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Library

The Newton Public Library District, 100 South Van Buren, at the corner of Van Buren and Jourdan Streets, was established in 1927 when a Chicago doctor donated 50 books to the Newton Women's Club for the purpose of starting a library. The library was first located in a room of the Annex Hotel in Newton, and was open 2 or 3 afternoons a week.

In 1932 the library was moved to the second floor of City Hall located on North Van Buren Street. By this time the library had about 3,000 volumes. In 1934 the City assumed responsibility for the library and named the first library board.

The library was moved to its present location in 1958 after Milo Yelvington purchased the former Star Theatre Building and made the building available to the library. In May of 1999 the building next to the library to the south was purchased and renovations were begun to join the two structures.

Today the library houses in excess of 18,000 titles including 525 large print editions. Daily newspapers and magazines are available as well as microfilm readers and a microfilm reader printer. Videos and books on tape are available for check out. Four computers with internet accessibility, a children's computer and a copying machine are available for public use.

The library runs a summer reading program for children and, from time to time, has special programs for children featuring local story readers/tellers. An Adult Book Club with about 20 members meets monthly. Several years ago a weight loss program was started that runs twice a year. This program has been very successful.

The library holds many materials of interest to those doing genealogical research. Cemetery listings and family histories can be found on the shelves of the library. The library belongs to the Shawnee Library System and is able to order most any desired materials through this system. Library cards are free to residents in Newton and all in Wade Fire Protection District. All others outside of area must pay a fee.

In May of 1999 the building directly to the south of the library building was purchased from Fred and Barbara Bergbower for the purpose of enlarging the library. Work on the expansion began almost immediately as many fund raising efforts were undertaken to finance the work.

The new addition has greatly increased the area used for children's books and programs. The area designated for use by those doing work on genealogies has also increased in size. The new addition greatly increased available space for all areas in the library. The old library area has been repainted and carpeted. The results are a library that Newton is very proud of!

Connie Davidson is the present librarian. Information about any aspect of the library can be obtained by calling 783-8141. Library hours are Mon., Wed. & Fri. 10-5, Tues & Thurs. 10-7, Sat. 10-1:00.