

Gibson Memorial Library History*

1873 – The Creston Library first opened in a building erected at the corner of Union and Maple at the expense of the Burlington Railroad. This company was interested in the founding of a library to furnish a pleasant place for the railroad employees to spend their evenings. The room on the ground floor was fitted up for the library and the space on the second floor was used for entertainment on weekdays and for religious services on Sunday. The rental of the hall was used for expenses.

For many years the library was in prosperous circumstances, but as time went on it slowly became involved in debt. It was moved several times back and forth from the north to the south side. The books were given to the Board of Education in 1897. The library was then opened in a room at the high school building. It was used for reference work by the students, but was also open to the public.

1899 - When the new high school was opened, the students had access to a library of their own at the school. The students, therefore, did not use the old library as extensively as before. There was a noticeable lack of reading material for Creston citizens. Two attempts to get a Carnegie library failed.

1902 – July 14, 1902, Matilda Gibson died of cholera in the Philippines.

Early 1900's – Brothers Frank and John Phillips established bank in Bartlesville, Oklahoma and then went on to found their oil business, which began Phillips Petroleum Company – which they trademarked as Phillips 66 in 1927.

1930 – Mrs. Frank Philips of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, gave Creston \$25,000 in memory of her mother, Matilda Gibson, who had been very active in church and charity work. This money was used to buy the grounds (\$10,000) and erect a beautiful joint clubroom and library. \$15,000 was given in seed money for the building fund, and helped raise additional funds to construct the new library.

1931 - The Matilda J. Gibson Memorial Library was formally opened April 7, 1931.

1934 (“about”) – The city added a mil and a half to taxes to take care of the library maintenance. In spite of this, there was still a shortage of funds to completely finish the building in the desired manner..... In a major cleaning and painting project, the Library Board furnished \$110.20, which was used to buy materials.

1943 – A children's wing was added. The present stone-trimmed brick structure measures approximately 66 by 51 feet and is set on two lots.

1948 – and 1950 - Jane Gibson Phillips died on August 31, 1948. And Frank Phillips died on August 23, 1950.

1980's – During the early 80's it became apparent that the Gibson Memorial Library needed some improvements to continue into the future. Not having handicapped accessibility would result in losing accreditation. After much discussion, changing of librarians, changing of council members, changing of library board members, changing of mayors, looking at lots and locations for a new building, hiring and firing architects and contractors, many debates, newspaper articles, newspaper ads and finally a city-wide vote, it was decided to remodel the old building.

1996 – In February, students from the Creston Middle School carried the books from the old library to a temporary location, at the corner of Maple and Montgomery, in downtown Creston. The remodeling project began with reinforcing the foundation. A new entrance was added to the west of the building making the building handicapped accessible. The old basement clubrooms and bathrooms became the main floor of the building. New plumbing, sprinkler systems and electrical work were added. The air conditioning and heating systems were replaced. New bathrooms were added on the main floor.

Offices for the staff and storage room were placed on the main floor. The children's area and some computers for young people were also placed on the main floor. An elevator had been added so the top floor was accessible to everyone. More computer space was added upstairs. The book collections were also moved upstairs.

A genealogy room was placed there along with room for ICN equipment. Beautiful woodwork was added to match the woodwork in the original building.

1999 – February – Open house of the newly remodeled building – Total cost was between \$700,000 and \$800,000. Middle school and high school students moved the books back. The City of Creston appropriated \$700,000 and the rest was supplied by private donations.

Librarians for the Matilda J. Gibson Memorial Library (1931-2008)

Mrs. Matilda Bowman	Carrie Hutton	Phyllis Arnold	Marilyn Ralls
Rose Hill	Mrs. Gertrude Jay	Carole Stager	
Gertrude Hutton	Balla Alderson	Sonja Breen	
Mabel Hutton	Margaret Ball	Diana Dillinger	

Current Staff for the Matilda J. Gibson Memorial Library

Marilyn Ralls, Director	Jackie Shafar
Sue Teutsch,	Donna Walsh
Assistant Director & Children's Librarian	Ron Walter
Steven Hunt	Randy Rief, Janitor
Terry Madison	