniversary of Corbin's Libraries. I can't begin to tell you what a joy this journey has been; I have rekindled friendships during my quest for needed information; I have learned so much more than I realized I needed to know; and I have grown to respect and love all three of Corbin's libraries and the trustees and librarians who gave so much of their energy and time to give our libraries worthwhile, meaningful lives.

The Corbin Library is a well-kept treasure in our town; as Mayor McBurney and I have often said, it is a treasure that remains hidden from far too many. To enter this treasure house, only interest is needed, so if you are interested, come on in. If you like what you see and would like to take some treasures home with you to enjoy for a while, all you need is a library card, and that will cost you nothing.

Celebrating 100 Years of Corbin's Libraries

It is fortunate that fairly early in the town's existence Corbin citizens realized the value of having a free public library. Matters of arts and culture are often encouraged by the women in society, and Corbin's first women's club (the Women's Improvement Club) was no exception. According to the ***First Biennial Report of the Kentucky Library Commission 1910-1911***, found in the CPL collection of records, a Corbin Free Public Library opened on Sept. 30, 1911, with a book reception in a private home. The collection of 200 volumes was organized by and under the management of the Women's Improvement Club. The room was given rent free and was open to the public on Saturday afternoons. Mrs. B. G. Wager was the librarian. While this library collection offered citizens access to books they may not otherwise have read, the ladies in the club soon recognized a need for a larger, more accessible building.

The 'free public library' movement in America received a huge boost when industrial magnate Andrew Carnegie took up the cause. Carnegie's formal education had ended at age 11 when his family left Scotland for America, so he had improved himself by way of using the private libraries shared with him by others. Recalling his own youth, Carnegie knew that public libraries could give "working boys" the opportunity to acquire knowledge and improve themselves, as he had as a lad. Carnegie went on to amass a fortune from his Carnegie Steel Company and used this fortune to fund 2,500 public libraries in 10 different countries between 1883 and 1919.¹ Pictured below is a Getty Image reprinted from the stock photos of Carnegie on ***Google.com***.



Andrew Carnegie
(1835-1919)

Industrialist, Businessman, Entrepreneur and Philanthropist

"It was from my own early experience that I decided there was no use to which money could be applied so productive of good to girls and boys who have good within them and ability and ambition to develop it as the founding of a public library" ...Andrew Carnegie

The Carnegie Library Program coincided with the rise of women's clubs in America, whose efforts also established public libraries. Women's clubs began spearheading lending libraries and reading rooms especially as an antidote to the dreaded saloon. A public library not only loaned patrons books free of charge, but also provided a quiet sanctuary where people could retreat from a noisy boarding house or crowded worker's cottage.² Many ladies in the Women's Improvement Club surely remembered the fire in 1903 that destroyed 22 buildings in Corbin, including 10 saloons clustered along Florence Avenue between Center Street (now known as Roy Kidd Ave.) and the L&N Railroad Crossing (above and north of what is now the underpass). Pictured below is Saloon Row in the early 1900's found in a library scrapbook.



Ada Gray Gilliam, a member of one of Corbin's first families and wife of J.A. Gilliam, a city councilman and later one of Corbin's Mayors, was a leader in the Women's Improvement Club and spent much of her time and effort working to get a library in Corbin. The ladies of the Improvement Club wrote letters to Andrew Carnegie making Corbin's case for one of his libraries, and Ada Gilliam used her own money to travel to Washington, D.C. to plead for building funds from the Carnegie Foundation. Ada G. Gilliam served on the Corbin Public Library Board of Trustees for a number of years after Corbin acquired it.³ Her husband, J.A. Gilliam, was appointed on Sept. 3, 1914, by Mayor J. T. Nelson to serve on the first library committee along with G. M. Smith, G. T. Anderson, Miss Mary O'Mara, Mrs. R.Y. Chappell, and Tom (name impossible to decipher—looks like Atlorgr). Councilmen approving this appointment were A. D. Murrell, A. D. Cloyd, J. H. Arnold, J.A. Gilliam, and Guy Hatfield.⁴

Carnegie considered a library "the best possible gift for a community," and he required the town to help support the facility once it was built. The Carnegie Library Formula required a financial commitment from the town that received the donation: at the minimum a town-owned building site and ongoing annual operating expenses (typically 10 percent of the library's construction cost).⁵

On June 17, 1913, City Councilman L.W. Pulliam moved “that the city donate a lot for a public library building and 10% annually for 20 years on the cost of constructing said building, which shall not exceed \$6000, to maintain a public library in the city of Corbin; provided, Mr. Carnegie will donate the funds for the construction of said building.” Mayor J.W. Wyrick, and City Councilmen, A.D. Cloyd, John A. Gilliam, J.T. Nelson, and L. W. Pulliam were present. The ye and nay vote was taken. The result was recorded; all present voted ye. Minutes were signed by Thomas Young, Clerk, and J.W. Wyrick, Mayor.⁶

After the application was submitted, the final decision was made by Carnegie’s secretary-assistant James Bertram based upon the town’s need and its readiness for a Carnegie-funded library. The amount of money donated to most communities was based on U.S. Census figures and averaged approximately \$2 per person.⁷ With the news that the money would be granted for a Carnegie Library to be built in Corbin, on Feb. 23, 1915, the City Council adopted by unanimous ye vote the following resolution: “Whereas Carnegie Corporation of New York has agreed to furnish \$6000 to the City of Corbin to erect a free public library Building, on condition that said City of Corbin shall pledge itself by resolution of Council to support a free public library at a cost of \$600 per year and provide a suitable site for said building, now therefore, Be it Resolved by the Council of the City of Corbin that said City of Corbin accept said donation and it does hereby pledge itself to comply with the requirements of said Carnegie Corporation of New York. Resolved, That it will furnish a suitable site for said building and will maintain a free public library in said building when erected at a cost of \$600 a year. Resolved, That an annual levy shall hereafter be made upon the taxable property of said city sufficient in amount to comply with the above requirements.” Council members present on that historic day were Jas. T. Nelson, Mayor; Councilmen, J. H. Arnold, T.N. Ballard, A.D. Cloyd, J.A. Gilliam, Guy Hatfield, and A.D. Murrell.⁸

Dot Dizney Foley, speaking about her love of the library and its importance at a tea on April 20, 1961, during National Library Week, said that the lot for the Corbin Carnegie Library was donated to the city by Guy Hatfield.⁹ Hatfield was listed as one of the city councilmen when Andrew Carnegie agreed to fund Corbin’s library in 1915.

Hearing the news that a Carnegie Library was to be built in Corbin and being aware of Corbin’s continued expansion at this time, Major William Heath (Corbin’s 1st Mayor and a prominent business owner) encouraged his much younger brother, Forest Booth Heath, a contractor working in Marion, Kentucky, to come to Corbin and open a lumber business.¹⁰ F.B. Heath (later called “Pop”) did move to Corbin, was contracted to build the Carnegie Library, established the Heath Lumber Company, and built several homes in east Corbin and other parts of the city. “Pop” Heath’s homes were well built, sturdy, and treasured; many of them remain today as useful, occupied residences. According to *Corbin Vignettes* by H.E. Everman, “Pop” con-

sidered the Carnegie Library his finest achievement. Hank Everman is well qualified to make that statement since he is married to the former Linda Heath, “Pop” Heath’s granddaughter. Copies of “Pop” Heath’s contract to build the Carnegie Library at a price of \$4,708 and a letter concerning the winter weather slowing the building progress can be found in the History Room. Some things happened more quickly in 1916; the contract to build the Carnegie Library was signed on Feb. 7, and in spite of the winter blizzard mentioned, the building was dedicated and open for business in October of the same year, and it is still around today, 100 years later.



F.B. “Pop” Heath

Each town chose its own architectural design; a Library Guide to direct towns toward choosing a design that combined functionality with “good taste in building” was available for grant recipients. Carnegie libraries became architectural gems. Each had “Carnegie Library” prominently carved above the front entrance. (While **Wikipedia.org** does make this statement and perhaps this was the desired outcome of the Carnegie Foundation, some of the Carnegie Library buildings did not have “Library” carved above the front entrance. Corbin’s Carnegie Library, however, does.)

Neoclassical Revival architecture, sporting stately columns and a picturesque pediment, resembled a miniature Greek Temple and was tremendously popular at the time. Most of the libraries were single story on a raised foundation with a basement to hold meeting rooms, restrooms and the furnace. The structure had a stone or brick exterior with tasteful embellishment. Above all, the Carnegie Library provided free service to all. The simple and formal architecture welcomed patrons who entered through a prominent doorway, accessed by way of a staircase. The entry staircase symbolized a person’s elevation by learning. Most of the libraries

also had a lamppost or lantern outside as a symbol of enlightenment.¹¹ Corbin's Carnegie Library, pictured below, does not have a lamppost.



The interior featured “modern” library elements such as open stack shelving that allowed patrons to browse and discover books on their own. The children pictured below are using the freedom of selecting books from the shelves of Corbin's Carnegie Library.



According to a library report found in a scrapbook in the Corbin Public Library History Room, “The Carnegie Library had an adult reading room, a junior reading room and a large room in the basement which was once used as the bookmobile headquarters and then later as the Regional Headquarters for the Kentucky Department of Libraries. At one time or another, the basement was used for public meetings, classes, and club programs, and for many years the

library was the center for a community art class." Pictured below is a group of men attending a meeting in the Carnegie Library building.



At least 45 people attended an art class taught in the basement of the Carnegie Library.





Girl Scouts and other groups met in the basement of the Carnegie Library. Below, students enjoy working on a project at the library.



During National Library Week 1961, an Open House was held at the Carnegie Library. The Garden Clubs active in town at that time worked together to provide and serve the Tea for the event. Serving as hostesses for the Tea were the Corbin Garden Club, the Cumberland Falls Garden Club and the Forsythia Garden Club.

Mrs. Laura Bryant served as Librarian from 1920 until 1951. Until 1951, according to a report found in the CPL History Room, the library was supported by a share of the fines collected in city police court.

In 1916, a Board of Trustees, appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the City Commission, was the sole governing body of the library. These people received no money for their services. This is still true today.

A number of the libraries funded by Carnegie remain today, and many of them have been approved to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Corbin officials received word of approval from the NRHP in early 1986 that six sites and one residential area in Corbin had been added to the Register; Corbin's Carnegie Library is one of them.¹²

According to CPL records, the Carnegie Library was re-organized as the Corbin Public Library in 1951. Though the library was named the Corbin Public Library from that time and remains so today, the library was housed in the Carnegie Library building until 1968. Mrs. Edward Cummins was made the new librarian in 1951, and the collection at that time was 3,166 volumes. Pictured below, Gay Cummins checks out books for a library patron.



My friend, Don Edwards, who passed away recently, was a columnist for the Lexington *Herald Leader*; before he retired in 2001, he wrote some outstanding selections. One of those was about Gay Cummins and honored her as a librarian at the Carnegie Library when Don was growing up in Corbin in the 1950's. He recalls the "dreary mountain town" of his youth and the

“little library” he frequented which he says had a bookmobile, art lessons in the basement, and a Great Books discussion group. He fondly remembers Mrs. Cummins, as so many who grew up in Corbin in the 50’s remember her, “I realized that she had been one of the most important persons in my life because of the good books she had steered me toward in elementary school and that the little library had served as a great escape for the imagination in a dreary mountain town.” Gay Cummins remained the Librarian at Carnegie Library for 13 years. “The library was my life and I loved it,” she said, during Don’s interview with her.

In December 1953, the Corbin Public Library began county bookmobile service.



*Whitley County's First Bookmobile
Presented by the citizens of Corbin
Mrs. Earl Kidd, Bookmobile Librarian*

Though many people and organizations supported the bookmobile endeavor, it was not an adequate amount to finance the program. With 483 square miles in the county and over 65 county schools to visit, the bookmobile was hard pressed to cover its rounds on the money

available. Mrs. Earl Kidd served as bookmobile librarian until 1957 when Mrs. Charles LeForce became the bookmobile librarian. The library's report states, "In 1959 the Fiscal Court and the County Board of Education withdrew their support. In late 1959 and early 1960, the (CPL) library board, with the help of interested friends, raised over \$2000 in the Corbin vicinity, and the City of Corbin increased its appropriation to the library, but without county support there was not enough money to continue the bookmobile. In March of 1960, the Corbin Library board voted to cease to attempt to maintain the bookmobile. By not having county tax support, we were forced to withdraw from the Valley of Parks Library Region and thus lost nearly everything that was held in the library's collection, plus of course, a sizeable amount of cash."¹³

In 1961 and in 1962, a library tax was placed on the ballot and was defeated both times. The last time it lost by 77 votes. In spite of these disappointments, some Corbin citizens persevered to help the library; Mrs. Raymond Bolton accepted the task of directing National Library Week activities in Corbin in 1961. Pictured below are members of her executive committee for the event: Left to right are Peggy Houser, Dot Cannon, Frances Gieszl, Gay Cummins, Mrs. Bolton, Mrs. Morgan, and Flo Inman.



Mrs. Cummins resigned as librarian in 1964, and Mrs. Charles LeForce was named to take her place.

The 1964 legislature adopted a statute permitting library taxes to be formed by a petition of the majority of voters in the last general election and a petition was circulated with success in the county. In one year the tax brought in between \$12,000 and \$14,000 which was shared between the Whitley County Library in Williamsburg and Corbin Public Library.

J. Malcolm Higgins circulated a petition in 1965 and 1966 which was intended to abolish the library tax, but it did not contain enough signatures; in addition, a court judge ruled that a tax could not be removed if a library held indebtedness against itself. The library in Williamsburg was not paid for, so the tax was assured.¹⁴

The Carnegie Library had served Corbin well for 51 years, but the city was outgrowing it. A new 5,000 square-foot building was begun in 1967 on the Wade Candler property across the street from the Carnegie building. The new building was to be the headquarters for the new Regional Library and was to serve the counties of Whitley, Knox, and McCreary. The building cost about \$165,000 and was financed from four different sources: the Federal Government contributed 64% of the cost; the state of Kentucky provided 21% of the cost, and the Regional Library provided \$10,000; the rest was provided by the City of Corbin.¹⁵ The new building opened with a collection of 15,000 books and was dedicated on November 23, 1968.

Pennington Construction Company was the contractor for the new building, and Donald B. Shelton was architect. Members of the Library Board were Raymond Farmer, Chairman; David R. Culp, Jr., Mrs. Frank Gieszl, Rev. Thermon Taylor, and Mrs. Bill Russell. Mrs. Charles LeForce was the Librarian. Members on the Corbin Public Library Service Corporation were W.C. Ashley, President; Raymond Farmer, Secretary; James R. Campbell, Treasurer; Walter P. Byrd, John L. Crawford, Dr. Elmer G. Prewitt, and Rev. Thermon Taylor.¹⁶



RIBBON CUTTING—Mayor Robert VanBeber is shown as he officially opened the new Corbin Public Library Saturday afternoon. A large crowd attended the dedication ceremonies with Dr. J. M. Boswell, president of Cumberland College, giving the dedicatory address. Shown from left to right are Library Board members, the Rev. Theron Taylor, Raymond Farmer (chairman) Mrs. Bill Russell, Mayor VanBeber, Dr. Boswell and board member Mrs. Frank Gieszl.

In September of 1970, the Regional offices in the Corbin Public Library were moved to the Regional offices in London, Kentucky. Their office space in the building was then used to house periodicals and storage.¹⁷



This library served patrons for over 40 years, but a needs assessment, compiled in 2007, showed a definite need for a larger library building with more parking availability. Bob Terrell had already recognized a need for a larger building and had encouraged the Board of Trustees to think about starting a Building Fund. He pledged \$1000 each year of 2007-2011 to that fund and a gift of \$5000 at the end of 2011 for the Building Fund if a Building Project had been started or a commitment for a starting date had been reached by that time.¹⁸ This pledge evidently provided the boost needed because the library's Board of Trustees purchased the building owned by Jerry and Billie Jean Poynter on the corner of Roy Kidd Avenue and Laurel Avenue in April 2009. While the building was considered perfect for library use, it required renovation, including an expensive elevator. Early estimates of the cost for those items came in under the actual cost needed. It was later announced that a sprinkler system would be required (originally, the Trustees had been told no sprinkler system would be needed) and steel beams would be needed to reinforce the second level for the added weight of library books! It was a large pill to swallow, but the Board of Trustees decided to do what needed to be done to have a beautiful and safe structure for library patrons. A Groundbreaking Ceremony was held in March of 2010.

In spite of an implication that the Corbin Public Library Board lacked competence and should turn control of Corbin's library over to the Whitley County Public Library Board,¹⁹ the CPL Board of Trustees trudged on with the job. The additional \$200,000 needed was borrowed and was paid back when the previous library building was sold to Ralph and Kathy Hoskins. The following pictures of the new Corbin Library are used through the courtesy of Kat's Eye Photography.



The Periodical Reading Room inside the new library.

The Ribbon Cutting and official dedication of the new library building took place on December 9, 2010. According to a library report compiled by Trustee Charlotte Vaughn, Director Huff reported the library's collection had grown to around 27,824 volumes at that time. Members of the Corbin Public Library Board of Trustees throughout the construction process of the third Corbin Public Library were Diane Mitchell, Chair; Charlotte Vaughn, Anne Hoskins,

Michelle Mayo, and Cathy Dean. Brenda Huff was Librarian. Tony Worley was Architect and John Marks was Contractor.

Many in Corbin helped the new library become a reality. It would be impossible to name everyone in this account, but the names of many may be found inside the new library. The Atrium was donated by the Hoskins family in memory of Springer Hoskins and in honor of Anne Hoskins. The Tree of Knowledge in the Atrium, names many supporters. A plaque near the elevator recognizes Partnership Level donations. On the second floor of the library, the History Room was furnished by Charlotte Vaughn in memory of her husband, Robert D. Vaughn. The Phyllis Terrell Children's Room recognizes many contributions the Terrell's have made over many years. The Ossoli Club of Corbin Community Room was completely furnished through the club's donation, and the Corbin Tourism Commission provided the \$20,000 which made the Reading Garden possible. Plaques throughout the building recognize art selections donated by local artists and furniture donated by Corbin citizens. All of this support helped the dream materialize. Pictured below is an event held in the Reading Garden during Poetry Week.



Statistics confirm the opinion that patrons are using the new library; circulation and visitors have more than doubled in the years since the building opened.²⁰ Corbin Public Library is a busy place almost any time: computer use is up considerably, circulation is nearly three times

what it was in 2009 in the previous building, meeting areas are bursting at the seams on many occasions, and more meeting space is needed for scheduling.

Five years after the opening of the third library, the Board of Trustees began a search for funding to purchase the building adjoining the library as a means of accommodating the need for additional space.

This year, the Board of Trustees purchased the adjoining building which will give the library 10,000 additional square feet of space. They are now working diligently on an application for funds to renovate the building through a Kentucky Department of Libraries Construction Grant. If they are successful, the new addition will accommodate an Internet/computer area, display area, two community rooms with dividers which can be removed for large groups and for Black Box Theater events, staff work area, kitchen area, Friends of the Library area, and conference area with two restrooms downstairs. Upstairs can accommodate meeting, tutoring, and class areas, as well as storage. The present library would have access to the additional building through two openings downstairs and two openings upstairs. The staff work room in the additional area would allow the History Room in the present library to expand into the large adjoining room, thus giving much needed space for history articles, books, and memorabilia. Members of the Board of Trustees are spending hours and hours of their precious volunteer time and effort to help Corbin Public Library be the best that it can be; we owe them a great debt of gratitude for that. Members serving on the CPL Board of Trustees at this time are Brenda Jones, Chair; Rob Miller, Anne Hoskins, Thelma "Frankie" Sasser, and Chris Lockhart. Library staff member Heather Croley is filling the position of Library Director until a permanent director is hired by the Board.

Many Corbin citizens recognize the importance of the library and support it in many ways, and patrons are using the library and growing because of it. Our city officials support our library and realize its importance; when they can, I feel certain they will increase the support they already give. The Corbin Public Library receives 25% of the Whitley County Library Tax funds collected. Friends of the Corbin Public Library is a valuable support group for the library. This group works diligently to help the library do many things it cannot do on its yearly budget.

Tonight's Chautauqua performance and the Reception food have been paid for with Friends of the Library funds, and \$1500 was recently given by Friends of the CPL to purchase needed library furniture.

I feel blessed to have served as a member of the Corbin Public Library Board of Trustees. While there were good and bad times, my fellow Board members and I trudged forward, and I am very proud to have been a part of the opening of Corbin's third library building. I believe with author Sidney Sheldon, that "Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life."

"A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert." ...Andrew Carnegie

Acknowledgments

A number of people helped me with the collecting and publishing of this history of Corbin's libraries; without their help I would have quit my quest long ago.

First, I greatly appreciate those who cared enough to preserve the past for those of us seeking answers in the future. Scrapbooks and pieces of history discovered in the History Room of the Corbin Public Library piqued my curiosity and pushed me in my quest to learn more about the libraries. Mrs. Gay Cummins, I feel certain, compiled at least one of the scrapbooks I found; Mrs. LeForce, Evelyn Kidd, and Mrs. Raymond Bolton, Director of National Library Week for Corbin in 1961, probably compiled the others; I would love to be able to tell them how valuable these books are for those seeking answers about the past.

Thank you to Anna Cummins Smith for sharing the Don Edwards' article about her mother; it brought to mind many memories of the Carnegie Library of the 50's and the Booth Tar-kington books I so loved to read.

Much appreciation goes to Linda Heath Everman for searching through family memorabilia and finding the contract her grandfather, “Pop” Heath, signed as contractor for the Carnegie Library. I found this document, along with the letter written to Mrs. Chappell concerning the effect of the winter weather on the building progress, very interesting.

Hank Everman’s suggestion that I should examine the City Record Books, especially Book #3, gave me the push I needed to really delve into some research. It was so exciting to find the actual dates of decisions made and committees appointed, as well as the actual wording of the resolution to build and support the Carnegie Library. For a moment, time seemed suspended, and I felt myself there in the room with the city’s leaders as they voted “yea,” giving birth to the Carnegie Library, Corbin’s first library building.

Thank you to the members of my family who patiently listened to me each time I found a new lead; I know they must be sick of hearing about libraries. Thank you to my daughter, Christina Bentley, for proofing my work; to my brother, Rob Miller, without whose technical assistance and computer knowledge, this wouldn’t be possible, and to my husband, Wendal, who ate whatever he could find and didn’t fuss too much when I had my head immersed for hours in the libraries’ past.

Footnotes

1. Cathleen Norman, “Carnegie Libraries in Colorado: Is there one in your town?” (<http://coloradogambler.com/colorado-history-carnegie-libraries-colorado-one-town/>).
2. Norman, Carnegie Libraries.
3. Robert B. Williams, for John L. Crawford, “Ravelings,” *Corbin Times Tribune*, Jan. 14, 1966.
4. *Corbin Record Book*, #3, Sept. 3, 1914.
5. Carnegie Library Formula, (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/carnegie_library#carnegie_formula).

6. **Corbin Record Book**, #3, June 17, 1913.
7. Carnegie Library Formula, **Wikipedia.com**.
8. **Corbin Record Book**,#3, Feb. 23, 1915.
9. Dot Dizney Foley, "My Treasures," **Corbin Daily Tribune**, April 22, 1961.
10. H.E. Everman, "Major William L. Heath," **Corbin Vignettes**.
11. Carnegie Library Formula.
12. "Local sites listed on National Register of Historic Places," **Corbin Times Tribune**, Sept. 24, 1988.
13. Library report in scrapbook in Corbin Public Library History Room.
14. Library report in scrapbook
15. "Library Dedication to be Nov. 23," **Corbin Daily Tribune**, Nov. 21, 1968.
16. "Library Dedication to be Nov. 23." Also inscribed on plaque remaining in the former library building which now houses Kat's Eye Photography.
17. Library report in scrapbook
18. "Robert Terrell," Pledge Letter presented to Corbin Public Library Board of Trustees, Feb. 11, 2007.
19. Trent Knuckles, "In the case of local libraries, one board should rule them all," **News Journal**, May 26, 2010.
20. Jeff Noble, "Library Book Circulation STACKING UP," **Times Tribune**, Feb. 24, 2014.

Ownership of pictures has been identified in the body of this paper where pictures were used; all other pictures used are the property of the Corbin Public Library or were from my personal collection.

About the Author

Diane Miller Mitchell was born in Corbin, Kentucky, in 1941. Her education began in the one-room school Mrs. C.E. Bunnell conducted out of her home on Fifth Street. Diane attended St. Camillus Academy for one semester but enrolled at East Ward School in January because she “wanted to go to the school where her Aunt Jay (Juanita Adkins McShane) taught.” Diane was an “East Ward Green Wave” until she entered Corbin High School, became a “Redhound” and was graduated in 1958. Her education continued at Union College in Barbourville, Kentucky, where she earned her B. A. Degree with a double major in English and French in 1962. She began her teaching career on the military post at Fort Knox High School and taught there three years before returning to Corbin to teach French and English at Corbin High School. She received a M.A. Degree from Union College in 1967, was named a Teacher of the Year at CHS, received a scholarship to study Journalism at UK one summer, and was awarded a Mellon Fellow Scholarship in 1989 to study the Foxfire Teaching Method under Eliot Wigginton. Diane says the Foxfire Method helped her teaching ability more than anything else she had studied, and that she truly loved teaching after that experience and beginning to practice the Foxfire rules. Following 34 years in the teaching profession, Diane retired in 1996. Since that time, she has remained active in the Corbin community: working in the Presbyterian Church Food Pantry, volunteering at Corbin’s United Effort, serving as a charter member of the Corbin Community Backpack Organization, participating in the Ossoli Club of Corbin, serving as the first President of the Ossoli Foundation Board, and serving as a Trustee on the Corbin Public Library Board from 2007 until April of 2015. She was Chair of the CPL Board during the last seven years of her term. Presently, Diane is an active member of Friends of Corbin Public Library and is a charter member of the Carnegie Center of Corbin Board, a new organization whose purpose is to purchase and renovate the Carnegie building, repurposing it for use as a community center.

