

# Best Sellers

*Our favorite stories about your Library's impact* • FALL 2021

## Sneak Peek! Three New User Experiences in the Renovated Library



● Three of the main floor study rooms that patrons will be able to reserve using our new online system.

The Library renovation involves a lot more than just new carpet and fresh paint. We're completely transforming the way our building functions and the way we deliver services. You might be surprised to learn how much work is involved in making and then maintaining those changes! Here are three exciting examples of new experiences and the behind-the-scenes effort needed to make them happen.

### SELF-CHECKOUT

We will have kiosks in the lobby and in the children's room. Patrons will stop by a kiosk, scan their Library card, and then check out all their materials with one swipe. This will eliminate lines at the Checkout Desk, making checkout fast and convenient. It will also help us do inventory and manage the collection.

The catch? Everything in our 180,000 item collection needs a Radio Frequency ID (or RFID) chip to facilitate self-checkout. It took six people almost two months to insert all the chips! Those chips will also have to be applied to each new item we add to the collection.

### MEETING ROOM RESERVATIONS

One of the high-demand needs for our community is meeting room space. As a result, we have planned 19 rooms of various sizes that can be reserved by community members.

This means we need a reservation system, and also a way to indicate the status of each room throughout the day. We're working on a new website that will, among other things, allow users to find and reserve rooms online. Our new digital signage system will post events,

reservations and room status throughout the Library. These systems represent a significant investment but help us meet an important community need.

### LAPTOP CHECKOUT

We host more than 30,000 hours of computer use in a typical year. In the past, our computer room had 50 desktop computers for public use. We will still offer desktop computers in our computer area, but we are adding laptops as well. The new laptops can be checked out of a "vending machine" with a Library card and used anywhere in the building. We will have plenty of tables in the computer area, but we will also have comfy chairs and cozy nooks on all three floors. The laptops will provide patrons with the flexibility to work in their favorite spot. Technology always requires upgrades and maintenance, so this fleet represents an ongoing investment that will help keep Flint residents connected to digital resources.

### IT'S ALL COMING NEXT SPRING!

We're excited to show you all the new features and functions of the renovated Library. Stay tuned for more information about the Grand Reopening planned for next spring!

*Sign up at [YourNewFPL.org](http://YourNewFPL.org) to receive updates about our Grand Reopening in Spring 2022!*

## “It’s Always Full of Wonder and Life!”

If you want to meet someone whose entire life embodies a love of learning, spend some time with Jane Bingham.

“For me, the Library was an inspiration,” Jane says passionately. “We didn’t have books at home. But I had Flint Public Library, with more books than I could possibly read. Those books enriched my imagination and taught me so much. I would look at the librarians in awe, thinking about how lucky they were to work in such a wonderful place! Books and libraries are in my blood.”

That love of books evolved into a teaching career. First Jane taught in Flint Community Schools, then she earned her Ph.D. and taught children’s literature and reading courses for 31 years at Oakland University.

Over the course of her career, Jane built a collection of more than 8,000 books that spanned the history of children’s literature. She found many of those books at the Library’s Used Book Sales, and later donated the collection to Oakland University. According to Jane, a historical collection should reflect the changing values of society through time. “My Ph.D. dissertation was about how African American children were pictorially portrayed in children’s literature from 1930-1968,” she says. “Back then, the portrayal was scant, often demeaning, and unfair. Flint Public Library has done a marvelous job of introducing diversity to its shelves and speaker forums. Now children from all walks of life can find themselves in books, learn about others,

or even dream of becoming authors and illustrators themselves!”

Jane believes that access to information is the key to self-respect and communication. A beloved book by Joseph Krumgold, entitled “...and now Miguel,” illustrates why. “I did a report on it in my Children’s Lit class,” Jane remembers. “What did I know about Mexican-American shepherders? Nothing! But books have the power to open up new worlds. Books inspire curiosity and motivate us to talk with each other. They fend off our natural fear of new things, and, instead, pique our interest.”

Books allow people to experience the thrill of learning. “I believe it’s important for everyone in the community to listen to one another and learn about different ways of being in the world,” Jane affirms. “The Library is the perfect place for that to happen, especially since it provides access to resources that many people might not otherwise have. No other institution can pull this off.”

Why does Jane support Flint Public Library? “It takes a lot of money to run a library,” Jane observes. “Flint Public Library uses resources so beautifully. The programs are always amazing. I love everything, from the gentlemen playing chess in the Great Reading Room to the beautiful art displayed from the Mott-Warsh collection. It’s a pleasure to walk in and feel comfortable. It’s always full of wonder and life.”

“Flint has given me everything,” Jane concludes. “It gave me inspiration, stability, the ability to go to school. My heart never left, and that’s why I came back. This is a learning community, and the Library is a big part of it.”



● Jane Bingham is always surrounded by books!



# If the Library Didn't Save It, Who Would?

**O**ur Local History & Genealogy collection is a treasure trove of unique and irreplaceable documents. In fact, next to the Library of Michigan in Lansing, Flint Public Library has one of the largest, richest collections of curated local history in Michigan.

## HOW DID IT START?

Local history has been a focal point of the Library for more than 100 years. In 1905, then-director Mrs. Caldwell separated the local history materials from general reference. She also asked for donations to the collection, and many people brought materials to the Library. The collection has continued to grow in volume and reputation ever since.



● Mrs. Caldwell, founder of the Local History & Genealogy collection.

## WHO USES IT?

Genealogy has become a popular hobby. Many local people have taken our introductory classes, or searched through our documents to start building their family tree.

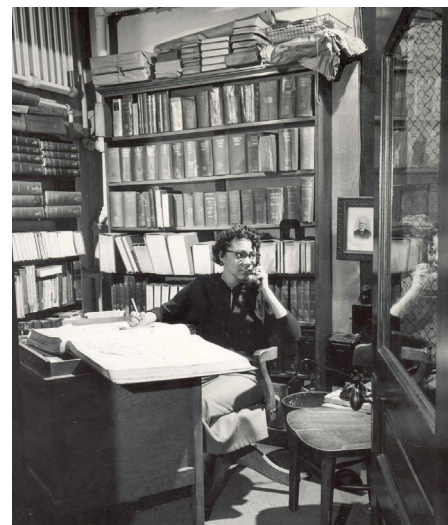
We also assist people who are taking a more disciplined approach to their personal history. "We had two sisters here

from Florida this summer," says librarian Michael Madden. "They journeyed to Flint on a quest for documents to help them gain entrance into the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)." Organizations such as DAR and SAR (Sons of the American Revolution) require proof of lineage in order to be recognized. "An unsourced family tree is not enough," says Michael. He should know! Michael gained membership in SAR after tracing his own family back seven generations to an ancestor that served in the Revolutionary War. "You need legitimate documentation, which could include military service records, county histories, or newspaper obituaries," Michael notes. "Most of the time, you have to go to a local library to find these things."

And then there are all of the fascinating research projects that bring people to pore through the archives. "For example, a researcher from the University of Michigan-Flint is revisiting the travel guides that were commissioned by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) after the Great Depression to employ librarians and authors," Michael shares. "She's using local history resources to compare Flint of the 1930s to the community of today."

## WHAT DO WE KEEP?

This is indeed the question! "Knowing what to keep is a fine art," continues



● FPL has always had friendly librarians to help answer local history and genealogy questions.

Michael. "Today, people are using resources that Mrs. Caldwell decided to save more than 100 years ago. I find myself hoping that I've made the right choices, but I won't ever really know."

## BIGGER AND BETTER

Local History & Genealogy will have a large, dedicated space in the lower level of the renovated Library. "We will have a climate-controlled vault right next to our research room," says Michael. "When patrons need something that's not on the shelves, we can quickly get it for them. We'll also be protecting all of our materials from direct sunlight, which is important for preservation."

## Join the Search!

*Our Introduction to Genealogy class is back in October, with a limited-attendance in-person program that will also be live-streamed on Zoom. And in spring of 2022, we will welcome DAR and SAR to the newly renovated Library to host a workshop on gaining entrance into these two societies. See the calendar at [fpl.info](http://fpl.info) for more information!*



1026 E. Kearsley St.  
Flint, MI 48503

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is to be Flint's go-to place  
to learn for life.

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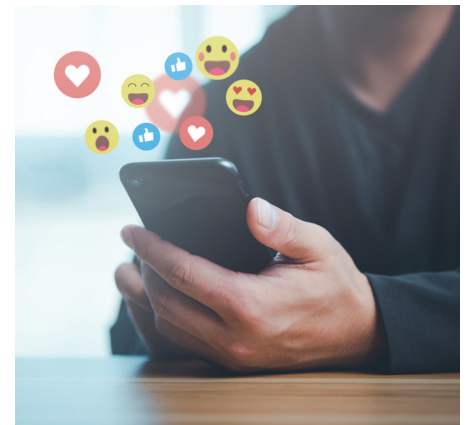


Spread the **Word!**  
**#GiveBacktoFPL**

If you're an active social media user, you know how quickly word can spread when people start sharing news on their personal networks.

We need your help! We are so close to our fundraising goal, and it's time to get more people involved. We've created a social media toolkit that you can use to tell people about the renovation project. It's a fun way to start some great conversations and engage people to give.

Visit [YourNewFPL.org](http://YourNewFPL.org) and click the Social Media tab. There you can download a kit of different images and posts. Engage your friends and family in conversations about field trips, summer reading prizes, story time and more. Add the hashtag



**#GiveBacktoFPL** to your posts and we will all be able to share the memories.

Flint Public Library has been an integral part of life for generations of Flint residents. Many of them would love to give back if they knew about the project. This is your chance to help us spread the word and push our fundraising over the finish line. Thanks for your support!

Download our social media kit from [YourNewFPL.org](http://YourNewFPL.org) and have fun posting!