

Celebrating

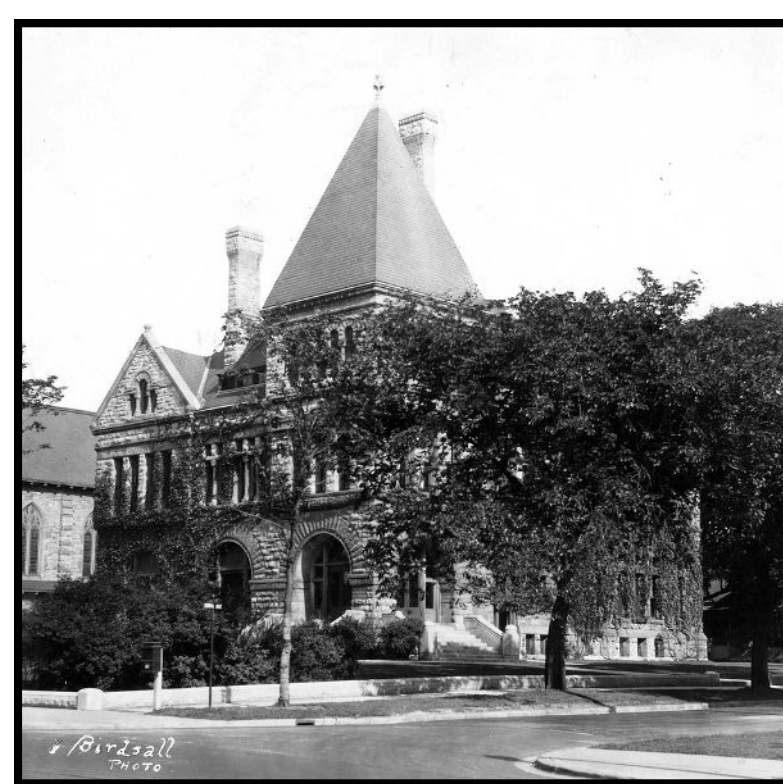
120 YEARS
OAK PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
1903-2023

And 20 years in the current Main Library Building



1885

James Scoville purchased land at Lake Street and Oak Park Avenue from the area's first non-native family to settle here (Joseph and Betty Kettlestrings).



1903

Oak Park elects its first Board of Library Trustees to lead its first public library housed in The Scoville Institute, built in 1886 as a private subscription library.



1939

A space needs study finds the Scoville building is "obsolete and wholly unsatisfactory" for a public library space — despite strong community sentiment for its Victorian-era design.



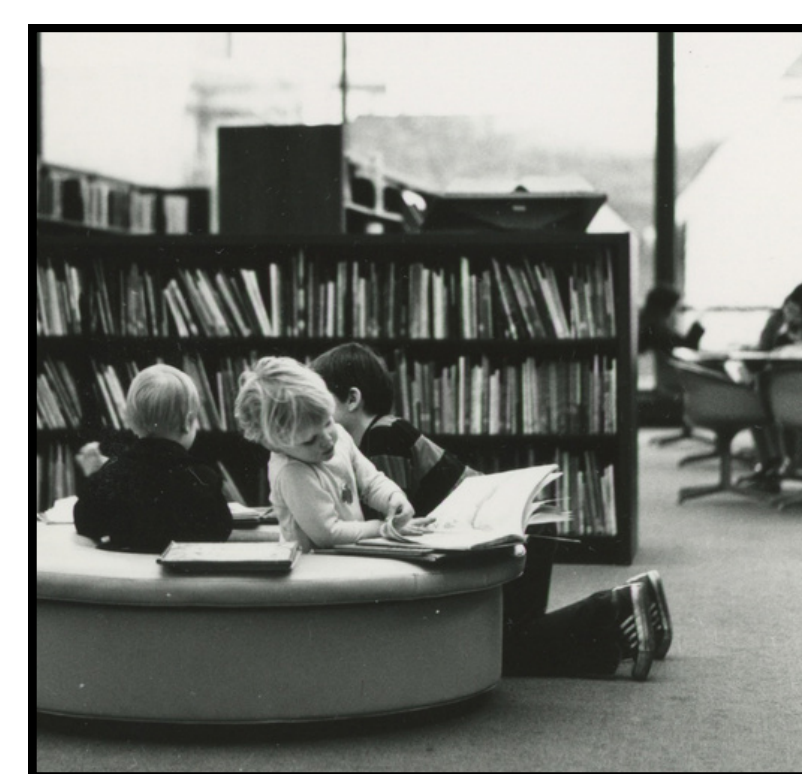
1961

After three referendum attempts, Oak Park voters approve a bond issue to raze the original Institute building and construct a modern building in its place.



1964

The new building opens featuring a full basement, a first floor open design, and a second floor covering just half the first floor's width — for a total of 42,324 square feet.



1977

More patrons and more library items lead to an expansion of the second floor. This adds 8,000 square feet for a new children's area and audiovisual items.



1999

Cramped quarters lead to the formation of a Citizen's Committee for Library Space Needs, recommending library space be doubled. A new referendum process begins.



2003

Opening at 104,000-square-feet, a new three-story design doubles the previous building's size and earns an award for "distinctive design, outstanding construction and a positive impact on the surrounding community."



2015

Supported by Illinois grant funding secured by IL Rep. La Shawn K. Ford, building improvements maximize first floor community space and add three third floor study rooms.



2023

October marks 20 years in the current Main Library building and 120 years as a public library, giving Oak Park a place to gather, to learn, and to embrace the Freedom to Read.

Learn more: oppl.org/about-main