

Snapshots of Sandstone

a timeline

- **1884:** A free reading room opens in the fire station/city hall on the north side of Walnut Street, one of several reading rooms in town during the 1880s.
- **1899:** The Fort Collins Public Library and Reading Room Association forms and opens a public reading room in the Welch Block, located at the northwest corner of College and Mountain Avenue.
- **1902-1903:** Fort Collins receives a \$12,500 from Andrew Carnegie to build a library building.
- **1904:** The Public Library moves into the newly completed sandstone building at 200 Mathews Street in Lincoln Park.

- 1939:** A \$60,613 library addition is completed and dedicated, doubling the size of the Carnegie building.

- 1942:** The Pioneer Museum opens in a newly completed sandstone building from 217-219 Peterson Street.

- 1976-1977:** The new Public Library building opens at 201 Peterson Street, the old Pioneer Museum building is demolished, and the Museum moves to the Carnegie building at 200 Mathews Street and changes its name to the Fort Collins Museum. City Council changes the name of Lincoln Park to Library Park.

- 2003:** The Fort Collins Museum completes a major renovation project on the Carnegie building, including the reorientation of the entrance to the building and the creation the Heritage Courtyard.



"Free Reading Room" located at the fire station/city hall on Walnut Street, circa 1884. This is one of several reading rooms located in Fort Collins in the 1880s before the formation of the Fort Collins Public Library and Reading Room Association.

In December of 1899, the freshly-formed Fort Collins Public Library and Reading Room Association unanimously elected Mrs. Budrow as the town's librarian. She expressed joy with the "pleasant rooms" rented to the association by prominent businessman C.R. Welch, and delighted in the 500 books and the complete set of Britannica that the citizenry of Fort Collins now had at their fingertips.

Six months later, Mr. Welch announced that, due to business reasons, he needed to reclaim the rooms he rented to the library. For two tumultuous years, the reading room and its growing collection of books moved from location to location in Fort Collins.

“It seemed almost too good to be true...”

So gushed Mrs. Jane T. Budrow in the January 25, 1900 edition of the *Fort Collins Courier* as she announced that “the efforts of a portion of the citizens of Fort Collins to establish a library and reading room for the use of the public had been so far successful...”

The Public Library and Reading Room.

It seemed almost too good to be true when it was at last announced that the efforts of a portion of the citizens of Fort Collins to establish a library and reading room for the use of the public, had been so far successful; that the generous offer of the Unity church has been the portal through the open door of which can be seen the realization of dreams of a public library and reading room, worthy of our standing as a community of intelligent citizens.

The library of the Unity church and Sunday school has been the nucleus, and already the large number of valuable books in the care of the W. C. T. U., and many others, are added to our list. The ladies belonging to the two literary clubs of the town have generously provided for periodicals and other reading matter, and young boys have given of their treasures, the Youth's Companion, etc. A large and valuable map of the world hangs upon the wall of the reading room, the contribution of a leading citizen. A complete set of Britannica has been given by the Courier office, all showing and indicating that the interest taken in the growth and prosperity of our public library and reading room is rapidly spreading among all classes, and is proof that the library association of this city has only answered to the needs of an increasing population of intelligent readers.

The pleasant rooms recently occupied by C. R. Welch have been secured, and the public is welcome to come and enjoy the books and periodicals provided for their benefit. The hours when the rooms are open are from 3 to 5 in the afternoon and 7 to 9 in the evening of every day, except Sunday, when the library is closed, and the reading room open from 2 to 5 in the afternoon. Membership cards can be procured at the library. The small fee of one dollar a year entitles the owner of the card to the use of the books for that period.

JANE T. BUDROW, Librarian.

**Clipping from *Fort
Collins Courier*,
January 25, 1900.**



**Welch Block,. at the northwest corner of
College and Mountain Avenue—location
of Reading Room for six months in
1900. Image circa 1903.**

On June 16, 1902, the ladies of the Fort Collins Columbian Club took matters into their own hands when club president Mrs. D. McLain wrote a letter to Andrew Carnegie, stressing the need for a library building and asking him to donate the money. Exactly one month later, the library board received a promised amount of \$10,000 from Andrew Carnegie. When funds fell short during construction, Carnegie allocated another \$2,500 to the project. The building was finally completed and opened on August 26, 1904.

After getting off to such a *rocky* start, it seems fitting that the Carnegie building was constructed of blocks of native red sandstone, quarried from Stout, Colorado.

Though Stout and its quarries now lie beneath the waters of Horsetooth Reservoir, many structures made from Stout sandstone remain standing in Fort Collins.

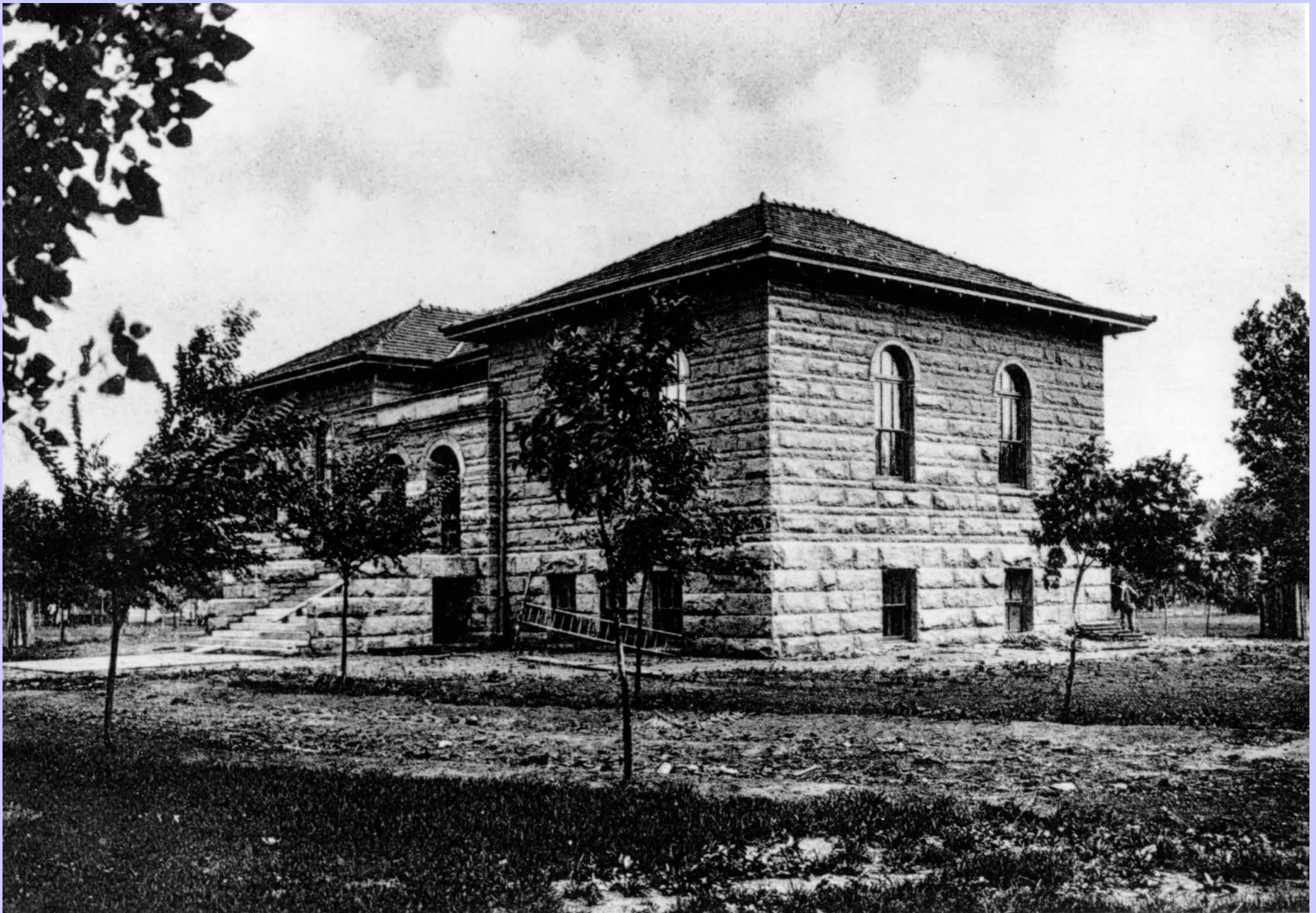


STOUT 1885

Stout, Colorado, 1885. Stout buildings were sold, moved, or demolished when Horsetooth Reservoir was built from 1946 to 1949.



Quarrying red sandstone at Stout, circa 1925



Probably the earliest photo of the Carnegie building, 1904.

Reading Room in Carnegie building, circa 1917. The wooden table in the foreground is still in use in the Local History Archive as a work table for volunteers and staff.

Looking southeast into Lincoln Park, Carnegie building at right, circa 1907. Homesteader Henry Clay Peterson patented this land in 1872, described as “verdant and swampy cow pasture, across which the youngsters walked on their way to town and school.”



The Colorado Flag hangs on the wall of the reading room on the main floor, circa 1917. The clock advertises O.E. Messerschmitt, jeweler, and R.M. Fulbright, optometrist, in partnership at 141 North College Avenue.

Three photographs of Elfreda Stebbins, first librarian at the Carnegie building. Stebbins held a degree in library science and remained with the library until her death on August 16, 1931.



Circulation desk and shelves, circa 1917.



Images of World War I posters displayed in the library, circa 1917.

In the late 1930s, the library sought to expand through assistance from the Works Progress Administration (WPA). When completed in 1939, the building's size was doubled with the addition of an auditorium, three new reading rooms, kitchen, and children's area.



Exterior prior to 1939 addition.

One page of petition to support the construction of a museum for Fort Collins, circa 1937.

Note the signature of local legend Frank Miller, wild west showman and artist.

Three pages from the Fort Collins Public Library Publicity Book, March 1937-March 1938, highlighting the new addition to the building.

SUNDAY, MARCH 26

Special Library Edition published by the Fort Collins Express-Courier

Children's Story Hour, 2:30 p. m. in Library Auditorium

Wind Quintet—Junior High boys and girls

MONDAY, MARCH 27

The Library Serves, a panel discussion

Leader..... James G. Hodgson

Women's Organizations..... Charlotte Baker

City Schools..... Ward I. Miller

Religious Interests..... Dr. G. S. Cox

Parent-Teacher Association..... Mrs. A. P. Alexander

Rural Schools..... Mrs. Florence Irwin

City Library..... Rozetta Thurston-Cowan

Library Auditorium, eight o'clock p. m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29

Friends of the Library meeting

Miss May Wood Wigginton, assistant librarian
Denver Public Library, speaker

Chairman—Oscar B. Seyster

Library Auditorium, eight o'clock p. m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 30

Trustees and Librarians Round Table, followed by
tea and tour of library

Chairman..... B. F. Coen

Hostess..... Mrs. Lulu Brownell

in Library Auditorium, three o'clock to five

Dinner—Mortimer Stone, presiding

College Cafeteria, 6:00 o'clock, 60 cents

FORT COLLINS PUBLIC LIBRARY DEDICATION PROGRAM

Thursday night at eight-fifteen o'clock
Library Auditorium

B. F. Coen, Presiding

String Quartet: Editha Leonard, Margaret Evans

Roberta Ross, Agnes Espelin

Prayer of Dedication..... The Rev. Z. T. Vincent

Presentation of Guests

A Word from Our Librarian..... Rozetta Thurston-Cowan

Baritone Solo..... Preston Murphy

Address of Dedication..... Edward A. Chapman

Federal W. P. A. Library Consultant
Washington, D. C.

Works Progress Administration Project

Time: March, 1937—February, 1939

Total cost: \$60,613. City Sponsor, \$15,337

W. P. A., \$45,276

Architect: Roland L. Linder

City Library Report

Volumes in Library, 1938.....	25,470
Circulation, 1938.....	115,884
1939 Budget	\$10,000

Larimer County Library Report

Volumes in Library, 1938.....	6,872
Circulation, 1938	65,857
1939 Budget, approximately.....	\$2,000

**Program from dedication of new addition,
March 26-30, 1939. Events took place in the
new auditorium.**



Remodeled interior of main floor after the 1939 addition.



Remodeled interior of main floor after the 1939 addition.

Also in the 1930s, efforts by the Fort Collins Pioneer Society (check this), the Indian Relic and Hobby Club, and other local citizens helped make the dreams of a city museum become a reality. The Antoine Janis cabin was moved from its original location in to Lincoln Park in 1938, becoming the nucleus for the museum. In 1940, the WPA began another sandstone structure at Lincoln Park. Located at 215 Peterson Street, the Pioneer Museum was completed and dedicated in 1942.

In 1959, the Elizabeth "Auntie Stone" cabin, which had already endured two relocations from its original site at the Fort Collins military post along Jefferson Street, also found a new home behind the Pioneer Museum.



Magic show in auditorium, August 24, 1944.



Auditorium after 1939 addition, located where the Local History Archive currently resides.



"Pooh Celebration" in the children's section located on ground floor, circa 1948.



Images of the 1940s children's section, located on ground floor.



Reading room on ground floor, circa 1965.



**Circulation desk on
main floor, circa 1965.**



Pioneer Museum on Peterson Street at Lincoln Park, 1960s.



Main floor during early 1970s



**Looking northeast into Lincoln Park, early 1970s,
with Library Bookmobile at rear of building.**

More changes came in the 1970s, when citizen advocacy group Designing Tomorrow Today, City Council, and Fort Collins voters supported a capital improvement project to fund the construction of a larger library building.

Popular vote demanded that a new library be located in Lincoln Park. Thus, the nearly thirty-year old Pioneer Museum was demolished as the new library was built, and the museum collections and exhibits were moved into the vacated Carnegie building.



Pioneer Museum during construction of new library building, circa 1976. The Pioneer Museum building was demolished after the completion of the new library.



**The Public Library moves out of
the Carnegie building, 1976.**



Elizabeth "Auntie" Stone cabin being moved from behind Pioneer Museum to present location near the Fort Collins Museum building, 1975.

Meeting Minutes from the Executive Committee of the Fort Collins Public Library and Reading Room Association (dates here)

(Describe selected passage--Jane Budrow elected librarian at \$10.00 month, etc.)

Reports of the Librarian, October 1903-March 1908

Monthly report from (date) shows _____ books in circulation. Note under the gifts heading "Marie LaFitte", well-known Fort Collins madam.

Postcards of the Carnegie building, dating from 1907 to the 1980s.

In 2001, the Fort Collins Museum completed a major renovation project on the Carnegie building, including the reorientation of the entrance to the building and the creation the Heritage Courtyard, which now houses the Janis, Stone, and Franz-Smith cabins as well as the Upper Boxelder Schoolhouse.

In this 104 year-old sandstone structure, The Fort Collins Museum provides opportunities for visitors to learn, reflect, and have fun while exploring the legacies of the of the peoples of the Cache la Poudre River Valley.