

## History of JCPL

Established in 1952, Jefferson County Public Library was founded on a commitment to freedom through knowledge for all residents by the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners. It was built on the pioneering efforts and determination of many civic associations and volunteers over the years.

The early years of JCPL began with several independent libraries, before the countywide system was formed.

The history of Golden Library starts just before the turn of the 20th century when four women's groups were founded in Golden: The Golden Fortnightly Club, the Progressive Literary Club, the Bay View and the Thursday Musicales. In 1913, under the leadership of the Progressive Literary Club, the four women's clubs banded together and formed the Golden Library and Improvement Association. Women's clubs purchased property at 713 13th St for \$900, and by 1952 the Golden Library housed a book collection of 7,860 items. The Golden Library joined the countywide system in 1962. A new Golden Library opened in 1970, and in 1996 the Golden Library moved to its current location on 10th St.

Ms Julia Brewster Douglas, a professional librarian from the Free Public Library of Newark, NJ, established Evergreen Library in 1917. The Evergreen Library remained an independent library until 1959, when they joined the countywide system. A new Evergreen Library opened at its current location in 1993.

The Ladies Aid Society of the Lakewood Community Church established Lakewood Library in 1937. The Lakewood library moved to 1537 S Wadsworth Blvd in 1949, and a new Lakewood Library opened at its current location in 1976.

The local Parent Teachers Association established Morrison Library in 1937. The Morrison Library was one of six NYA library projects in Jefferson County between 1937 and 1942. In 1958 Morrison Library joined the countywide system, and was closed 20 years later, in 1978.

The history of the Edgewater Library reads like the history of many community libraries in this country. It began with a pittance of funding but rested on a foundation of hard work and high hopes of citizens who were willing to put their backs and minds toward the creation of reading opportunities for all. Established in 1937, the Edgewater Library was first housed in the local high school, then moved to the Edgewater Town Hall. Edgewater Library affiliated with the countywide system in 1969. A new Edgewater Library opened in 1987 at its current location.

Arvada Public Library opened in 1938 in the Arvada Town Hall. In 1941 the Arvada Library moved to Wadsworth and Grandview, and in 1942 the library moved to another building in the same block. In 1950, the Citizens' Library Committee formed to find larger quarters for the library, moving it to a city-owned house in McElvoy Park in 1951. Thanks to fund-raising efforts of the Better Arvada Library League and city funds, ground was broken on August 3, 1965 for a new library at 57th and Dover St. In 1969, the Arvada Library affiliated with the county system. A new Arvada opened in September 2006 at its current location in Old Towne Arvada.

In 1939, the Sew and So Home Demonstration Club organized Fruitdale Public Library, originally the Fruitdale School Library, along with other Fruitdale School District clubs, including the Victory Club, the Mother's Club and the Book Club. Community Chest funding began in 1947. The library closed in 1953.

Three small libraries for summer reading for children composed the original Wheat Ridge Library. The Wheat Ridge Youth Council created them in 1944. The Wheat Ridge Library was housed in the back room of Bailey' Barber Shop on West 38th, the Columbia Height Library was in the firehouse on West 32nd, and the Mountain View Library was in the Wheat Ridge Town Hall on West 43rd. With books lent from the Colorado State Library

and with volunteer help, the reading rooms were very popular even though they were open only one day a week for four hours. Needing funds, the library joined the countywide system as soon as it was invited in 1953. At that time, the library was in the Wheat Ridge Grange. In 1959 it moved to 4429 Brentwood in a building rented from St. James Episcopal Church. It moved in 1961 to a larger building in the Wheat Ridge shopping area. In 1979, the new Wheat Ridge Library opened in its current location.

A milk house donated in 1950 by Mr. and Mrs. Norman Mayer on property they owned housed the first Conifer Library. It was supported by the Conifer Civic Club. In 1954, the club affiliated with the Jefferson County Public Library. In 1955, the library moved to a room in West Jefferson Elementary School. In 1964 it was proposed that the Conifer Library be closed and that mountain residents be served by the Bookmobile, due to low usage and lack of funds. However, 270 Conifer residents protested and the Conifer Library remained open. In 1996, the Conifer Library opened in the new Conifer High School under special contract with the Jefferson County R-1 School District as a shared high school/public library.

Construction for Villa Library began in 1968, making Villa the first library building owned by Jefferson County Public Library. Villa Library closed in August 2000, replaced by the Belmar Library in the Lakewood Commons.

Columbine Library shared a combined high school/public library at Columbine High school before the new building was built in Clement Park in 1989.

Standley Lake Library opened in 1991.

Daniels Library, one of the first four libraries to join JCPL in 1953, closed in 2003. JCPL's smallest library, it was open just six hours a week and its collection was unavailable to other users in the county. It also lacked sufficient space for computers and other services important to patrons. Daniels patrons were encouraged to use Belmar, Golden and Lakewood Library where they could receive more comprehensive service. The Daniels collection was redistributed to other libraries for wider patron use.

*Sources:*

*Scott, Jacqueline B. ed. 50 stories for 50 years: stories and history of the Jefferson County Public Library: 1952-2002. 1st ed. Conifer, CO: Red Fox Pub, 2002. Print. Amy Denniff, Edgewater Library Manager, personal interview*