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Two 19th Century Community Institutions: Public Libraries & Settlement Houses

SI 645

Sept 21, 2009-Week 2

A Variety of Institutions Arose in the 19th Century to Serve Communities

- Schools
- Libraries
- Newspapers
- Governmental agencies
- Settlement Houses
- Community organizations
- Professionals to work in many of these institutions

Historians Differ on their Focus &
On the Motivation of Early Librarians

- Jesse Shera, 1949 (period:1629-1855)
- Sidney Ditzion, 1947 (1855-1900)
- Michael Harris, 1973 (1850-WWII)
- Dee Garrison, 1979 (1876-1920)
- Abigail Van Slyck, 1995 (1890-1920)

Early Public Library Milestones

- 1731--Library Company of Philadelphia (Ben Franklin)-membership based
- 1833--First publicly funded (local taxation) public library, Peterborough, NH
- 1852--Boston Pubic Library followed quickly by New York, Chicago, etc.
- 1876 Founding of the American Library Association & its first conference
- 1879- Approximately 300 PLs in US
- 1882-Enoch Pratt gave $1,000,000 to Baltimore for its Public Library (still called the Enoch Pratt Library)
- 1883 start of the Carnegie's library philanthropy *program*

Peterborough (NH) Free Library

Opened 1833

The first public library supported by local taxes in the US and the world.

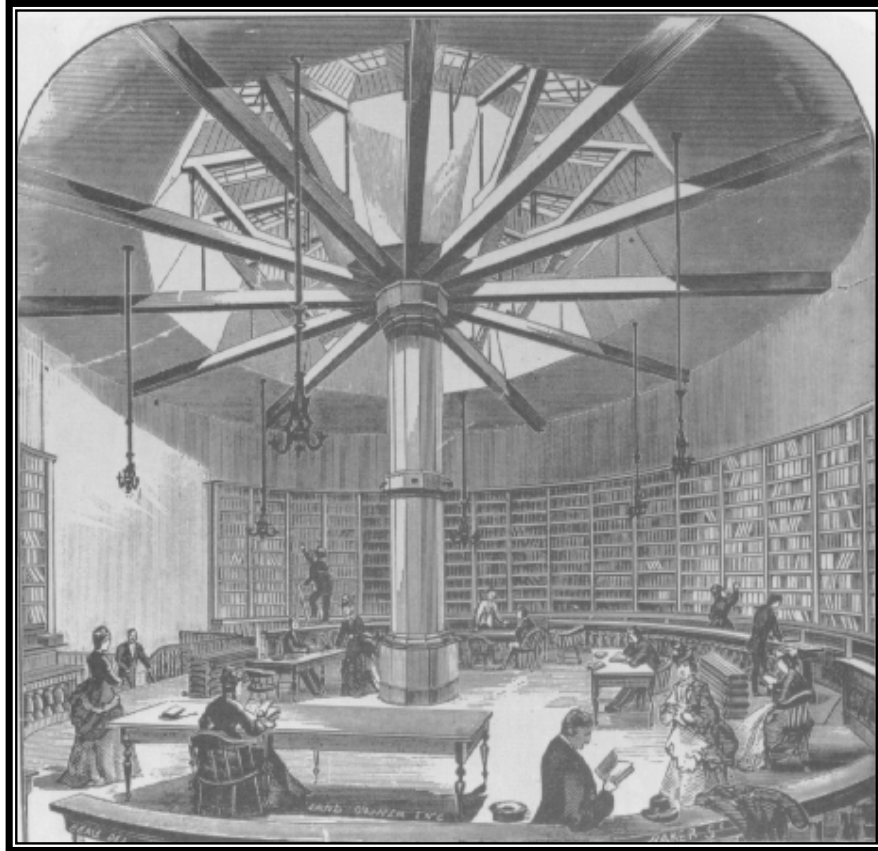# Boston Public Library Established 1852

PUBLIC LIBRARY, BOSTON, MASS.

Source: Undetermined

Chicago Public Library
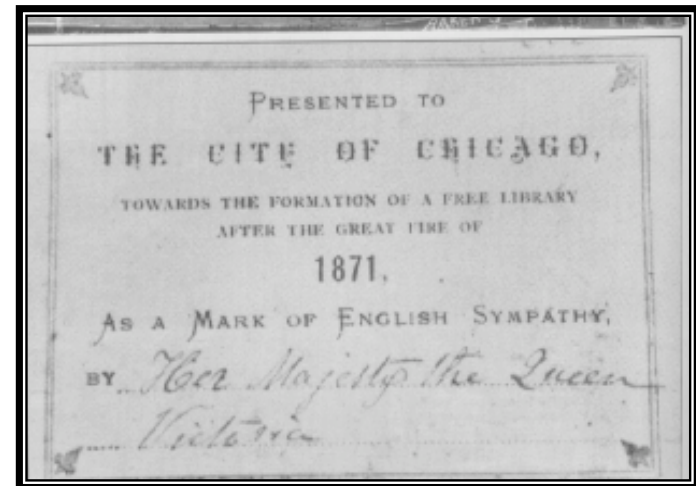
Water Tower Library

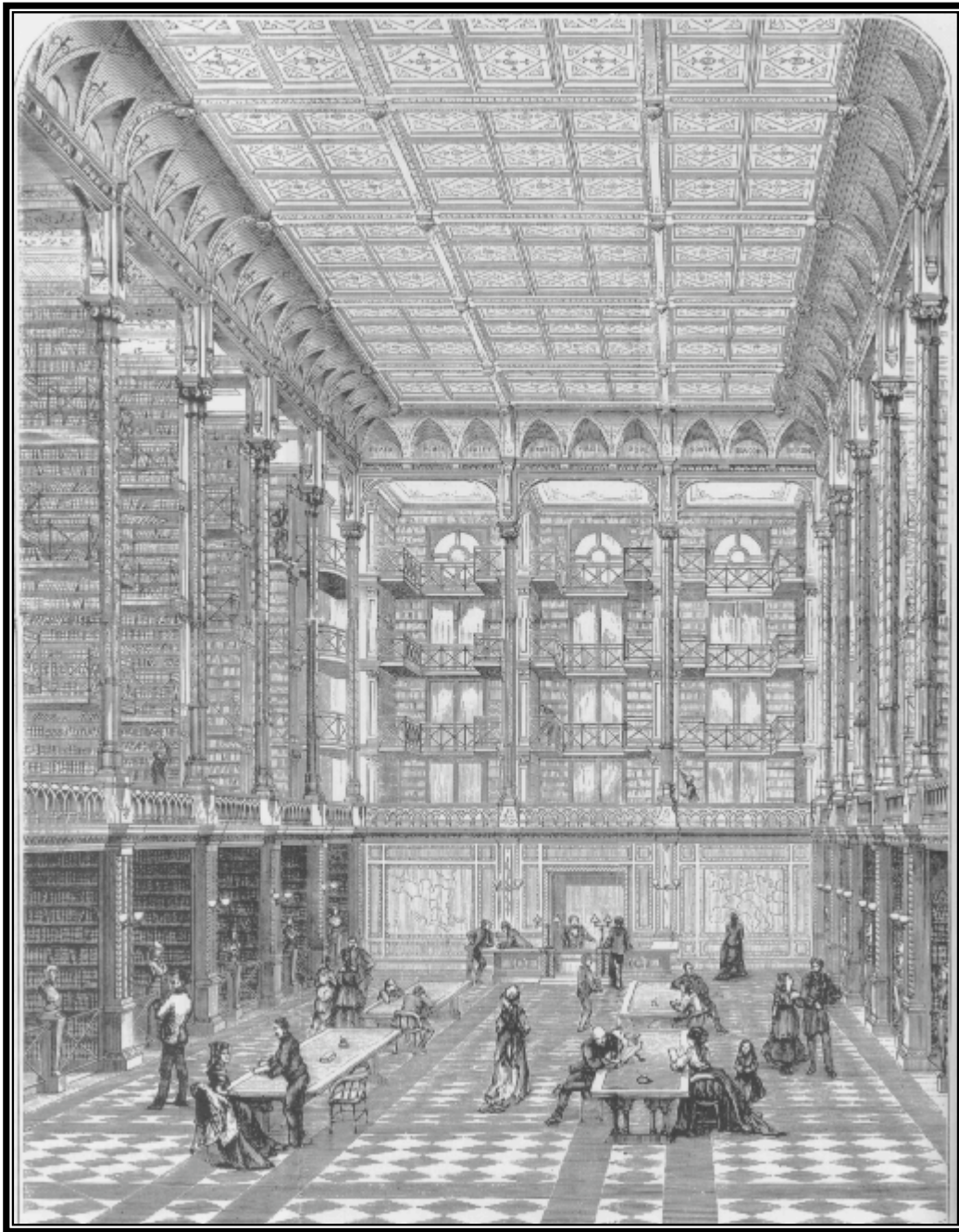## After the 1871 Fire

A bookplate inscribed by Queen Victoria, who donated books to Chicago after the great fire.

PRESENTED TO

THE CITY OF CHICAGO,

TOWARDS THE FORMATION OF A FREE LIBRARY

AFTER THE GREAT FIRE OF

1871.

AS A MARK OF ENGLISH SYMPATHY,

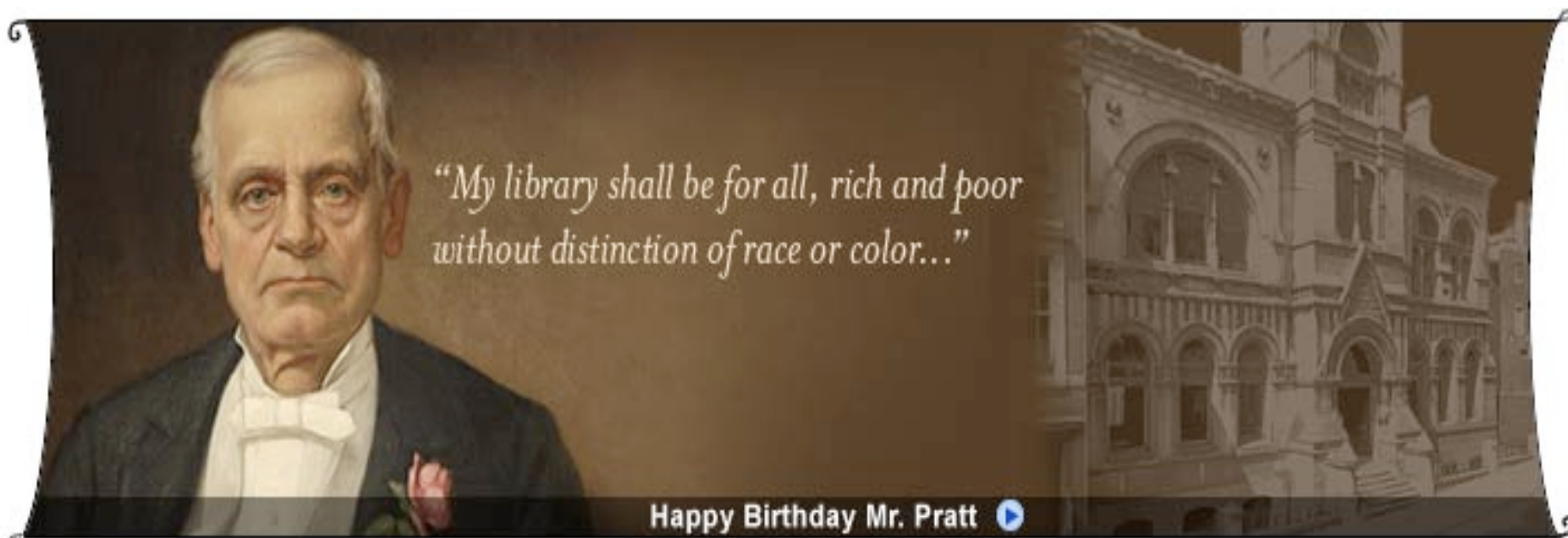BY *Her Majesty the Queen Victoria*

Cincinnati Public Library

Main Hall

This picture appeared in Harper's Weekly for March 21, 1874. The article called the library "the largest, best-arranged and only fire-proof public library building in the country."

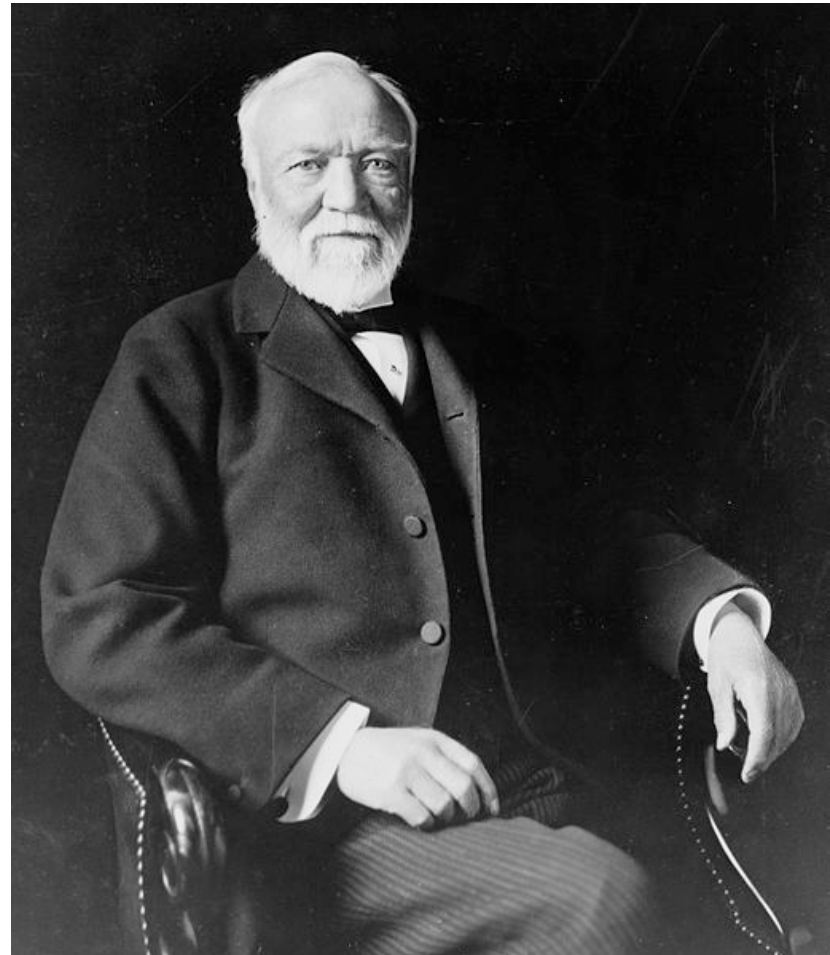# Enoch Pratt Endowed Baltimore's Public Library 1882

"My library shall be for all, rich and poor without distinction of race or color…"

Happy Birthday Mr. Pratt ▶

Source: Enoch Pratt Public Library http://www.prattlibrary.org/

A Wealthy Immigrant
Jump Started Public Library Development
1880–1920

Source: U.S. Library of Congress

Carnegie's Influence on Public Library Development

- Born 1845 Scotland- immigrated with parents to US 1848
- 1879 (you recall) there are 300 PLs in the US
- 1883 Andrew Carnegie began funding public library buildings (the first in his native Scotland)
- 1890 Carnegie funds the Allegheny (PA) Free Library
- Carnegie pays for building, community promises future funding of the library and its operations
- 1920 approx 3500 PLs in US-1/2 built by Carnegie Funds
- In 2005 (most recent gov't statistics) 9207 public library systems (with multiple branches)--funded by local & state governments

1st US Carnegie Library-Allegheny City PA-1890

Source: Nyttend, Wikimedia Commons

Memorial to Col. James Anderson at the First US Carnegie Library

Andrew Carnegie, in his memoir, reflecting on his days as a messenger boy:

". . . the messenger boys were hard worked. Every other evening they were required to be on duty until the office closed, and on these nights it was seldom that I reached home before eleven o'clock. On the alternating nights we were relieved at six. This did not leave much time for self-improvement, nor did the wants of the family leave any money to spend on books. There came, however, like a blessing from above, a means by which the treasures of literature were unfolded to me."

- Colonel James Anderson—"I bless his name as I write--announced that he would open his library of four hundred volumes to boys, so that any young man could take out, each Saturday afternoon, a book which could be exchanged for another on the succeeding Saturday."

Source: Andrew Carnegie's Memoirs

The 2nd US Carnegie Library—Pittsburgh: 1895

Source: Daderot,Wikimedia Commons
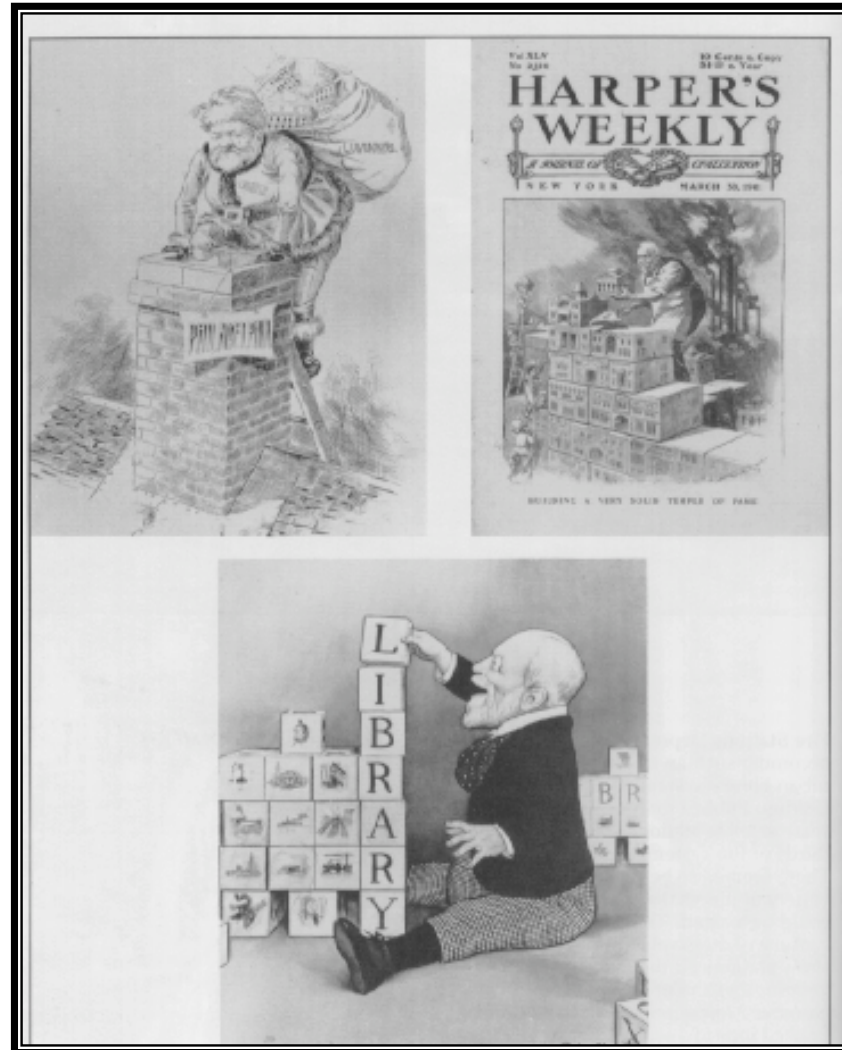
The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Periodical Room

Catalog Department

Main Lending Desk

From the
Philadelphia Inquirer
January 8, 1903

From
Harper's Weekly
March 30, 1901

From
Harper's Weekly
April 1903

1886-1920 Carnegie Era--Explosion is the growth of public libraries in the US.

A Few of Many Carnegie Libraries

Douglas, Wyoming

Coshocton, Ohio

Guthrie, Oklahoma

US Immigration During the Carnegie Library Building Era--1880-1920

- DECADE # of immig   % US Pop
- 1880s   *5,246,613*   *15%*
- 1890s   *3,687,564*   *14%*
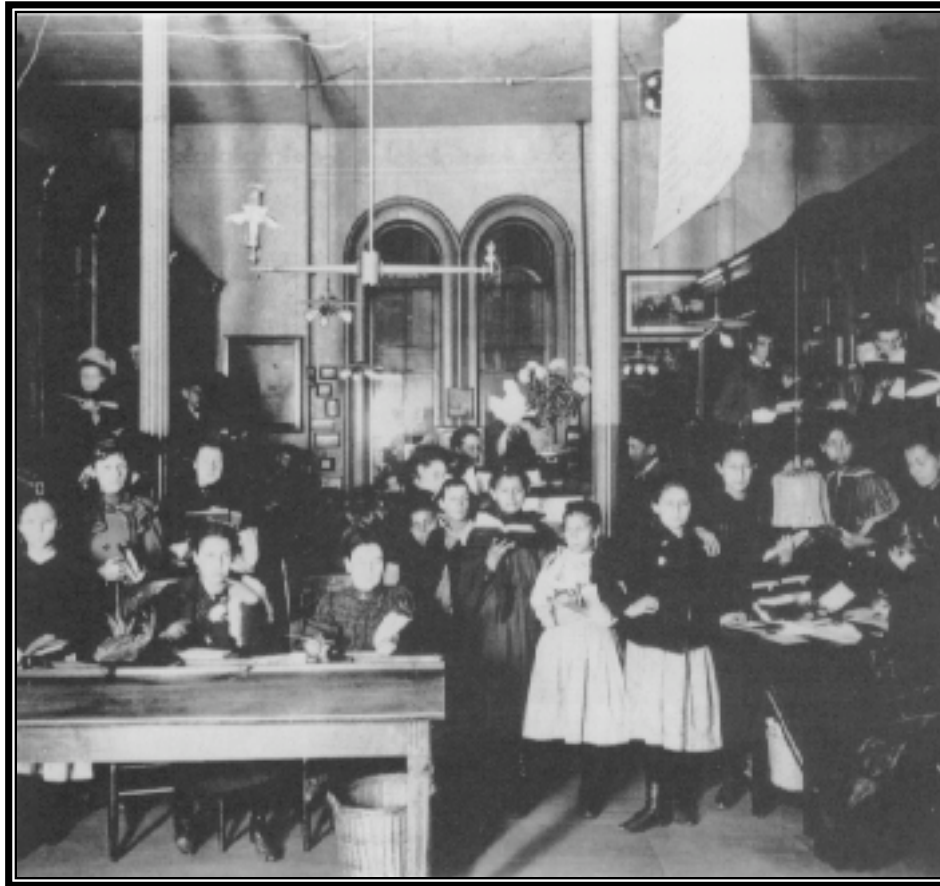- 1900s   *8,795,386*   *13%*
- 1910s   *5,735,811*   *14%*
- 1920s   *4,107,209*   *13%*

**A Chicago Public Library Branch
Reading Room At Hull House**

Public Library Services Emerging at the End of the 19th Century

- Children's Services, including story hours
- Services for immigrant populations
- Outreach-first bookmobile-via horse drawn carriage; deposits off site
- The Library as "Place"
- The Library as Community Center

Serving Children at the Main Branch of the Cleveland Public Library in 1898

The first children's reading room opened in 1890 in Brookline, Massachusetts.

**Story Hour at the Perkins Branch
of the Cleveland Public Library, 1898.**

A Story Hour at the Cleveland Public Library, 1900.

Services to Immigrant Children

The New York Public Library was one of the country's leaders in terms of children's services.

A reading room for the blind at the new Library of Congress in 1897.

Students in the Library of Congress Reading Room, 1897

Less than a year after the new Library of Congress opened in 1897, the hours were extended to allow more time for public use during the weekends and evening hours.

Public Library "Deposit Collections"

Source: Undetermined

At the National Cash Register Company in Dayton, Ohio.

Source: Undetermined

A reading room for the unemployed sponsored by the Minneapolis Public Library-1910.

Source: Undetermined

**A home-deposit library
on Hill Street, part of the
Cleveland Public Library system, ca. 1900.**

Source: Undetermined

The Public Library as a Community Center

An outdoor story hour at the Cleveland Public Library--Turn of the Century.

Source: Undetermined

The First Bookmobile

The first bookmobile originated from the Washington County Free Library in Hagerstown, Maryland in 1905.
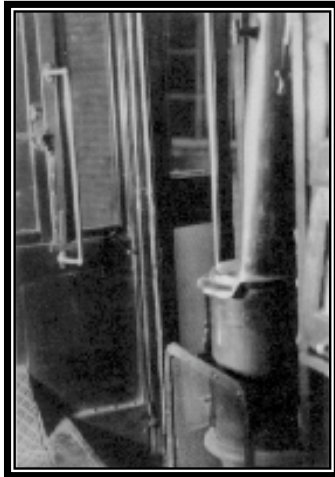
The Washington County Free Library then created the first automotive bookmobile in 1912.

Source: Undetermined

Views of the "Library Bus"
from Hibbing, Minnesota, 1915
The first bookmobile that patrons could enter.

It included heat for service
during the winter months.

Source: Undetermined

Source: Undetermined

Source: Undetermined

Problems to Be Solved by Libraries During the 19th Cent

- Agreement that a PL is considered a "public good" and thus worthy of support from the community
- What is the role/mission of the public library?
- What does the building look like and foster?
- What resources does it acquire and how are they distributed?
- How do libraries organize their resources?
- What about the people in the community? "the library's public" (immigrants? children?)
- How can people be trained to do all these things?

Source: Undetermined

Melvil Dewey with the first library science class,1888. Colombia University.

Brief Intro to Settlement Houses--19th Century Community Social Agencies

- Aim: Provide place for new settlers to major cities to meet, learn, bring their kids, get away from noisy, overcrowded tenaments

- Located in areas of urban poverty in a number of cities

- Organizers often attracted college students & others to work with residents with the aim of building community

- First in England 1884

- Chicago: Jane Addams/Ellen Gates Starr co-founded Hull House in Chicago in 1889

- Services included: kindergarten, day care, continuing education for adults

- Jane Addams books include:

  - *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 1902.

  - *Children in American Street Trades*, 1905.

  - *Twenty Years at Hull House,* 1912.

Dressmaking

Millinery

Source: Undetermined

Hull House & Its Neighborhoods

URBAN EXPERIENCE IN CHICAGO:

HULL-HOUSE AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS, 1889 - 1963

Lewis W. Hine

Hull House Today

Source: Zagalejo,Wikimedia Commons