

THE BELL ART ROOM

The Bell Art Room on the second floor of the library contains a large collection of art books and a reproduction of the statue Hebe. The library also hosts many artistic displays and events in the Bell Art Room.



The statue of Hebe

The statue is a donation to the library from Mrs. William H. Laird. She presented it to the Library Board at its meeting on July 8, 1899. Mrs. Laird purchased the statue in Florence, Italy while on a vacation. The statue is a Carrara marble copy of the original work by Antonio Canova.

Canova was born in 1757 and studied in Venice. Orphaned at an early age, he studied with his grandfather who was a well-respected stone mason and master builder. Canova became the favorite sculptor of Napoleon and of the Emperor's circle of friends.

Hebe was sculpted by Canova in 1796, and is one of his most admired figures. Its evocation of airborne grace is Hebe's most distinguishing quality. It was so popular that he carved four replicas.



Canova's Hebe is the last figure of Western Art to levitate as if flight were a perfectly natural attribute of humanity. Levitation is implied without wings, without strenuous action, without a single distended muscle. Hebe is captured pouring divine nectar in sight of human eyes but beyond their mortal reach.

In Greek mythology, Hebe was the daughter of Zeus and Hera. She was the cup-bearer of the gods on Mount Olympus. She was considered the personification of the beauty of youth.

THE LIGHT OF LEARNING

Painted by Kenyon Cox



In 1910 a Kenyon Cox mural titled *The Light of Learning* was donated to the Winona Public Library by William Hayes as a memorial to his wife Charlotte Prentiss Hayes.

The general intent of the painting is to symbolize the function of a public library as the conserver and distributor of the light of the past for the use of the present.

In the center, robed in the green of eternal youth and wearing a decorative modification of the shield of Minerva, sits **Learning**, lighting her lamp torches which are distributed by her winged attendants to symbolical figures on either side.

To the right **Romance**, the dreamy-eyed fairy princess of Northern folklore, leans upon **Poetry**, bearing the lyre and clad in the flame color of passion. Below them, a more physically luxurious type, **Art**, palette in hand, leans upon a fragment of antique sculpture.

To the left **Philosophy** looks up at the torch she has already grasped, and **History** writes upon her tablet, while **Science** holds the globe and compasses, signifying the exact knowledge of the universe.



JULIUS C. WILKIE STAINED GLASS

In 2010 the library acquired a stained glass panel that was originally on display in the Julius C. Wilkie steamboat in Levee Park. The masterpiece was created by local artist John H. Czapiewski.

WINONA PUBLIC LIBRARY

151 W. 5th Street
Winona, Minnesota 55987



ESTABLISHED 1899

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a center of the community
connecting people with
ideas, inspiration and information.

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WINONA PUBLIC LIBRARY: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

The Winona Public Library was presented to the City of Winona by lumber baron William Harris Laird on January 21, 1899. The architects were Warren P. Laird, dean of the school of architecture of the Univ. of Pennsylvania and Edgar V. Seeler, an eminent architect of Philadelphia.

The building is solidly constructed of brick walls faced with Bedford stone. The original entrance steps (closed in 1987 to accommodate handicapped accessibility), curbs, and walks are of hard Winona limestone. The columns at the original entrance are of Georgian Creole marble. The copper dome is 56 feet above the street grade. The cost of the building, exclusive of the site and décor, was about \$50,000.

Upon completion of the building structure, the library board contributed approximately \$7,500 to install the heating system, fixtures, furniture and shelving. Solid oak tables and chairs then rested on cork carpet, and brass lamps and chandeliers hung as high as the thirty foot dome in the central room.

Unique features of the library are the frosted glass block floors and the ornate copper-faced shelving and stairs in the book stacks and the Kenyon Cox mural *The Light of Learning* under the library's dome. While changes such as replacing the original light fixtures and removing the exchange desk, the cork carpeting, and the spiral staircase in the Bell Art Room have occurred over the years, most of the beautiful original woodwork and ceilings of carved and decorous quartered oak are intact.

In the central room, once called the "Exchange Room," the ceiling rises thirty feet into an inner dome and is pierced by a large rose window of leaded glass, a delicate composition from the hand of Otto Heingke.

The library's original stacks provided space for about 30,000 volumes. By 1913, however, the collection consisted of 32,000 volumes. Additional stack space,

providing for double the original book capacity (60,000 volumes) was constructed in 1913 at a cost of \$10,000 with money set aside by Mr. Laird for that purpose. The frosted glass block floors continue into the new addition and Library Bureau steel shelving was added. The stack area has been filled completely for years. There has been very little change to the stacks area, other than switching from gas lighting to fluorescent and updating the heating vents.

The Winona Public Library is the oldest building in the state of Minnesota built as a library and continuously used as a library. It is one of the oldest of the 21 places in Winona which are on the National Register of Historic Places. The dome, the Doric columns framing the doorway, and the pediment and cornices around the top of the building exhibit the Grecian influence in its neoclassical style.

As time progressed, the library continued to meet the demands of its public. In addition to the adult selections, a Children's Department was added in 1921. Its doors were first opened in December 1921, with Miss Mary A. Holmes as the first children's librarian. The room housed a collection of some 5,000 books.

By 1949, the library offered a wide array of newspapers and magazines in an attempt to stay current with the popular mediums of the day.

In 1987 the library was remodeled to make the entrance handicapped accessible. The new entrance was moved to Johnson Street. Patrons enter the building and are immediately able to visit the circulation desk, go into the Children's Department or take the elevator up to the main floor. The addition above the

circulation desk now holds the library's large print book collection and public Internet access computers.

While we still provide face-to-face service and offer print magazines, newspapers and books, today the Winona Public Library is keeping up with the times with the addition of online services and digital materials.

We offer free internet service and wireless Internet is available throughout the building. We host a website which features our searchable online catalog, various reference sites, and access to patron accounts. You can also download audio and e-books from our site and even pay your fines online. Other recent additions include online access to magazine articles, an electronic reference help center, and interlibrary loan service.

The general scenery may have stayed the same, but since its opening more than 100 years ago, the Winona Public Library has seen growth and improvement in many areas, including its circulating

collection. In its early days, the library boasted of its 85 volume collection. That number grew to more than 3,000 titles by 1886, 29,000 by 1901, and 33,000 by 1913. Today's holdings number approximately 147,000 items for circulation in the Winona Public Library, with over 3,000,000 items available throughout the region via interlibrary loan.

As of April 2014, the total number of adult holdings registered at over 73,000 items. The Youth Service's department, which now holds annual summer reading programs and hosts preschool story times along with special children's events throughout the year, has grown to offer over 36,000 items.

The Winona Public Library's goal is to continue to grow and serve the needs of the community. As time, materials, and preferences change, we will continue to adapt to meet the demand. We have been here serving the public for more than 100 years and plan to continue far into the new millennium.

