

Champlin Library

Address	12154 Ensign Ave. N. Champlin, MN 55316
Architects	TSP ONE, Inc. Architects and Engineers Dedication Brochure 10/16/1994
Construction	Langer Construction – Contractor Dedication Brochure 10/16/1994
Square Feet	8,905 Welcome Brochure 8/1994
Cost	\$1.2 million Welcome Brochure 8/1994
Groundbreaking	10/4/1993 Fact Sheet from Hennepin County Library 10/4/1993
Open to Public	9/6/1994
Dedication	10/16/1994 Dedication Brochure 10/16/1994

Overview of the Community

“Champlin is located in northern Hennepin County on the west bank of the Mississippi River about 17 miles northwest of Minneapolis. The City is approximately 8 square miles in size and has approximately 24,010 residents. It is bounded by the Mississippi River on the east and north, Brooklyn Park and Maple Grove on the south, and Dayton and the Elm Creek Park on the west.” <http://ci.champlin.mn.us/aboutchamplin2007.html>

History

“After being captured by the Sioux Indians in the spring of 1680, Father Louis Hennepin, a Franciscan priest; Michael Accult, a voyager; and Picard Dulay were brought to the site now known as Champlin. In the 18th and 19th centuries, legend has it that there was an Indian trading post at the junction of Elm Creek and the Mississippi River. Charles Miles made the first permanent settlement here, building his house just below the mouth of Elm Creek in 1852. The Township of Marshall was organized in 1858 and a year later, Marshall reorganized into two townships, Champlin and Dayton, and the post office was established.” <http://ci.champlin.mn.us/aboutchamplin2007.html>.

“Champlin’s first flour mill was built in 1867. A larger mill was built in 1874. The Champlin Milling Company sent an exhibit of its flour to the Chicago World’s fair in 1893 and received its highest award.” <http://www.champlinhs.org/> (Champlin Historical Society)

“In 1947 a portion of the old Township of Champlin was incorporated to form the Village of Champlin and on January 1, 1971, the Township of Champlin and the Village of Champlin consolidated as the result of a petitioned order from the Minnesota Municipal Commission to form the City of Champlin.” <http://ci.champlin.mn.us/aboutchamplin2007.html>

Pre-Hennepin County Library History

In 1913 Vinnette Lincoln, Charlotte Joslin Trusell, Inah Gates Stout, Bessie Evans Kimball and Frances Lincoln Lane met and decided to create a library and reading room for young people in Champlin. These women organized the Champlin Woman's Club to support the library. Thirty women became members. They opened the library in a small rented room. It was open on Saturday afternoons and evenings. Mrs. S. R. Coleman was the first librarian. [From Chalmers, Joan. "History of the Champlin Community Library, 1913-1994" in the Dedication Brochure 10/16/1994](#)

In 1921 the Woman's Club leaders obtained a "16 foot by 16 foot frame cottage" ([Chalmer, 1994](#)) from the Standard Oil Company. This cottage became the new library.

The Champlin Branch of the Hennepin County Library System

In 1922, the library became a branch of the Hennepin County Library System. Inah Gates Stout became the new librarian. [From Chalmers, 1994](#) Then, because a feed mill was to be built on the library site, the Woman's Club purchased two lots at the intersection of Dayton Road and Oak St. (now Curtis Road). [From Champlin Woman's Club brochure, 1980's](#) The small library was moved to the 100 foot by 100 foot plot. [From Chalmers, 1994](#) In 1933, Gertrude Leathers became the new librarian.

In 1939, "an addition totaling 16' by 32' and costing approximately \$700.00 was completed." [Champlin Woman's Club, 1980's](#) Miss Ethel Barry, county library director and Miss Gratia Countryman, librarian emeritus of Minneapolis, were present at the dedication. [From Anoka County Union, December 13, 1939](#) Bessie Kimball gave a brief history of the library, ending with "This summer we decided to take what money we had and make our building the best we could with that amount and enjoy it while we were living. And this is the result. May it stand as a monument to our efforts and an inspiration to the future generation, that if they want anything, to go get it." [From Anoka County Union, 1939](#)

When Gertrude Leathers became ill in 1952, her daughter, Ruth Stephens, began to work as the librarian. Gertrude Leathers retired in 1956. [From Champlin Woman's Club, 1980's](#) Ruth Stephens continued her work as library assistant/librarian until she retired in 1986. [From Champlin Dayton Press, April 15, 1997](#)

During the 1950's the building was described in a Hennepin County "Branch Library Survey." The author stated that "the library itself is white with green shutters surrounded by a large well kept lawn and several shade trees. The interior of the bungalow type cottage has been completely redecorated. From the newly painted white ceiling, green walls, and newly tiled floor; to the modern blonde bookcases, tables, and chairs, the atmosphere is one of spacious quietness."

In 1972, the library building was moved to Mississippi Point Park at Highway 169 and West River Road. Library service continued at this site while a new building was being built on the original Dayton Road and Curtis Road site. The new building opened on January 22, 1973 and was dedicated on April 23, 1973. ([Chalmers, 1994](#)) Librarian Ruth Stephens, Hennepin County Library Director Robert Rohlf, Champlin Mayor Josephine Nunn and others spoke at the dedication. [From Dedication program, April 1973](#) The new "Champlin Reading Center" at 230 Curtis Road was 1600 square feet with a dark cedar exterior. Cost of the building was \$40,266. The site was leased from the Champlin Woman's Club. The architecture was designed by the Hennepin County Department of Buildings and Grounds. [From "Champlin Reading Center Dedication Brochure", April 19, 1973](#) The library was expanded to 2,300 square feet in 1981. [From Fact Sheet: Hennepin County Breaks Ground for New Champlin](#)

Community Library, October 4, 1993 During expansion construction, “library service was conducted from a 1956 Bookmobile.” From Champlin Woman’s Club, 1980’s

Grand Opening/Dedication

The groundbreaking for the new library was on October 4, 1993, with music by the Champlin Park High School Band Ensemble. Milt Goldstein, the President of the Hennepin County Library Board, welcomed everyone. Steven Boyton, the Mayor of Champlin, and Mike Opat, Hennepin County Commissioner, both gave remarks. From Groundbreaking Brochure, 1993

The new library opened on September 6, 1994 and the dedication took place on October 16, 1994. Charles Brown, Director, Hennepin County Library, gave welcoming remarks. Then Milt Goldstein, Mike Opat, and Steve Boynton each spoke. Melissa Sibley, Senior Librarian of the Champlin Library, introduced the guest speaker, Tom Hegg, author and actor. Refreshments were served by the Champlin Woman’s Club and the Friends of the Champlin Library. Music was provided by the South Minneapolis Bassoon Quartet. From Dedication Brochure, October 16, 1994 The dedication program included a “History of the Champlin Community Library” by Joan Chalmers.

Collection and Public Service

In 1913, donated books, games, and curios formed the library collection. From Chalmers, 1994 During the next few years, the Minneapolis Public Library sent out boxes of books as a loan. When the library became part of the Hennepin County Library System, the number of books greatly increased. From “A Library and Gymnasium for Champlin”, 1923 In the “Branch Library Survey” of the 1950’s, the number of books in the collection was reported as approximately 1,741.

The collection in the new 1973 Champlin Reading Center included “8,000 volumes with access to more than 800,000 volumes in the Hennepin County Library System.” Also included were 8 millimeter films, records, cassettes and cartridges. From Champlin Reading Center Brochure, 1973

The new library in 1994 had 35,000 books, plus current and past issues of 150 publications. Compact discs, videos, and audiocassettes were available. The collection cost \$425,000. From Champlin Community Library Brochure, October 1994

In addition to reading and listening material, the 2009 library has the following service features: 22 computer workstations, 3 word processing workstations, and a staff person who gives assistance for the Hmong community. From www.hclib.org

The Woman’s Club/ Friends of the Library/Volunteers

The Champlin Woman’s Club, whose early members began the library, continues to support the library with many programs and projects.

The Friends of the Champlin Library group was formed in 1979. The group has raised funds for the library by sponsoring two booksales per year. From Chalmers, 1994 Faithful citizens have served as officers and members of the group. Jim Johnson was the president for 18 years, and Carrie Johnson has served as treasurer for many years. The money raised by the Friends has been used for many projects, including childrens’ summer programs, puppets, art in the library, and adult programs.

Two volunteers at the library, Gerald Winship and Ruth Stephens (after she retired from the library), have spent countless hours helping check in books from the bookdrop and doing other

special duties. Gerald has sorted books for the booksales, set up the booksales, and supervised high school book sale volunteers. Many other volunteers have also helped at the library.

Art Dedications

Melissa Sibley, Librarian, Senior Librarian from 1986 to 1996, formed a citizen Art Committee to oversee any artwork added to the new 1994 library. The committee's first project was "The Seasons", a series of stained glass windows by Dawn Purtle. [From "The Seasons" dedication brochure, May 1997](#) The stained glass windows replaced windows over the entry. Fund raising was done by the Friends and the Woman's Club. Funds were given by Ruth Stephens and other community members through memorials or donations. Champlin Library staff person Pearl Mead oversaw the project when the library's senior librarian position was in transition. Sharyll Smith, Senior Librarian, presided at the dedication ceremony on May 17, 1997. [From Champlin Dayton Press, May 13, 1997](#)

On September 17, 1997, the painting, "Azure Shadows" was dedicated and placed on a meeting room wall. It was given by the DeJarlais family in memory of Abbie and Evelyn DeJarlais. [From "Champlin Library Annual Report, 1997"](#)

The art committee met several times and interviewed several artists before deciding on a major art display in the Children's area. The artist, Christopher Tully, was chosen. He designed a "three-dimensional wall mural...depicting Minnesota wildlife and the Mississippi River including three blue heron mobiles." [From Art fund donation brochure, 2000](#) A "Thank you to Donors" art dedication took place on March 18, 2000. Christopher Tully showed how the artwork was done. Joan Chalmers, Art Committee; Jim Johnson, Champlin Friends; Gail Mueller Schultz, Champlin Youth Services librarian; and Sharyll Smith, Senior Librarian, spoke and gave thanks to the many donors. Pearl Mead, library staff, donated part of her retirement money for the project. [From Champlin Dayton Press, March 14, 2000](#) The mural was titled "Mississippi Flight" and was finished in June 2000. [From Champlin Library brochure, June 2000](#)

The art committee then decided on a puppet theater project. Artist Jane Elias created the puppet theater. In December 2001, the "Schifelly Puppets" group performed at the dedication of the theater. Ruth Stephens donated a large sum of money in memory of her husband. The Friends of the Library also donated money for the project. [From "Champlin Library Annual Report, 2001"](#)

On September 11, 2004, a celebration was held for the new library's 10th anniversary. A new art project, the "Teen Wall Collage", created by the artist Christopher Bailey Foote, was dedicated. The wall collage depicts scenes from the early days of Champlin and into the future. [From "Champlin Library Year-end Report, 2004"](#)

Recent Happenings

In 2007, the staff of the library and others responded to a changing suburban population. The Youth Services librarian and Hmong liaison met with Asian students. Hmong New Year was celebrated at the library. The Youth Services librarian and the Spanish liaison visited with Spanish speaking families. Librarian staff presented popular “Faces of Africa” presentations. In order to serve senior citizens, staff gave book talks at a local senior community. [From Champlin Library Annual Report, 2007](#)

In the June 26, 2008 *Hennepin County Library Weekly Reader*, notice was given of planning for the updating of the Champlin Library. This may include a mix of technology and service desk improvement, new furniture and fixtures, and expanded meeting room access

Staff

Library Managers:

Mrs. S. R. Coleman, 1913-1922
Inah Gates Stout, 1922-1933
Gertrude Leathers, 1933-1956
Ruth Stephens, 1956-1986
Melissa Sibley, 1986-1996
Sharyll Smith, 1997-2002
Maryann Weidt, 2003-2009
Molly Schaaf, 2009-

Youth Services Librarians:

Gail Mueller Schultz, 1995-2000
Abike Eyo, 2001-2005
Stephanie Wyman, 2005-

Library Asistants:

Rhoda Mead, 1970-1988
Pearl Mead, 1988-1994 (at Champlin until 1998)

Senior Support Services Supervisor:

Geri Thostensen, 1995
Pat Thompson, 1996-2000
Mary Commers, 2000-

Long time circulation desk staff person, Judith Dehmer, greeted the public on opening day of the new library (1994) and continues to greet them today. (2009)

Sharyll Smith
3/03/2009