History of the McHenry Public Library District

1836
McHenry was settled.

August 10, 1872
McHenry was incorporated as a village.

May 15, 1923
McHenry was incorporated as a city.

February 27, 1936
A small lending library opened in a room of the McHenry High School, presently McHenry East High School. The idea for the library was fostered by Mrs. C. W. (Gretta) Goodell with the support of the McHenry Mothers' Club, later known as the McHenry Woman's Club.
The library moved to the city hall after a few years when the High School needed the space the library was using.

June 7, 1943
The McHenry City Council adopted an ordinance establishing the McHenry Public Library. Mrs. Goodell served as chairman of the Library Board with Mrs. C. J. Reihansperger serving as secretary-treasurer. Mrs. Goodell served as Library Director until 1960. Mrs. Lon Smith, Miss Rita Martin, and Mrs. Robert Winkel assisted her.

January 1946
McHenry Mayor R. I. Overton appointed the first Library Board. The nine members were: Mrs. Goodell (President), Mrs. Reihansperger (Secretary-Treasurer), Mrs. George Kramer, Mrs. Clarence (Lillian) Anglese, Mrs. A. I. (Frances) Froehlich, Mrs. C. H. Duker, Mrs. Fred Ferwerda, Earl R. Walsh, and George Freund.

August 11, 1951
The Library Board purchased the William Tesch residence, 1011 North Green Street, for $4,700. The building, built in 1835, is believed to be the oldest residence in McHenry.

September 27, 1953
The renovated Tesch residence opened as the McHenry Public Library with 3,460 books and 600 registered borrowers. Norbert Mauch of the Alexander Lumber Company and Gerald Steinbach of the McHenry Lumber Company volunteered their time and acted as architects for the remodeling.
The city established a building fund soon after this to allow for future expansion at this site. Mr. William Bolger, city alderman and Library Board President, was instrumental in the drive to raise funds for an addition. A $9,000 bequest was received from the estate of Mr. Andrew Worwick and the McHenry Rotary Club raised $10,000 in one week in April 1964 in order to pay the $35,000 needed for the project.

1960

Mrs. June Stuart became the second director of the McHenry Public Library when Mrs. Goodell retired. Mrs. Dorothy Uttich was her assistant.

November 1, 1964

The Tonyan Construction Company completed construction on the addition to the library. Architect Warren Kuhlman designed the addition.

January 10, 1965

The community celebrated the dedication of the renovated and expanded library. The library housed a collection of 10,000 books on three levels with a new parking lot for eight cars.

1967

McHenry Pubic Library joined the Northern Illinois Library System and began offering interlibrary loan service.

1973

The library purchased the Willis Schreiner property at 3605 West Main Street next to the existing building on the west side.
Architect Bill Ewald drew up plans for an extension of the library building, which would cost $190,000.

November 7, 1976

The library hosted the dedication of the renovated and expanded building. The addition added 5,115 square feet to the existing 3,591-square-foot building. The 1965 addition became the Children's Room. A local history room was included in the new building.

1981

The library purchased the personal collection of June Barrickman to form the core of its genealogical collection. This was an achievement that Library Director June Stuart was especially proud of.

April 1984

The library began publishing its newsletter, *The Preface*.

July 1986

Mrs. June Stuart retired as Library Director and was replaced by Julia Johnas. Johnas, who was the third director in the library's history, was also the first director to have a Master of Library Science degree. Mrs. Stuart's assistants, Dorothy Uttich and Avis Gan, retired the previous year.
Later this year, the library began circulating videocassettes and audiocassettes in addition to books and magazines.

July 1, 1987

The library ceased to be a city library and became a district library. This change came about through the efforts of board member Gary Schaefer and library attorney Dan Curran. It involved a Board resolution, a City Council ordinance, and a court order. As a

result, the library became a separate taxing body and an independent governmental unit.

January 12, 1988
An ordinance passed by the Library's Board came into effect expanding the library service boundaries from the McHenry city limits to the boundaries of High School District 156, excluding those areas served by McHenry Nunda Public Library District (now River East) and Johnsburg Public Library District. The expansion more than doubled the library's population from 13,536 city residents to 27,547 district residents and expanded the size of the district to approximately 37 square miles. The district serves all of McCullom Lake and Holiday Hills, the eastern half of Wonder Lake, and small sections of Bull Valley, Lakemoor, and Island Lake.

July 1989
The library left the Northern Illinois Library System (NILS) to become a member of the North Suburban Library System (NSLS). Soon after this, the library joined the Cooperative Computer Services (CCS) consortium to take advantage of its shared automation system. The library began using the automated circulation system the following year once all library materials had been entered into the shared catalog.

March 20, 1990
Voters defeated a referendum for a bond issue to raise $4.3 million to build a new library building on 11.3 acres on Green Street near the McHenry Municipal Center. The architectural firm Wendt Cedarholm Tippens designed the planned building.

May 1991
Arlene Kaspik was hired as the fourth director in the history of the McHenry Public Library.

September 14, 1993
The Library Board of Trustees voted to hire a consultant to conduct a site feasibility study for using the Althoff Building at 809 North Front Street as a library. The site's previous tenant was Follett Software.

August 31, 1994
The first staff computers were connected to the Internet.

October 1994
Althoff Industries began renovating the former site of the Follett Software Company, preparing it for sale to the library.

January 19, 1995
The library closed on the purchase of the building at 809 North Front Street owned by Althoff Industries after the owner had renovated it. The building was purchased for $1.85 million dollars. The library agreed to provide a 25 percent down payment and mortgaged the remaining 75 percent. In order to make the down payment, the library sold its existing building to School District 15 for $156,000 and sold its undeveloped 10.5-acre property on Green Street.

April 20, 1995
The library at 1011 North Green Street closed its doors for the last time.

June 7, 1995
The library held a Grand Opening for the new library building at 809 North Front Street. The library portion of the building is approximately 23,000 square feet with 20,000 square feet of warehouse space. The architectural firm of Engberg Anderson of Milwaukee designed the library.

April 16, 1996
The library's Web site made its debut.

November 1998
The library went to referendum to increase operating funds and was defeated.

April 13, 1999
The library again went to referendum, which passed this time, increasing the millage rate for operating funds.

July 1999
The library began circulating Spanish language books.

2001
The library began offering public access to the Internet.

December 2001
CCS (Cooperative Computer Services) consortium changed automation systems, migrating from GEAC to Sirsi, in order to provide a graphical interface for the online public library catalogs.

July 2004
The library paid off its mortgage on 809 N. Front St. six years early, due to strong financial management and passage of an operating fund referendum in 1999.

Fall 2004
The library hired a space planning consultant to look at the best use of existing space.

June 30, 2007
Library Director Arlene Kaspik retired and Assistant Director Bill Edminster was appointed Interim Director.

November 2007
James C. Scholtz was hired as the fifth director in McHenry Public Library District's history.

December 2007
The library purchased the property to the north immediately adjacent to the building, with the hope of someday building a new library there. This acquisition increased the

library's total property to about four acres.

November 2008
Building referendum failed.

2009
Due to the failed referendum and the poor economy, the Library Board decided to expand/renovate the existing library rather than pursue a new building, so they enlisted the expertise of local architects Gillespie Design Group of Ringwood, IL, and Construction Manager Lamp Incorporated of Elgin, IL. Funds for the $2.5 million project (which came in at $1.8 million) came from the library's Reserve Fund and federal Recovery Zone bonds, with almost half of the interest credited back to the library.

January 2010
Expansion/renovation began on the existing library, adding roughly 5,800 square feet.

April 2010
Renovation began in the main library and front lobby area.

September 2010
Construction ended and the library celebrated with a Grand Reopening/75th Anniversary celebration during the first week of October 2010.

Spring 2011
The library began offering circulating eReaders, pre-loaded with eBooks of different genres. The staff also helped patrons learn how to download eBooks on their personal eReader devices using the library's digital content catalog.

October 2011
The library added more parking spaces on its additional property to the north, increasing parking spaces by 41.

The early part of this timeline is based in part on research done by Julia A. Johnas in September 1988 and Mary Amstadt in March 2003.