

# THE LANE LIBRARIES

## 1866 - 2016

*A Sesquicentennial History*









# The Lane Libraries 2016



**I**ndustrialist and philanthropist Clark Lane established the Lane Library in 1866 as a gift to the people of Hamilton, Ohio. Today the Lane Libraries serve people of all ages in three cities and western Butler County. Three innovative public libraries, a distinctive regional history library, a popular bookmobile and a dynamic community technology center offer active learning, educational programs and events, community outreach, publications and venues for community interaction. To deepen appreciation of these civic contributions through public events and publications during the 2016 Sesquicentennial, we recognize our origins and history, celebrate our legacies of service, promote our locations and achievements, and discover opportunities for the future.



Published by Lane Public Library, Hamilton, Ohio 45011

[www.lanepl.org](http://www.lanepl.org)

Copyright © 2016 by Lane Public Library

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher.

Book design by Carrie Mancuso and Mandy Thoman.

Printed on acid-free paper.

Back cover: Rededication of the Lane Public Library, 1914.

This publication was made possible by funding from the W. E. Smith Family Charitable Trust.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Lane Libraries 1866–2016: a sesquicentennial history / editor, Curtis W. Ellison

p. cm.

ISBN 9780692774403

1. Lane, Clark, 1823-1907. 2. Lane Libraries--Anniversaries, etc. 3. Public libraries--Ohio--Hamilton.

4. Local history. 5. Hamilton (Ohio)--History. I. Ellison, Curtis W. II. Title.

F499.H2

977.175--dc23



# Contents

## *Part One* | **The Life and Legacy of Clark Lane**

Early Days in the Miami Valley	6
Owens, Lane & Dyer Machine Company	7
Civil War Experiences	8
A New Home	9
Later Years	10
Lane Free Library	11

## *Part Two* | **Evolution of the Lane Libraries**

Hamilton Lane Library	12
Early Outreach and the Bookmobile	15
Booker T. Washington Branch Library	19
Lindenwald Branch Library	20
Oxford Lane Library	21
Fairfield Lane Library	24
Smith Library of Regional History	25
Lane Administration Center	27
Lane Community Technology Center	28

## *Part Three* | **People and Plans**

Directors	29
Board of Trustees	33
Collections and Digitization	34
Outreach to Children and Youth	35
Honoring Robert McCloskey	36
Friends of the Libraries	38
Benefactors	40
Levy Initiatives	42

<i>Contributors</i>	43
---------------------	----

<i>Mission</i>   <b>2016</b>	44
------------------------------	----

<i>Staff and Board Of Trustees</i>   <b>2016</b>	45
--	----

<i>Oil Painting of Clark Lane</i>   <b>2015</b>	46
---	----

<i>Clark Lane Morph</i>   <b>1997</b>	47
---------------------------------------	----



# Part One The Life and Legacy of Clark Lane

Clark Lane was the son of Northwest Territory pioneers. He helped revolutionize farming into profitable agriculture, was a founder of Owens, Lane & Dyer Machine Company that became the genesis of Hamilton, Ohio's metal trades manufacturing, built one of Hamilton's premier Victorian homes, established the Butler County Children's Home that sheltered orphans for more than a century, and created a Free Library, the progenitor of today's Lane Libraries system, that he donated to the people of Hamilton. A late 19th century admirer wrote, "The name and generous deeds of Clark Lane will never fade from the memories of a grateful people who have been recipients of his favor." In the 150th Anniversary year of the Lane Libraries, we honor his achievements and legacy.



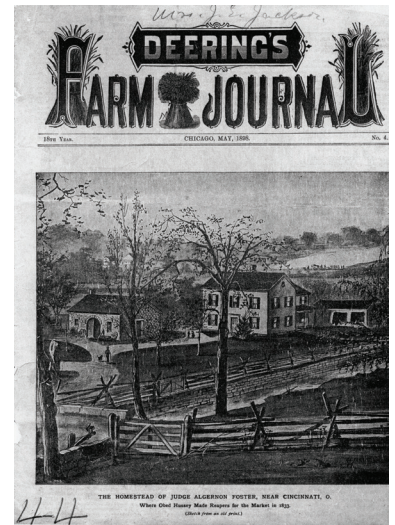
## Early Days in the Miami Valley

Lane's family immigrated to America in the 1660s from the Spanish Netherlands and settled in New Jersey. His grandfather was among pioneer settlers who migrated west to populate new territories after the American Revolution. He left New Jersey to settle in Cincinnati in March 1798, acquired land in the Symmes Purchase, and built a log cabin at Hamilton Avenue and Mill Road. Clark Lane was born there April 5, 1823.



*Obed Hussey Blacksmith Shop | Deering's Farm Journal, May, 1898*

Lane's formal education included "reading, writing and ciphering" and he worked with his father, John Lane, in a blacksmith shop. At the age of twelve he helped his father and brother construct the first reaping machine that would be successfully operated in the Northwest Territory. Its inventor, Obed Hussey, secured iron parts from John Lane and the new machine was tested in a nearby barley field. This reaper would help initiate an agricultural revolution. In the 1830s and 1840s, the Lane family made many common types of farm wagons and did smithing and plow work. In 1841, Clark Lane was put in charge of his father's blacksmith shops.



In the summer of 1844, Lane came to Hamilton to work on fifty farm wagons with builder John H. Brown, whose former establishment still stands at the northeast corner of Main and D Streets. The national controversy over slavery interrupted his early Hamilton efforts. Lane had been a confirmed abolitionist since age sixteen and in the presidential election year of 1844 proudly voted for James G. Birney of the Liberty Party. Other family members shared Lane's unpopular views opposing slavery, and his brother's home in Mt. Healthy was said to be a station on the Underground Railroad. In his 1890 recollections, *Reminiscential*, Lane said "In Hamilton, or more specifically the town of Rossville," he "was denounced as an abolitionist, an idiot, fool and traitor to his country." "I was an abolitionist, I voted for Birney, the abolition candidate," Lane recalled. "Next morning, Brown came into the shop, and in language more forcible than polite, told me that no abolitionist should work in his shop."



Lane soon left for Dayton. He quickly found work there in edge tool and machine forging with Matthias Denman Ross, a native of Hamilton who was successful in Dayton and then in Boston and Massachusetts mill towns. Working with him, Lane's skill became equal to that of the best workmen in Dayton. After a year he began a partnership for the production of edge tools, but it proved unsuccessful because of his partner's debts.

*Clark Lane was a member of the Odd Fellows Lodge in Mt. Healthy for over 60 years. The instruments on the desk are believed to be fraternal symbols.*



In 1846, Lane moved back to Hamilton. His family life had begun on Christmas Day of 1845 when he and Sallie Coriell were married. "She was a poor penniless girl endowed with a store of good sense, of love for me and of charity and good-fellowship for all," he wrote. They would have nine children. Lane was very fond of children and wrote to them when travelling on business. From the West Coast he counseled sons Jacob and Harry to obey their mother and avoid fighting and bad company. While on a 13,000-mile journey, he asked Jacob to have his mother point out his travel route on a globe, and from the Caribbean he described a scene where "great porpoises roll and tumble in the water and flying fish abound." Two of Lane's children died in a cholera epidemic of 1849 - 1850, only three survived childhood, and of those, Harry O. Lane lived most of his life institutionalized at the Butler County Children's Home.

## Owens, Lane & Dyer Machine Company

Clark Lane's first job after returning to Hamilton was building iron and stone cells in the Butler County jail, one of Hamilton's most important public works. He also furnished ironwork for the Beckett and Rigdon paper mill. In 1846, William Beckett loaned him an unsecured \$1,000 to launch his own Hamilton shop. According to historian W. E. Smith, it manufactured "grist mills, sawmills, paper mills, portable engines and agricultural machinery." In 1849 and 1850, Lane made a two-month trip to New York and New Jersey, and upon his return

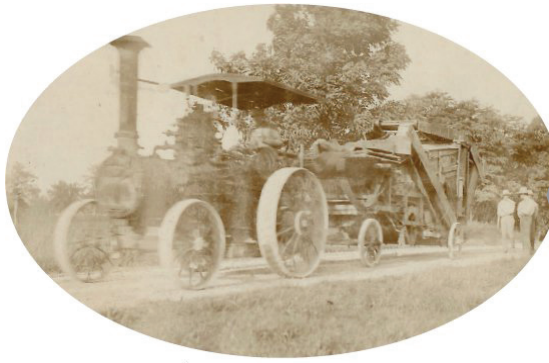
found that mills were being built throughout Butler and adjoining counties. "Fortunately for me," he wrote, "I had the good will and confidence of and the patronage of all resident millwrights of that period. Much more work came to me than I could possibly accept and execute." He chose the best paying, and prospered.

In 1853, Lane visited the Crystal Palace Fair in New York City and was authorized by Hamilton City Council to travel to Pawtucket, Rhode Island to purchase a "Jeffers Fire Engine," although at this time the city had no paid fire department. Upon his return, Lane began work on a new three-story brick smithing shop he initially called "Clark Lane and Company." His partners, Job E. Owens, Jacob Ebert and Elbridge G. Dyer, held a half interest. In 1854, Ebert died, Lane bought his interest, and Owens, Lane & Dyer was formed as a large foundry initially servicing grist mills, saw mills and paper mills.



*Owens, Lane & Dyer Machine Company advertisement, 1866*

This company grew rapidly, started building agricultural machinery, and by 1857 employed 100 men. It sold 350 threshing separators that year for \$300 each, a number that grew to 1,100 two years later. The Lebanon *Western Star* described it as one of the most extensive companies in the West, and few outside large cities had better credit. It introduced a threshing machine with a separator – for threshing and cleaning grain in a single operation – into Kentucky, Tennessee and other southern states, and built portable wood steam engines for farm and road work. As early as 1858, it shipped steam engines to California and Oregon, and introduced the wire-spring toothed riding- or horse-rake throughout the West. It sold foundry castings, mill gearing and paper-making machines to new paper companies forming in Hamilton, Middletown, Dayton, Piqua, Lockland, Richmond and elsewhere, and sold sawmills across the Midwest. From 1854 to 1863, sales figures were between \$130,000 and \$350,000 annually. For the next twelve years they averaged



Owens, Lane & Dyer steam tractor, undated

\$400,000 or more, and between 1863 and 1873, Owens, Lane & Dyer employed 500 to 800 persons. In 1874, Owens was presented with a gold medal at the Ohio State Fair for the first traction engine built west of Pittsburgh.

## Civil War Experiences

During the sectional conflict that began in 1861, Clark Lane remained an ardent abolitionist who spoke of President Lincoln as a Moses. At first, however, the war brought considerable frustration and loss of business because the southern agricultural machinery market disappeared. In the spring of 1862, Lane and his business partner Job E. Owens went to California to explore possible new markets for the steam engine and thresher trade. In six months he traveled 7,500 miles by steamer and water, 3,500 miles by stagecoach, 300 miles on horseback and 300 miles or more on foot or by train. This trip of 13,250 miles took him first to New York City, then the Isthmus of Panama, Acapulco, major cities of California and its mining and farming areas, and overland via Salt Lake City, Denver, Springfield, Missouri and Indianapolis back to Hamilton.

By mid-October 1862, they were home. Meanwhile the war had grown, in Lane's words, "to wonderful proportions." But as company buyer, he was challenged. Skilled mechanics were off to war and supplies were hard to find. Moreover, "To meet the wants of the individual customer and to supply the arbitrary demands of Government and the Army," Lane recalled, "made business life very perplexing and often of ruinous loss." Yet government business grew significantly. "Our shops were under siege, or seizure," he wrote, "for about all the steam engines, saw mills and other work in line of war requirements we could furnish." In June 1917, the *Hamilton Republican-News* recalled that "During the Civil War the firm Owens, Lane and Dyer prospered and became known as the wealthiest firm in the city."

*"During the Civil War the firm Owens, Lane and Dyer prospered and became known as the wealthiest firm in the city."*

- *Hamilton Republican-News* | June, 1917

92

ADVERTISEMENTS.

**OWENS, LANE, DYER & CO.**

MANUFACTURERS OF  
THE ECLIPSE  
STEAM  
Saw Mills,  
COMBINING  
THREE PATENT IMPROVEMENTS  
ESSENTIAL TO THE  
WELL-WORKING OF  
Circular Mills.

ALL SIZES OF  
Portable and Stationary  
**ENGINES!**  
Mill Gearing  
AND  
MACHINERY  
OF  
First Class Workmanship  
AND MATERIAL.



For further information call and see, or address them at the  
**Manufactory in HAMILTON, OHIO,**  
**Or Branch House, ST. LOUIS, MO.**

Aside from its effects on business, the Civil War brought personal loss to the Lane family and many others in Butler County. In the last days of 1862 and early 1863, a military campaign with terrible loss of life took place in central Tennessee, and on January 1, 1863, Lane learned that his youngest brother was dead at Stones River, Tennessee. Many in Hamilton received similar news. The following morning, Lane and six others from Hamilton travelled via Louisville to the Stones River battlefield to find their dead, dying and wounded relatives.

Faced with official obstruction of their journey, Lane and William Beckett sought out those in Louisville who could get them to the front, and all but one of the Hamilton party found their relatives. Lane later remarked that it was amazing they were not filled with bullets that day. They were, however, loaded with greenbacks to address any unforeseen emergency and were neither stingy nor slow to place them where they could do the most good. During this experience, and later at home, Lane gave money to unfortunate soldiers in distress. More than one would find a new home waiting when he returned from war, or a widow and her family would find their mortgage paid in full.



## A New Home



*Clark Lane House, undated*

When the Civil War began in 1861, Clark Lane was one of the most prosperous industrialists in Hamilton and possibly the wealthiest man in a town of 7,223 people. War disrupted markets and affected his business, but new demand strengthened his company and he wished to have a home fitting to his stature. The Lane family lived in at least three Hamilton locations before he decided to build arguably the city's most unique and architecturally significant residence. Today, 319 North Third Street is known as the Lane-Hooven House, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, yet not everyone appreciated it during the Civil War. Some called it "Lane's Folly."

Construction of the house began in early spring 1863, when, Lane wrote, "both labor and material were probably cheaper than at any future period." Master carpenter and contractor James R. Elrick was in charge of the work, which took eleven months. Elrick had come to Hamilton by canal boat in the 1830s, learned his trade from his father, and been employed by Owens, Lane & Dyer. He was a descendant of George Reed, a signer of both the Declaration of Independence and of the U. S. Constitution.

The Clark Lane House was octagonal, a popular mid-19th century design. Its novelty was attributed to Orson Fowler, who in 1853 wrote about its supposed advantages, including centralization of household activities, improved heating, lighting and ventilation. The eight-sided style typically featured a flat roof and wrap-around verandas, yet the Lane house deviated from this by exhibiting

an exuberance of gables, curved bargeboards underneath overhanging eaves, and an elaborate layer of multi-colored slate which likely gleamed when new. Finials atop gable peaks are thirteen feet high and weigh 150 pounds. Constructed of brick with wood, iron and stone trim, Lane's home incorporates a mixture of architectural styles including Gothic arches, square-headed windows and Eastlake bargeboards. Despite this eclecticism, the dominant spirit is Victorian Gothic Revival. Notable features of the interior are butternut and ash woodwork and a spectacular spiral stairway designed by Hamilton resident Timotheus Vogel. It extends from the ground floor to a third floor turret. Lane sold the house in 1875, and later owners surrounded its fireplaces with tiles made by Hamilton Tile Company. An addition was built to the north about 1895.

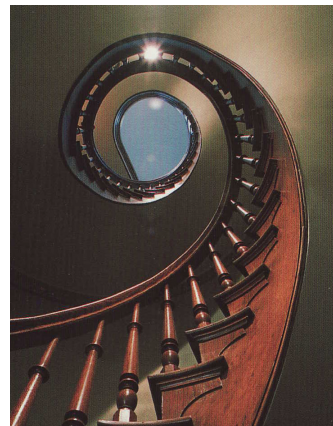
*Lane-Hooven House | Pat Brown, 2015*

After Lane departed Hamilton, bankers, prominent industrialists, and community leaders owned Lane's home. Ohio Governor William McKinley was entertained there by



Colonel Alexander Gordon, a founder of Niles Tool Works. Bertrand Kahn, whose family established the Estate Stove Company, purchased the home from C. Earle Hooven in 1942 and gave it to the "people of the City of Hamilton," stipulating that it be used by the Red Cross through the duration of World War II. Today the Lane-Hooven House is home to the Hamilton Community Foundation, whose commitment to supporting the city and community seems a fitting legacy for

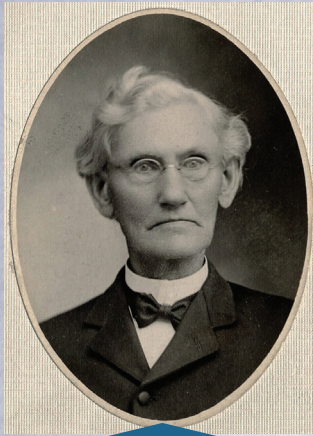
it. Indeed, Clark Lane wrote that during his time, "It was the home of all comers. Its doors were always open for every charity, for every Aid Society work."



*Lane-Hooven House  
Pat Brown, 2015*



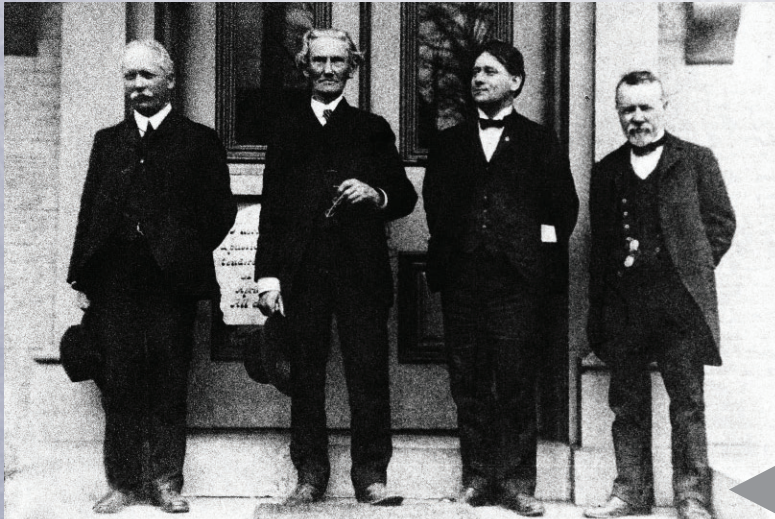
## Later Years



Clark Lane | E. M. Mudge  
Elkhart, Indiana, undated

In the early 1870s, Lane and his partners tried unsuccessfully to develop lead and coal mines as well as oil fields in Kentucky, and ventured into a problematic joint-stock incorporation. However, their steam threshing machine, the California Chief, remained popular with farmers. After the financial Panic of 1873 chilled business, Lane became interested in the industrial development of Elkhart, Indiana where his son Jacob lived. In 1875, he sold his interest in Owens, Lane & Dyer and moved to Elkhart with his wife and daughter. When his former partner Elbridge Dyer committed suicide in 1876, Lane's former company applied for

receivership in order to remain in business. Lane was appointed receiver and commuted to Hamilton from the family homestead near Mt. Healthy. Although he was an astute financial manager, with farm foreclosures increasing to record numbers through the 1870s, Owens, Lane & Dyer Machine Company went out of business in 1879. Its assets had new Hamilton owners in 1882 when a successor firm was incorporated as Hooven, Owens & Rentschler Company. It would be a major employer for over fifty years, later becoming part of General Machinery Corporation, Lima-Hamilton Corporation, and Baldwin-Lima-Hamilton Corporation. In 1962, its Hamilton manufacturing operations ended.

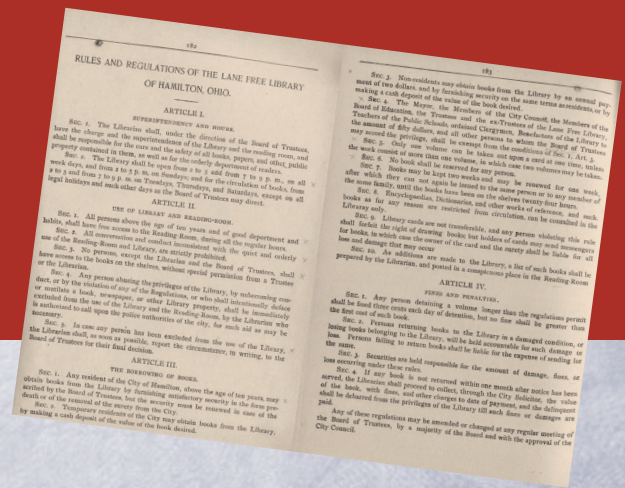


After Owens, Lane & Dyer closed, Clark Lane moved to Mt. Healthy but maintained property in Elkhart. There he built the first permanent dam on the St. Joseph River, promoted the development of hydraulics, and helped secure three paper mills. A lover of books and an extensive reader, he gave many valuable books to the public school library in Elkhart and donated a library for the Northeast Elkhart Chapel, whose collections subsequently became part of the city's Carnegie library.

When his wife died in 1892, Lane again moved to Elkhart, and in 1894 married Augusta Swift Wood, who was to live only three more years. Although he was not actively engaged in business Lane was a familiar figure on the streets of Elkhart. One day at the age of eighty-four he walked five miles, and that night he fell ill. Clark Lane died of typhoid fever on September 4, 1907. His son Jacob and his daughter Maud E. Jackson of Mt. Healthy survived him. Lane's body was brought to Hamilton by rail car and his funeral service held on September 6. He was buried in Greenwood Cemetery.

## Did you know?

A copy of the Lane Free Library Catalogue No. 2, 1897  
is in the Cummins collection at the Hamilton  
Lane Library. A list of rules and regulations is appended,  
outlining deportment and circulation policies.



Clark Lane, second from left, poses with Library trustees on his final Hamilton visit in 1905.



## Lane Free Library

Shortly after occupying his octagonal house on the west side of North Third Street, Lane designed and supervised construction of a library directly across the street where he again incorporated an octagonal design. It opened October 20, 1866. Formal ceremonies were held November 29, and a newspaper article described it as “a building of novel proportions, octagon shaped and surmounted by a cupola with stained glass windows.” Historian W. E. Smith reported that Lane had offered \$10,000 to the City of Hamilton to build a library, and when that failed he built one himself and put his niece Emma Lane in charge. “Convinced that a library was essential to saving the young from ignorance and deterioration of morals,” said Smith, Lane “supported his library for a year before offering it to the city.” A successful special election in 1868 ratified acceptance of Lane’s offer and the library became a city responsibility. In 1879, it was made a circulating library.

Clark Lane’s penultimate return to Hamilton was for his 82nd birthday on April 5, 1905, when he attended a reception in his honor at the Lane Free Library. Six hundred people visited that evening to pay respects to one of Hamilton’s great benefactors. Library board chair E. C. Schenk, public school superintendent Darrell C. Joyce, and high school principal W. P. Cope spoke, and Lane was given a gold-lined sterling silver loving cup inscribed to him “From the citizens of Hamilton as an appreciation of his gift to our city of Lane Free Library.” Two years later he would lie in state in its Octagon Room.

The library was not the only example of Lane’s generosity. He and business partner E. J. Dyer contributed funds to start a Hamilton Children’s Home that opened in 1875 and served “poor and unfortunate children” of Hamilton and Butler County until 1985. Its first occupants were orphaned children of Civil War soldiers.

In 1898, Hamilton’s Board of Control sought Clark Lane’s advice about how he could best be memorialized in Hamilton. He replied that he wished the library to grow and prosper: “How be it good books free to all, and comfortable place or places wherein to enjoy they are not only a joy forever. But are also a powerful factor in the ‘git-up’ of the best type of humanity. Placing it mildly at least one economic feature of my life has been the placing of money where I believed the same would last longest and be of the most real benefit to my fellow-man.”

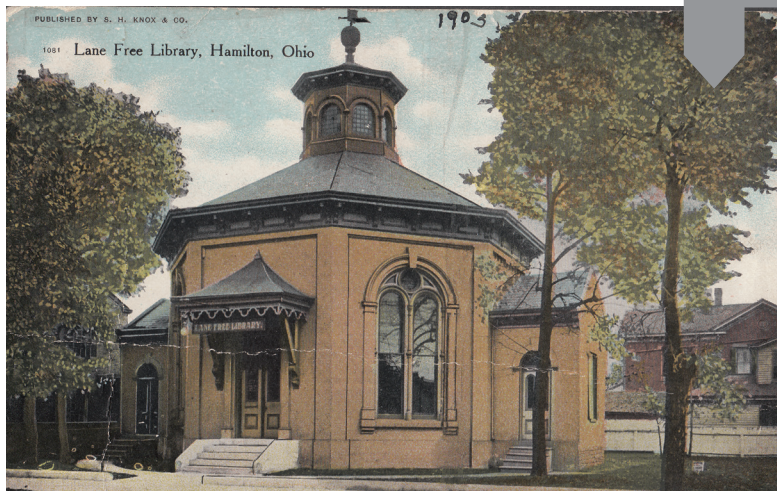


*Lane Free Library, 1882*



# Part Two Evolution of the Lane Libraries

## Hamilton Lane Library



Lane Free Library, 1903 | S. H. Knox & Co., 1903

In a letter appearing in the November 22, 1866 issue of *The Hamilton Telegraph*, Clark Lane invited all citizens to view the rooms of the Free Public Library of Hamilton which were to be formally opened to the public with appropriate ceremony on Thanksgiving evening. A week earlier, a writer for the newspaper offered a description of the new library so detailed that those seeking to restore the library could refer to it years later.

*The stranger or the citizen who strolls up Third Street cannot fail to notice on the East side of that Street, and between Buckeye and Heaton Streets, a new building, now nearly completed and of novel proportions. Standing inside a neat iron fence is a beautiful octagon structure, its wall of brick with windows and door casings of dressed stone, its roof of variegated slate and surmounted by a dome or cupola with stained glass windows. If puzzled to know whence and wherefore came this building let him lift his eyes still higher and observe the vane, a book transfixed by a quill. This then is a library building, and if you look across the street you will see the house of its designer and builder, Mr. Clark Lane.*

Octagonal buildings theoretically made good libraries because they permitted light to enter through windows on eight facades, a consideration where reading is the primary activity. Apparently Lane did not employ James Elrick, who built his home, to construct the library. *The Telegraph* reported that the library's "woodwork and architecture are worthy of their superintendent, Wm. Blackall, whose skill with the tools of his trade is well known." The names Tryon and Clark were acknowledged for masonry, Sullivan and Sarver for plaster. Interior walls were said to be finished in the "purest white." Other builders may have been involved. The *Hamilton Evening Journal* obituary of Frederick Henry Horssynder, a German immigrant initially employed by brick and marble yards, said in 1909, "Mr. Horssynder was the contractor who built the present Lane Free Library." Horssynder had received aid to start his own business from William Beckett, Clark Lane and Job E. Owens. Lane himself had a direct hand in some aspects of construction, such as its heating and ventilating system. At the dedication he said, "In and about the building, you can see, I have used nothing but the best of materials in order to secure permanence and durability." In addition to the octagonal reading room, a north wing featured a pump, washstand and coat and hat fixtures. The south side housed writing tables with pens, ink and paper.

The first significant addition to the Lane Free Library occurred in 1892 when a stack room for shelves of books was added to the rear. After the Great Miami River Flood of March 1913 brought devastation to Hamilton and the entire river valley, the *Hamilton Evening Journal* reported in April that "The



Lane Free Library, March 26, 1913  
Dr. M. Flenner, 1913





*Lane Free Library,  
1913*

most severe loss sustained by the city of Hamilton in any one building was by the Lane Free Library

where practically every book is gone, a part of the building washed away and all the valuable records destroyed." Both the stack room and north wing had fallen, but the octagonal room stood. After enduring this flood of a century, the Lane Free Library reopened for business and expanded. In 1914, it was rededicated as the Lane Public Library. In November 1915, architect George Barkman was asked to proceed at once with plans for a new north wing that was completed in 1916, providing a reading room and an auditorium.

In July 1906, a bolt of lightning struck a transformer at Third and Heaton Streets and carried into the octagon room dome via electrical wiring. Damage

was limited and not a single volume was lost to fire or water damage. It was necessary, however, to cut holes in the floor to release rising rainwater falling from the cupola like "a miniature Niagara Falls." In 1907, a lightning strike resulted in four months of suspended service. Then in February 1919, fire struck the library. An overheated boiler set the basement furnace room ablaze and quickly burned upward to the octagonal lobby and main reading room. Although newspaper accounts blared "LANE FREE LIBRARY DESTROYED," the annual report for 1919 noted that only 2,048 of 14,675 volumes were lost in the fire. Outer walls suffered no major damage, but the cupola was likely a casualty of this fire (or of 1920s construction). The library, its durability well demonstrated, reopened in July.

After World War I, there was increased demand for library services and architect George Barkman was again commissioned to design a new wing. This south wing contained 1,700 square feet on each of two floors. Completed in 1921, it features a Rookwood fireplace. Architectural details and furnishings of both wings were greatly influenced by Arts and Crafts or Mission styles. For most of its life this wing's main floor featured children's and youth collections, programs and activities, and for two decades, a "Little Theater" was located here.

## *Did you know?*

*On the evening of March 22, 1932, thieves broke into the Lane Public Library. Evidence collected the next day indicates the thieves stole \$15 in cash and also ransacked several offices. The most unusual thing noted is that before they left the building, they sat in the North Reading Room and smoked a number of cigarettes while reading The New York Times.*



*Gifts to the Hamilton Lane Library include a bust of Julius Caesar, butterflies, rocks, insects, a picture of Red Riding Hood, an 1870 Hamilton map, a moose head, a deer head, and a collection of birds. In 1946, the moose head hung in the Children's Department.*

*During WWII, the Hamilton Lane Library was a collection point of the Victory in Books campaign for donating reading material to troops overseas.*



*Hamilton Kiwanis Club donated ceiling projectors to Lane Public Library in 1948. First developed for military hospitals, they were available to immobilized patients in Butler County for reading microfilmed books, and checked out with no overdue date.*





A 1950 addition named for donor Edith Clawson was built adjacent to the south wing by Cleveland architects Outcalt-Guenther & Associates. It provided 2,500 square feet at ground level, a garage for two bookmobiles, and second-floor space for a cataloging department, offices and a boardroom.

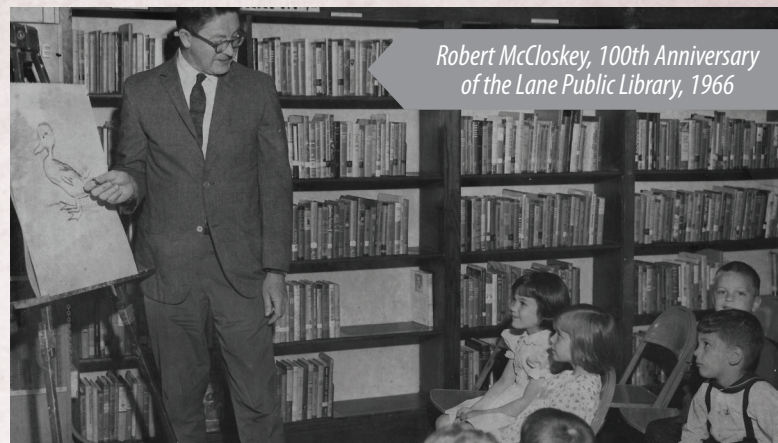
The sale of two paintings given in memory of World War II casualty Lt. Asa William Shuler helped enable a major addition to the rear of the library by architects Steed-Hammond-Paul and Winkler, Rank, Beegley & Maxfield in 1984. These paintings by noted Ohio artist Joseph Henry Sharp depicted American Indian scenes and hung in the Octagon Room for nearly thirty-five years. The building project also created a new meeting room named for Lt. Shuler, who was killed in action over Germany in 1945.

A second memorial space was designated in 1984 for local history materials and dedicated as the George C. Cummins Local History Room, following donation by his family of a portion of his extensive photograph collection. Photographs in the Cummins collection document a visual history of Hamilton between the 1880s and 1940s. They are heavily used, and many have been digitized for electronic access.

In early 1997, the entire library was reconfigured by Steed-Hammond-Paul. At this point the building comprised 25,350 square feet. Significant interior and exterior restoration included reconstruction of the 1866 cupola topped with a book-and-quill weather vane. Robert Collins of Hamilton made stained glass for the cupola windows in a Victorian design typical of the 1860s, and created a rose stained glass window for the mezzanine. Iron fencing in front of the building was designed in a Victorian pattern by Stewart Iron Works of Covington, Kentucky. Commitment to patron service led to an innovative decision to install the first drive-up window of the Lane system.

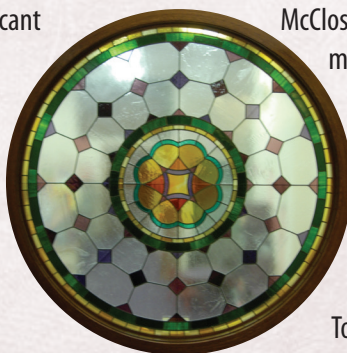
Planning for a new Lane Administration Center in 2004 would allow Steed-Hammond-Paul to reconfigure what had been the Main Library into what would now become the Hamilton Lane Library. By 2008, an interior re-design made substantial changes. Separate circulation and reference desks were eliminated to create a single centrally located one-stop service desk on the main level. The Octagon Room was converted to lounge and program space, and children's and teen services were expanded on the top floor where a quiet study room was added. The Cummins Room for local history materials was

transferred to dedicated space on the mezzanine. This renovation facilitated the growth of computer stations for public use, and they expanded to thirty-five by 2016.



*Robert McCloskey, 100th Anniversary of the Lane Public Library, 1966*

The Hamilton Lane Library occupies one of the oldest continuously-operating public library buildings in the State of Ohio. On May 9, 2015, during a community celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Robert McCloskey's birth and Children's Book Week, a Literary Landmark plaque was placed on the library's front façade. It reads, "Two-time Caldecott Award winner Robert McCloskey (1914-2003) walked through the doors of this library many times as a child. McCloskey was born in Hamilton and his first book, *Lentil*, featured several Hamilton scenes including the library." In 2016, the Third Street Plaza was dedicated in German Village between Clark Lane's house and his library, with the intent of providing the historic district with a space friendly to outdoor events, including library programs.



Today's Hamilton Lane Library under manager Carol Bowling remains in service as the historic original facility of a contemporary public library system. It is linked to the world via digital communications, online services, and video collections, in addition to the newspapers, journals, and circulating books that Clark Lane expected would multiply when he generously donated his library to the public. In 2016, the Lane Libraries system celebrated 150 years of public service, tradition and innovation. Building on its origins as a free library in a thriving industrial town, today the Lane Libraries serve all age groups in three cities and western Butler County.





## Early Outreach and the Bookmobile

The 150-year evolution of Clark Lane's library has remained true to his vision of a library readily accessible to all citizens. Outreach services and a bookmobile serving Butler County since 1938 have directly realized that vision.

The practice of taking the library to the reader began in 1915 when library stations were opened in Hamilton school buildings at East Hamilton, Lindenwald and the West Side. Librarians lugged suitcases filled with books onto streetcars and carried them into schools. Stations were also established at mill sites including Champion Paper & Fibre Company, Beckett Paper Company, American Can Company, Miami Knitting Mills and Shuler &

Benninghofen Company. Perhaps recalling his own early education and apprenticeship, Clark Lane would have heartily embraced the practice of taking books to schools and factories. In his account of who should use the Lane Free Library, he had listed "apprentice boys and their associates" first.

For more than a half-century municipal governance controlled the library. In that era it grew slowly. Before 1913 as little as \$50 annually was provided for purchasing new books. In 1923, control of the library was moved from Hamilton government to the Board of Education of the Hamilton City School District. A decade later the library was providing collections of books to 89 classrooms and to fire houses, playgrounds and summer camps. After library service began at Mercy and Fort Hamilton hospitals, it became commonplace to see a book cart being pushed through hospital corridors.

One of the library's most popular expansions took place in 1938 when bookmobile service was inaugurated across large parts of Butler County. The initial bookmobile was little more than an enclosed truck bed with wooden shelving, and its first driver was James Dolan, later a judge in Hamilton Municipal Court. Originally called the "book car," the Lane bookmobile was one of the first five vehicles of its type in Ohio. Its average daily circulation for fall 1939 was an impressive 715 books.



### Books ON WHEELS

Good reading at no cost  
• • •

The Hamilton Lane Public Library is now able, by means of its Book Car, to bring books to the people in sections of Butler County that are at a distance from the Main Library or its Deposit Stations.

The Book Car now makes regular trips through the county, stopping at schools to supply children with books and at villages to care for the needs of the adults.

Service is free. There is no charge for a library card. A library card may be used to take books from the Book Car or from any other Library Agency.

Notice of the time of the stop for your section of the county you will find posted.

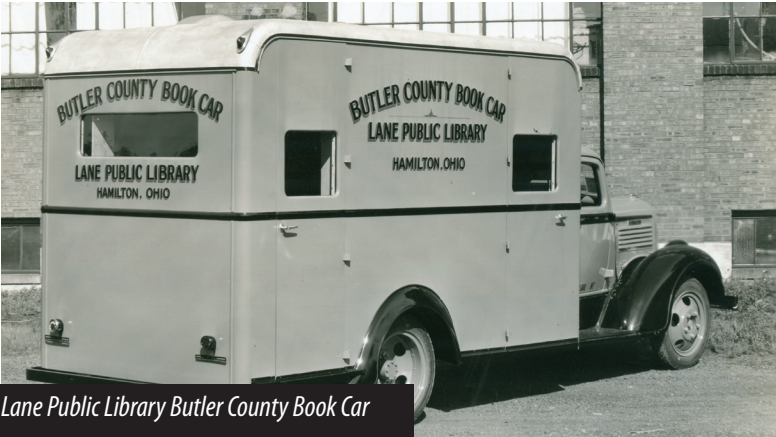
Book service for children and grown people including

Books for P. T. A., 4-H Clubs, and Grange programs.

• • •  
LANE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Hamilton, Ohio.



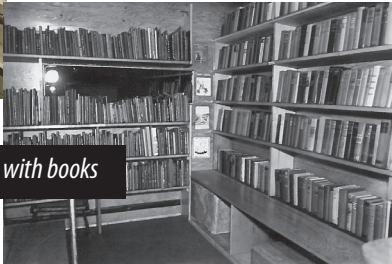
# First Butler County Book Car 1938



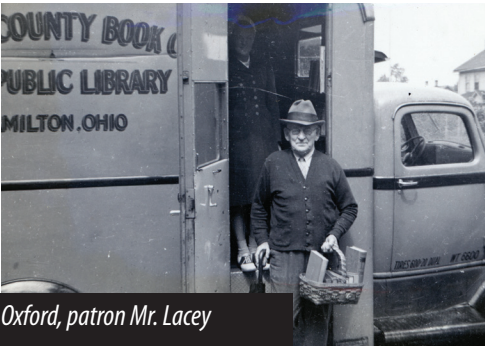
Lane Public Library Butler County Book Car



Front interior of Book Car, empty shelves



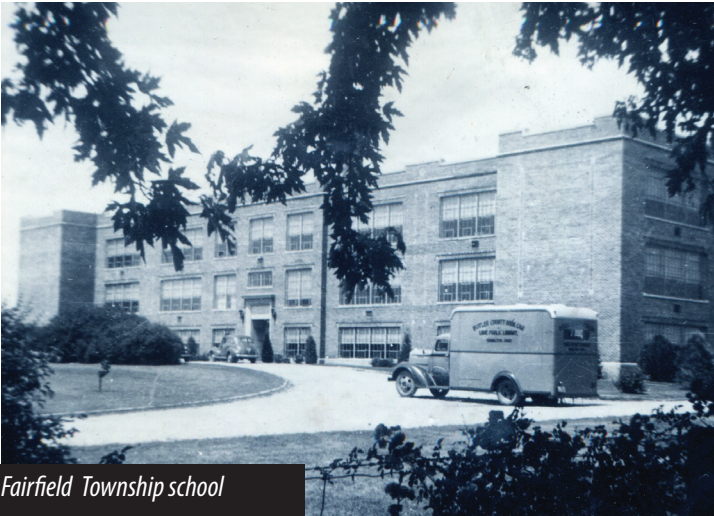
Back interior of Book Car, shelves loaded with books



Oxford, patron Mr. Lacey



Rosedale



Fairfield Township school



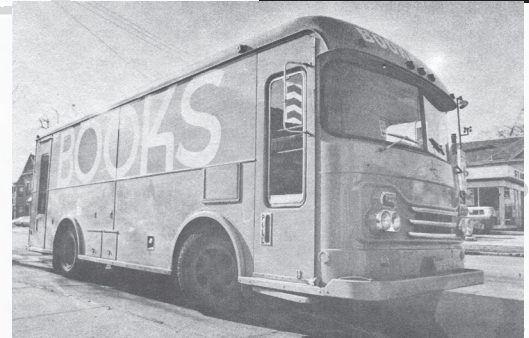
Morgan Township School



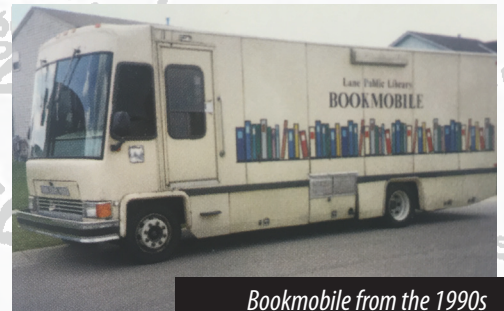
# Lane Libraries Bookmobiles Throughout the Years



Bookmobile purchased in 1950



1970s Bookmobile



Bookmobile from the 1990s



David Newkirk, Louise Bell (library staff member), Helen Sroufe, Thelma Sroufe, and Roseanne Gentile (library staff member) at a Fairfield school stop



Bookmobiles from 2001 - 2016





Demand for bookmobile service grew quickly. In 1939, the bookmobile travelled 6,000 miles and circulated 126,782 items. By 1940, it was circulating over 200,000 items per year including direct bookmobile loans and teacher collections delivered to schools. By then it was serving over 4,700 patrons annually and in 1941 the bookmobile was featured in a national farm magazine. That year it had forty-eight regular stops in thirty-eight villages, nine schools and four summer camps. With demand continuing to increase at this rate, a second bookmobile was added in 1950. Two new trucks were purchased and based at the Hamilton library in an area designed for them as part of a new addition named for Edith Clawson.

Two new bookmobiles were purchased in 2001 that now operate from the Lane Administration Center. These bookmobiles operate in much the same manner as they did sixty-five years ago, actively serving those who may not be able to

patronize other library facilities. Under the direction of manager Fran Meyer the bookmobiles schedule both community and school stops and have added stops at daycare centers, senior centers and community events. The bookmobile is a regular presence at parades, festivals such as Operation Pumpkin and IceFest, and farmers' markets.

After seventy-eight years, bookmobile services continue to innovate with programs such as Library Link, allowing students in local school districts to reserve materials from the Lane catalog for delivery to their school library. The Raise a Reader program provides books and early literacy materials to the family of every newborn at Fort Hamilton Hospital. In the sesquicentennial year of the Lane Libraries, it is easy to imagine that Clark Lane would be proud of the bookmobile's active heritage of making the library ever more convenient and accessible to all.





## Booker T. Washington Community Center Branch Library

In December 1945, the Hamilton newspaper reported that a “sub-branch library” would open in early 1946 at the Booker T. Washington Community Center on South Front Street in Hamilton. It would have a circulating collection in the center’s reading room, “offer a well-balanced selection of reading material for children, teen-agers and adults,” and provide current magazines. A librarian would be appointed to oversee this new library. The initiative would be a partnership between the public library and the center to establish the first permanently-located extension of the library system.

The new branch opened on Friday, February 15, 1946. Estelle Tate was librarian in charge and Alice Hurley was library assistant. A few years later Lola Briggs became librarian and Geraldine Jackson assistant. The facility was to be open daily for use as a reading room and books could be checked out Monday, Thursday and Friday evenings from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. By November 1946, increasing circulation justified expanding checkout service to five days weekly. A year later, the first anniversary of the branch was celebrated with a tea and a presentation by well-known author Jane Dabney Shackelford on “Better Negro Literature.” The anniversary event was arranged by the Community Garden Club, Booker T. Washington Community Center, Excelsior Literary Club and Lane Public Library. Community Center board members who initiated this library included Fred Grant, Jr., Rev. J. L. Francis, Mrs. J. D. Freeman, Mrs. Cyrus Fitton, Rev. A. H. Tate, Mrs. Louis Frechtling, C. K. Dyer, Mrs. James Dukes, Oscar Pridgett, Mrs. Damon Andrews, Chris Geckler and Milton Flowers. Library trustees were Robert J. Brown, Mrs. Marshall Barker, Terry Wickham, John O. Fry, Frederick A. Reister, Rev. Karl A. Mueller and Mrs. Guy B. Randall. Gladys S. Sepin was the Lane Library director.



shelving could not be installed, books were rotated to provide variety and to update the collection. Head Start programs of the 1960s utilized the branch facility as well.

The Community Center was expanded in 1968 and library service temporarily interrupted. In September, new and larger quarters formally opened with reference materials and the circulating collection expanded. Head Start classes met weekly, library services information was provided to churches and schools to encourage patronage, and hours adjusted to accommodate the community. In October 1990, branch manager Georgia Flenoury Simms retired after a thirty-year career and Robert Canida assumed the position. During his tenure the branch continued to support Head Start classes and offer children's story time activities, but patronage was lighter than that of other facilities in the system. The number of checkouts fell from approximately 30,000 in 1984 to about 4,000 in 1993, and hours were scaled back to three days weekly. On August 31, 1994, forty-eight years after it opened, the Booker T. Washington Community Center Branch Library closed its doors. Shelving and reference materials were left for Project One, a job training and placement organization. Bookmobile service that had been available here in summer months was extended to Riverside Homes, a nearby housing complex.



*Above:  
Librarian Estelle Tate,  
second from right*

*Left & Right:  
Patrons,  
Booker T. Washington  
Community Center  
Branch Library, 1946*





## Lindenwald Branch Library

The Lindenwald Branch Library opened in September 1948 with a collection of 3,000 books. It was located in the basement of the Lindenwald Citizens Bank Building and open to the public on Tuesdays and Fridays. Lane Library director Gladys Sepin promised more hours if use warranted, and after only one month the branch was circulating 800 books weekly. Eleanor Benjamin served the branch as librarian and Cora Baker and Roseanne Gentile as assistants. In the 1960s, the branch was open five days weekly but only two evenings. It was well used by families, schools and Miami University Hamilton students. Circulation was always brisk and summer reading programs for children, outreach to schools, attractive programming and personable staff kept the branch library popular as a neighborhood destination easily reached by walking. A 25th Anniversary celebration in 1973 drew a large crowd of supporters.



*Lindenwald Branch Library, 1948*

Space in the branch's leased quarters was, however, scarce. There were also exposed pipes, a long set of stairs leading to the library level, no other access, and few parking options. There were reports of children or teens throwing stink bombs down the stairwell. There was no library signage outside and a window of the bank was used for library displays. A street-level location was needed, and the library needed to grow.



*Lindenwald Branch Library, 1975*

In October 1974, ground was broken for a new Lindenwald Branch at 2121 Pleasant Avenue, physically connected to the First Church of God but with a separate purpose. Library director Edward Dax, officials of the church, and library staff attended opening ceremonies when a new wing of the church was completed for the library. It had a street level entrance and an exterior library sign. There was more space for collections and programming, and more parking available. The collection was said to be very good and average monthly circulation grew to about 40,000. The branch remained at this location for twenty-seven years. Branch Manager Stephanie Spurlock hosted numerous children's programs, story times and activities for adults, especially seniors, making the Lindenwald Branch in every sense a community center.

When a new Fairfield Branch Library was being built in 2001, only three miles from the overcrowded Lindenwald location, the library board made a decision to close Lindenwald. Its collection was integrated into the Fairfield collection and Lindenwald staff were reassigned to the new branch. After 53 years of service, doors closed at the Lindenwald Branch for the final time on August 30, 2001.



## Oxford Lane Library

By terms of the gift that had created it, Oxford residents held borrowing privileges at a large Carnegie library on the Miami University campus for nearly a half century before the Lane Libraries opened a small branch library near the center of Oxford in 1958. The Miami library rivaled Middletown's Carnegie library, dwarfed Hamilton's public library, and featured a children's collection along with thousands of other books. Oxford residents had not seen a need for another library.



The Lane Library bookmobile began visiting Oxford in 1938 and by the late 1950s was stopping Uptown, in two residential areas, and at schools. In 1957, Oxford recreation director Robert Artz noted that Miami's postwar student population was crowding its library. He suggested that the high

school library add adult books, but the school librarian instead proposed opening a Lane Public Library branch in Oxford. The president of the Oxford Federation of Clubs pointed out to the Butler County Budget Commission that Oxford residents were already paying county taxes for public libraries and were entitled to one. Avis Cullen, editor of the *Oxford Press*, supported the idea, as did the Newtowners Club. Lane Library director Gladys Sepin agreed and suggested that if an initial space were very small, a donor might be enticed to fund a bigger facility with his or her name on it. That ploy failed, even after minimal rented space

was secured in a one-story building on East Park Place that had been a livery stable in the 1800s and an ice cream parlor in the 1900s. The Oxford Branch opened there in fall 1958. Miami alumna Patricia Taylor Straker,



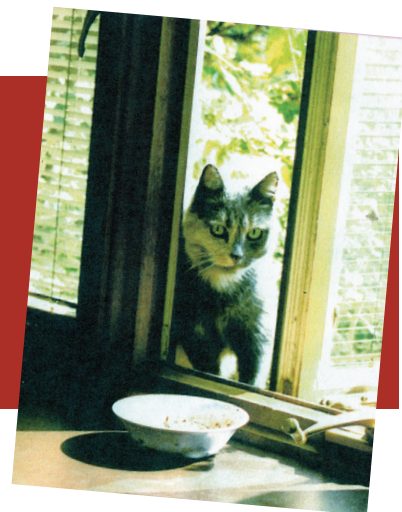
*Oxford Branch Library, 1958 | Robert E. White, 1959*

who had worked at the Hamilton library, was in charge, with assistant Sandra Tuley Larson. This library of less than 2,000 square feet served for over a decade.

In the 1970s, Avis Cullen wrote editorials advocating for a better library and community volunteers headed by writer and Miami professor Walter Havighurst encouraged the American Association of University Women to raise funds to buy property from Miami for a library. That effort succeeded, and in fall 1975 a new facility was opened at 15 South College Avenue on the west end of the Uptown business district. Oxford architect and Miami faculty member Keppel O. Small designed a modern building with an upper floor serving adults and a lower one for juveniles. Six years later, the first floor children's area was expanded to the east when the new Smith Library of Regional History opened on the addition's second floor. The Hamilton architectural firm Steed-Hammond-Paul designed that addition.

### *Did you know?*

*Between 1988 and 2009, the Oxford Children's Department had a grey cat, "Miss Kitty," who lived outside in a small house made by staff. She was mistakenly taken home by a patron whose veterinarian identified her as the library cat and she was returned.*



*Oxford Branch Library, 1975  
Miami Alumnus, February 1976*

In 1991, Glenda Terrell Rhodes headed the Oxford Branch when another substantial wing, also designed by Steed-Hammond-Paul, was added to the north. It increased the adult area, created teen space, and doubled space for meetings. New meeting rooms were named for Avis Cullen, a longtime supporter and trustee who led efforts to establish Friends of the Library groups for both Oxford and Fairfield Libraries and worked to revive the Hamilton Friends.



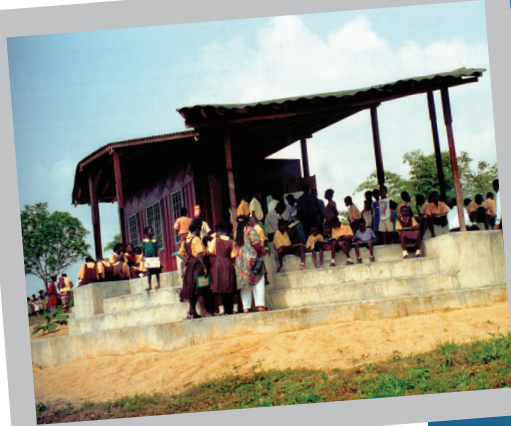


By the 21st century, patron demand in Oxford had significantly outgrown the library's space and Lane Libraries began exploring new locations and soliciting public comment. A decision was made to build within the city limits but outside the Uptown area on leased land in the Bishop Square development at 441 South Locust Street. SHP Leading Design created a two-story building of more than 20,000 square feet to accommodate more public computers, study rooms, meeting rooms, a Teen Zone, an interactive play area for children, a reading patio, a drive-up window and ample parking. New and historic items of public art were installed in the building. Oxford Lane Library manager Rebecca Smith was instrumental in helping plan a functional and welcoming facility.

The new Oxford facility was the first building in the Lane Libraries system designed for LEED certification. Because substantial funding for it came from bequests and gifts, the meeting room was named for Walter and Marion Boyd Havighurst, the activity room for Helen Weinberger, and Avis Cullen was remembered by naming study rooms for her. The new eight million-dollar Oxford Lane Library opened in September 2015.



# Did you know?



*In 2000, the Oxford Lane Library gave children's books to a new library in Abrafo-Odumasi, a village in Ghana. Miami University students designed and built the library.*



*The Oxford Lane Library is home to a large geophysical globe made by Rand McNally & Co. that was displayed in Miami University's Shideler Hall from 1966 to 2014.*



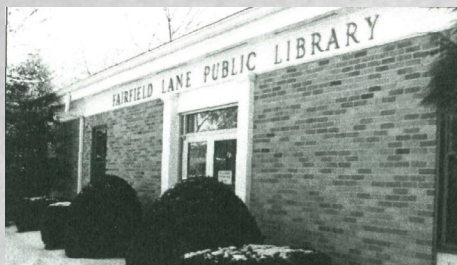
*The Owl of Athena mural in the Oxford Lane Library's Teen Zone is an original design created by Talawanda High School student Leighty Russell.*



*Murals from the former Miami-Western Theatre depicting Oxford collegiate scenes were painted in 1938 by Stiver Studios in Columbus and installed at the Oxford Lane Library in 2015.*



## Fairfield Lane Library



*Fairfield Branch Library, 1967*

new building in 100 years designed specifically for a library.

The new branch opened to the public in January 1967 with 4,000 volumes. Patron use was significant and circulation in its first year topped 55,000. A decade later its collection had grown to 20,000 and circulation had nearly tripled. By 1978, it was apparent that the Fairfield Branch had outgrown its space, and in 1979, Fairfield City Council appropriated \$220,000 for a 3,400 square-foot addition. This addition was dedicated in May 1980, providing additional space for shelving, offices and an all-purpose room. A notable feature was skylights in a cathedral ceiling to provide natural lighting.

In 1996, Fairfield officials under the leadership of city manager Art Pizzano envisioned enhancing the quality of life for city residents by creating a new city center, the Village Green. A vision for an updated and larger library facility to be located there came out of this initiative. City officials approached Lane Library trustees about a new library and both groups shared the excitement and work to come. A joint committee of city and library representatives conceptualized the signature building. Since this new construction site and the Lindenwald Branch were three miles apart, the library board decided to combine the branches at the new location. Stephanie Spurlock managed both and prepared their staff and collections for integration into the new facility.

The Fairfield Lane Library opened in September 2001 at 1485 Corydale Drive as part of the Village Green. The 25,000 square-foot facility was approximately three times the size of the previous library space and cost approximately five million dollars. Notable architectural features included a distinctive fifty-foot clock tower, a roof of Vermont slate and internal vaulted ceilings. The plaza incorporated a pergola and featured a life-size checkers and chess board. Interior flexible space housed a state-of-the-art computer laboratory and

a business resource center. An inviting children's area was funded by a gift from the Friends of the Hamilton-Fairfield Lane Libraries, and a special area designated for teen users. A drive-up window for library material pick-up and return proved popular, as well as new public meeting areas. In 2014, manager Cynthia Stafford reworked the Teen Zone and created several group study rooms.



*Fairfield Lane Library, 2001*

The vision of the City of Fairfield and the design of the new library have proven to be quite successful. In the 21st century, the Fairfield Lane Library has been the busiest facility in the Lane Libraries system.



### *Did you know?*

*The Fairfield Women's Club created a Millennium Community Time Capsule in 2000 to be opened in 2025, and placed it under a marble marker beneath Fairfield Lane's veranda.*



## Smith Library of Regional History

William E. and Ophia D. Smith had distinguished careers. He joined the Miami history faculty in 1926 and became department chair, dean of the Graduate School, and curator of William Holmes McGuffey Museum. His co-authored books with Ophia Smith and others included a three-volume *History of Southwestern Ohio: The Miami Valleys*. Ophia Smith wrote numerous articles and books on local and regional history.



William E. Smith



Ophia D. Smith

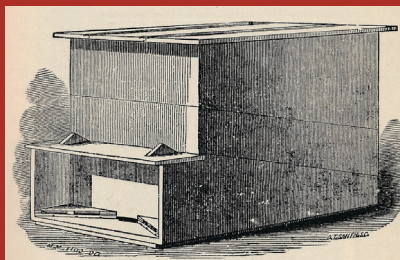


Joseph W. Smith

Upon the death of W. E. Smith in 1969, Ophia and son Joseph planned to establish a research center on the history of Oxford, Butler County and the Miami Valleys. Later Avis Cullen, a former *Oxford Press* owner and a Lane Libraries trustee, and Robert E. White, Jr., editor and publisher of the *Oxford Press*, negotiated with the Lane Libraries to achieve this goal. The Smiths' challenge gift of \$50,000 was matched and exceeded by the Oxford community via a City of Oxford revenue-sharing grant, a foundation grant and contributions by individuals and businesses. They funded an addition to the Oxford Lane Library for the Smith Library of Regional History on the upper level and the Lane Libraries expanded the children's area on the lower level.

### Did you know?

A production crew from Los Angeles filmed and photographed Smith Library material about Lorenzo Langstroth, the Father of Modern Beekeeping, for a 2014 television spot in Japan.



The new library was named for William E. and Ophia D. Smith and opened in 1981. University of London graduate Leslie Workman was its first director. Irene Moore Lindsey, a prominent figure in local government and community activities, helped raise interest in and solicit materials for the new library. She served as acting director after Workman departed in 1982. In 1988, Valerie Edwards Elliott, previously employed by libraries in Ohio, Indiana and California, succeeded her. Almost three years later, a major reconfiguration of space gave the Smith Library an exterior door plus visibility from the Archives Room to the Reading Room.



### Did you know?

An independent filmmaker visited Smith Library in 2014 to record material for the Civil War documentary *Spy Sisters*, an official selection at the Cayman International Film Festival.

The Smith Library is an integral division of the Lane Libraries that is additionally influenced by an external advisory board. The board's long-time chair, Robert E. White, Jr., led the effort to campaign for a building, seek library materials and oversee dispersal of income from a fund established by the Smiths. Instead of a circulating library, the new facility was to be a documents repository and research center with the mission to collect, preserve, and disseminate information on the history of southwestern Ohio. It does so by acquiring newspapers, photographs, maps, letters, diaries and other primary documents, recording oral histories, and publishing a series of monographs. The Smiths made annual gifts to the Lane Libraries for the history library and provided the Advisory Board with funds for grants to history groups, civic organizations and educational institutions. Ophia Smith died in 1994, leaving the W. E. Smith Family Charitable Trust from which income goes to the Smith Advisory Board for distribution, with preference to Smith Library. Joseph W. Smith, a 1940 Miami graduate with a career in the oil business, established another trust benefitting the library.





In 2015, a new Smith Library facility opened at 441 South Locust Street with triple the space of its previous location. In the 21st century, it offers to a distinct constituency of multigenerational patrons one of southwest Ohio's most important regional history collections and continues to produce publications, offer unique programming, create appealing exhibits and embrace outreach opportunities. Smith Library of Regional History is a Freedom Station Partner of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati and a member of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom sponsored by the National Park Service. Its expanding reputation means that it draws nearly half its users from outside the Lane Libraries service area.

*Smith Library of Regional History, 2015*

## Did you know?

*In 2002, Smith Library and the Oxford Visitors Bureau received an Award of Achievement from the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums for their partnership publication, Walking Tour of the Uptown Oxford Historic District.*

*Smith Library provided material for the Caroline Scott Harrison episode of the C-SPAN series First Ladies: Influence and Image in 2013.*

*Oxford Female Institute, attended by Caroline Scott Harrison in the 1850s*



### THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:  
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
PURSUANT TO AUTHORITY VESTED IN HIM BY CONGRESS  
HAS AWARDED THE

### PURPLE HEART

ESTABLISHED BY GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON  
AT NEWBURG, NEW YORK, AUGUST 7, 1782  
TO

Private First Class Will W. Glasgow, Jr., A.S.No. 15381858,  
FOR MILITARY MERIT AND FOR WOUNDS RECEIVED  
IN ACTION  
resulting in his death September 2, 1944.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON  
THIS 2nd DAY OF December 1944

*[Signature]*  
MAJOR GENERAL  
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

*[Signature]*  
HARRY L. STANSON  
SECRETARY OF WAR

*Smith Library was named the 2015 Ohio Memory Madness Champion in a statewide competition sponsored by Ohio History Connection when its photograph received the most online votes.*

*Freedom Summer Training, Oxford  
George R. Hoxie, 1964*



*In 2015, Dayton TV Channel 2 News filmed a segment in Smith Library where the reporter discovered what happened to a WWII soldier whose Purple Heart certificate was bought at an auction.*



## Lane Administration Center

The late 20th century brought challenges and opportunities. Among them was a realization that the facility at 300 North Third Street did not have sufficient space to expand public services, adapt well to new digital technologies with computer workstations for patrons, and house growing support services for the Lane Libraries system. That historic building, now expanded by additions and renovations that essentially left it landlocked in a downtown location, housed support services for many years while departments responsible for cataloging and processing materials, computer services, human resources, and public relations grew steadily. Lane's bookmobiles moved from the Hamilton library to rental facilities in the early 1990s. By 1999, Public Relations and Youth Services were also in rental locations. That year, using a space needs analysis, trustees approved creation of a new Administration Center to house system-wide services.

John V. Griesmer, a realtor and a former trustee, worked with Lane trustees to find an appropriate site for a new building. After considering various locations, in 2001 negotiations began with the City of Hamilton to purchase land on

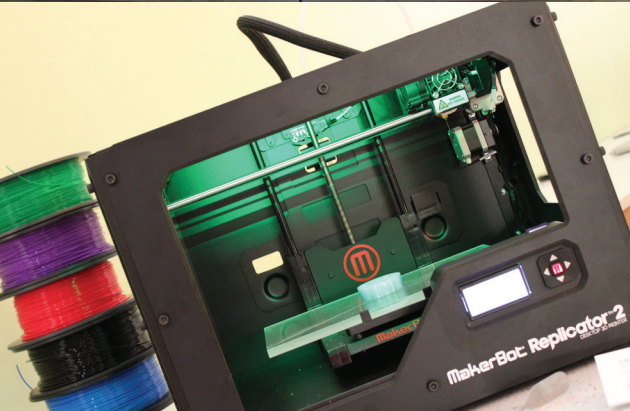
what was then Peck Boulevard. In 2004, trustees approved accepting bids for construction of a new administration center on the renamed University Boulevard near Miami University Hamilton. Robert A. Saurber, General Contractor, was awarded supervision of the project and Steed-Hammond-Paul designed the facility. In May 2005, Lane administrative and system-wide services relocated to the new building.

An open house in June 2005 welcomed people to a new single-story 20,000 square-foot administrative facility. It provided the system's first space designed for bookmobiles to pull directly through garages rather than maneuvering into parking spaces. New meeting rooms and conference rooms allowed more flexibility for scheduling programs, and system administrators and support staff gained additional space. Delivery vans could load and unload inside the facility and ample employee and visitor parking was available. The Lane Administrative Center continues to provide opportunities for evolution of 21st century system support while freeing traditional library space for growing demands of new public programming.



Lane Administration Center, 2005





## Did you know?

*The Lane Community Technology Center was a pioneer in 3D printing. Interesting items created by patrons include chess pieces, model houses, eyeglasses and jewelry.*



Lane Community Technology Center, 2013

## Lane Community Technology Center

Computers have been important to libraries since the 1960s and pioneering libraries like Lane recognized at that time the promise of computerization for data-intensive work. Most libraries spent the last quarter of the 20th century replacing paper card catalogs, cooperatively distributing cataloging data and creating a comprehensive worldwide lending network for sharing books and other items. The Internet grew in popularity through the 1990s and libraries responded to an increasing demand for public access to it. Public libraries in the 21st century serve as community digital computing centers as well as repositories of print materials and artifacts.

The popularity of computing is evident daily at the Hamilton Lane Library, where it was difficult to meet public demand for computers even with free wireless access and increased bandwidth. Space constraints of the historic building were a challenge as well. In 2012, a bequest by long-time Hamilton patron Leroy Roesel and support by the Hamilton Community Foundation allowed creation of a new facility solely devoted to expanding access to computing and digital technology. A ground-floor location at the rehabilitated Robinson-Schwenn building was leased to provide convenient public access at 10 Journal Square in the heart of a walkable city where a civic emphasis on the arts promotes living, learning, working and playing. The Lane Community Technology Center is adjacent to natural partners Miami University Hamilton Downtown and True West Coffee, and convenient to Butler Tech School of the Arts and Miami Valley Ballet Theatre.

Designed by Community Design Alliance, construction of the center began in January 2013, and the 2,700 square-foot facility opened in October of that year under manager Christian Sheehy. It offers a high-tech collaborative work/play/create space with public use PC and Apple computers, high-end software, tablet and eReader demo displays, 3D printers, and lounge furniture. Focusing on 21st century Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education, the center provides fun and educational programming for children and teens. A partnership with the City of Hamilton provides high-speed fiber optic networking. Manager Ryan Gay offers regular classes for the public on technology topics and expert staff schedule one-on-one sessions for interested patrons. The Lane Community Technology Center is a popular destination during Hamilton's signature public events such as Operation Pumpkin in the fall, Ice Fest in the winter, or Alive After 5 held downtown monthly on first Thursdays, drawing people to the city core with music, food and retail specials.

As the most recent expansion of the library system, the Lane Community Technology Center embodies both Clark Lane's innovative spirit and his commitment to educating the public for civic contributions. The positive public response suggests that after 150 years, the Lane Libraries still look to the future as they encourage and support the intellectual curiosity and imagination of patrons.



# Part Three People and Plans

## Directors

In its 150-year history, eight individuals have supervised the Lane Libraries and helped make the system a proactive, patron-focused institution. Clark Lane would have enjoyed the comment of Edward Dax in his 1966 report on the 100th Anniversary:

*“Neither flood, fire, nor lightening was able to halt the rapid and sure-footed progress of Lane Library. Under the supervision of three particularly gifted ladies, Mrs. Florence S. Schenck, Mrs. Flattie Symmes James, and Mrs. Gladys S. Sepin, whose terms of office lasted from 1878 to 1964, some 86 years, the library developed into a modern institution where information, recreational reading, and self-education could be obtained at small cost to the tax payer.”*

*- Edward Dax | 1966*

## *Emma Lane, 1866 - 1868*

Emma Lane was Clark Lane's niece, and took her post in fall, 1866 when the building was first dedicated. Lore has it that Lane asked her to be the librarian because she was a good housekeeper. According to newspaper accounts, the library contained a collection 2,000 – 3,000 strong including books, magazines and newspapers, all supplied by Lane, who also covered operating costs for the library. It was commonly called “Clark Lane's Reading Room,” although the official name was the “Free Public Library of Hamilton.” Emma resigned just short of two years after it opened, not long before the library was donated to the City of Hamilton. She married J. W. Halliday and moved to Chicago.





## *Laura Skinner, 1868 - 1878*

Laura Skinner was said to be the daughter of pioneer Hamiltonian Daniel Skinner. She succeeded Emma Lane as Librarian in early 1868 and remained in the post until ill health forced her to retire in April, 1878. She died a short time later. Although owned by the City of Hamilton, the library in this period was referred to officially as the Lane Free Library.



## *Florence Smith Schenck, 1878 - 1912*

One week after Laura Skinner's death in 1878, Florence Schenck was appointed Librarian and would remain in the position for thirty-four years. One year into her tenure, the Lane Free Library became a circulating library. A newspaper reported that books had been chained to library tables prior to implementation of circulation. Schenck introduced a book-order card service to patrons, encouraging them to write down titles they would like the library to purchase. Requests would be sent to the Book Committee only if accompanied by one good reason why the book should be acquired. Apparently this proved popular since, in 1892, a stack room was added to the library to handle an expanding collection. In 1910, more shelving was installed to accommodate the growing collection that was experiencing a steady increase in use. Schenck converted the library's north wing that had accommodated a pump and washstand to a reference department in order to handle patron research and study needs. Schenck's 1909 annual report stated that the number of accessioned books owned by the library had increased to 10,630 and books circulated between April and December numbered 31,206. "The doors were open to the public every day," she said, "with the exception of legal holidays and the Sunday following Christmas."

Two fires occurred during Schenck's tenure. In the winter of 1906, there was an electrical fire in the cupola that did little damage. Then in 1907, lightning struck a transformer, current traveled into the library and the cupola caught fire. Neighbors rushed in to save books and Clark Lane's portrait that was later destroyed in the fire of 1919. Later that same year, Lane's body would lie in state in the Octagon Room.

In 1912, Florence Schenck stepped down as Librarian, apparently because of poor health. Her *Hamilton Evening Journal* obituary in 1920 stated that she was a respected figure and the library "had grown wisely and well under her management."



## *Hattie Symmes James, 1912 - 1940*

Hattie James was a library employee for thirty-six years and for twenty-nine was Chief Librarian. During her tenure two significant disasters befell the library, but her determination and vision brought both recovery and expanding service. When the Great Miami River flooded in March, 1913 the stack room and north wing were swept away and the building was inundated with water and mud. Library Assistant Lutie Hale watched the destruction from the roof of her nearby home and then helped James and others circulate the surviving 3,000 books to the public out of the YMCA on North Second Street. By the time the library was rebuilt and rededicated as the Lane Public Library in fall 1914, James was planning new library stations in the community with library assistants aboard streetcars carrying suitcases packed with books to locations where they would circulate to patrons. A new north wing was added in 1916. After a boiler explosion and basement fire in 1919 destroyed the cupola and severely damaged the Octagon Room, books were circulated from Hamilton High School on Sixth and Dayton



Streets. By 1921, the library had been rebuilt again and a south wing added. In 1937, reference, children's and cataloging departments were created to efficiently handle patron growth. In 1938, a book car later to be known as the "bookmobile" was purchased, one of the first five in Ohio. It was exhibited that year at the Butler County Fair. It facilitated deposit stations throughout Hamilton at seven schools, two industrial sites, three hospitals, nine camps and playgrounds, six fire stations and two community centers.

When James began working as the Assistant Librarian in 1906, the library owned 8,500 books, was circulating 25,000 books annually and open daily with limited hours. When she stepped down as Chief Librarian in 1940, the library owned 65,000 books, had expanded its hours further and circulation topped 750,000 volumes.



### *Gladys Schenk Sepin, 1940 - 1964*

Gladys Sepin was a former Hamilton High School librarian who worked for Lane Public Library thirty-seven years, most of that time as Chief Librarian. In 1943, she took a nine-month leave to study at Simmons College of Library Science in Boston and received a professional degree. The title "Chief Librarian" was changed to "Director" during her tenure. A proponent of expanded service, Sepin established branch libraries after World War II. In 1946, the first was at the Booker T. Washington Community Center where it became a community social, reading and recreational facility in the Second Ward, demonstrating Sepin's progressive thinking about library services. A second branch opened in Lindenwald two years later, located in the basement of the Citizen's Bank Building. When

it outgrew its quarters, services moved to a more spacious and functional Lindenwald location. Bookmobile service was expanded and by 1949, thirty-eight Butler County villages, nine schools and four camps received regular visits. In 1958, rental space was located in Oxford for a branch library.

Sepin's strong support of teachers and children had led to the creation of a teacher's room at the main library in 1940, where they could check out materials and consult bibliographies. During summer months, this room offered books on camp administration and handicrafts for camp counselors, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other groups. Sepin advocated for adult education programming and created mobile displays at organizations such as the YMCA and YWCA. She championed conveniences such as telephoning patrons to alert them to holds and in 1940, 5,452 patrons were called about reserves and 14,722 books renewed by telephone. A highlight of the 75th Anniversary on November 29, 1941 was dedication of the Eugene H. Hughes Room, created to house "business and technical books, magazines and pamphlets." In that year, the Lane Public Library owned 67,000 books, 194 magazines and 40,000 pamphlets, pictures, maps and charts. It had 27,000 registered borrowers and annual circulation was almost 780,000. At the 85th Anniversary, a large addition with a garage for two bookmobiles and space for a cataloging department and business office was dedicated in honor of Edith Clawson for her generous support.



### *Edward R. Dax, 1964 - 1982*

Edward Dax was hired as Assistant Director in 1962 and succeeded Gladys Sepin two years later. When the Hamilton Lane Library celebrated its 100th Anniversary in 1966, May 9 was designated as Robert McCloskey Day. The Hamilton native and famed children's author was honored with a bronze plaque in the Children's Department presented by the Metropolitan Women's Club and the department was named the "Robert McCloskey Children and Young People's Room." Children's authors Adele and Cateau DeLeeuw were guests of the library in the centennial year for presentations to school students and noted author Fannie Hurst, also born in Hamilton, was feted at a library tea. Like his predecessors, Dax supported the expansion of library services. A new Oxford Branch

Library was built in 1975 and six years later an addition to it created a home for the newly funded Smith Library of Regional History. In 1967, the City of Fairfield and the Lane Library opened a branch in that community. Its heavy use led to expansion a few years later. While the enthusiasm of Oxford and Fairfield about



expanded library services was notable, Dax spent much time educating people about the need for an updated Hamilton facility. It was crowded with people, material and furniture, the roof leaked, and heating and cooling problems were routine. Its electric service was designed for an earlier age and its site limited expansion. A bond issue for a new Hamilton library at another location was rejected in 1970, but as Dax neared retirement in 1982, funds were raised to expand the Hamilton facility.



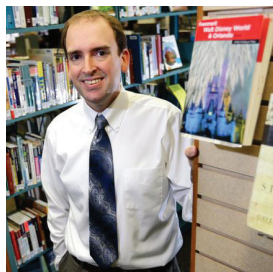
### *Mary Pat Essman, 1982 - 2011*

Community partnerships, technological advancements in library services, and an emphasis on patron convenience, cost-saving efficiency and building expansion were hallmarks of Mary Pat Essman's tenure as Director. She recognized the importance of embedding the library within the fabric of the community, and worked diligently to make it an active partner of business, education and cultural projects. Essman purchased the first automation system in the late 1980s and directed migration to others during her twenty-eight years of service, each system more versatile and convenient. While print materials remained predominant, non-print materials were explored and added in response to growing patron interest. VHS tapes, DVDs, audiobooks, music CDs and databases

expanded and diversified collections.

Essman employed convenience as a service measure. Drive-up windows were installed where possible. Six-day delivery among branches was established and hours expanded. Satellite return boxes were installed in Hamilton and Fairfield Township, and after-hours pick-up service created at Fairfield. Expansion and consolidation began with a large addition to the Hamilton Lane Library in 1983 and another significant renovation there between 1995 and 1997. The Booker T. Washington Branch closed in 1994 after an extended period of low circulation and use, and was replaced with bookmobile service. Essman supervised expansion of the Oxford Branch and partnered with the City of Fairfield to design and build a 2001 Fairfield facility that anchors the Fairfield Village Green.

In 2005, the offices of Public Relations, Technical Services, Systems, Youth Services and Human Resources, along with the Business Office and Bookmobile Services, were combined in a new Lane Administration Center, freeing space at the Hamilton building. It was renovated again in 2008, creating public areas for collections and computing. Significant budget reductions by the State of Ohio in 2009 led to a reduction in staff and hours, although hours were structured to provide service seven days a week. When a first-ever tax levy to support the Lane system for five years was passed by over 64% of local voters in 2010, many services were restored. The following year Essman retired.



### *Joseph Greenward, 2011 -*

Joseph Greenward has continued the focus on innovation and expansion of services. In 2013, he oversaw the design and creation of a Community Technology Center located in downtown Hamilton at the renovated Robinson-Schwenn building on High Street. It offers access to Apple and PC computers, 3D printers, technology programs and advanced technology training and assistance. In 2014, as part of the centennial of Robert McCloskey's birth, a first showing of the Lane's McCloskey art collection was offered at the Fitton Center for Creative Arts.

A significant improvement to Lane's facilities occurred in 2015 with construction of the new Oxford Lane and Smith Libraries. In 2015, the Hamilton Lane Library was dedicated as a Literary Landmark, the Lane's public levy was successfully renewed for ten years, and the Lane Libraries partnered with the Hamilton Community Foundation and the City of Hamilton to create the Third Street Plaza in German Village. At its 150th Anniversary in 2016, the Lane Libraries had a solid tradition of innovation and public service, and much to celebrate.



## Board of Trustees



From its beginning as a public institution in the late 19th century, the Lane Public Library has been governed by a board of trustees consisting of dedicated library users, civic leaders, business professionals and educators. A gift to the City of Hamilton from Clark Lane, the Lane Free Library was a municipal library and remained one for fifty-five years. In that era, trustees were appointed by the city council and required to be residents of Hamilton. Services offered by the library did not extend outside the Hamilton city limits. In 1923, control of the library was transferred to the Hamilton City School District Board of Education. The library greatly expanded its reach after that time, and library trustee representation was eventually extended to Fairfield and Oxford.

Seven trustees are charged with overseeing fiscal and management policies, appropriating funds, providing the means to establish services and to construct and maintain properties, and employing and providing policy direction to the director and fiscal officer. The board has overseen all major projects in the library's evolution, including expansion to Hamilton's Second Ward at the Booker T. Washington facility in 1946, to Lindenwald in 1948, to Oxford in 1958 and Fairfield in 1966.

It has ensured that the original Hamilton facility is preserved and updated for modern service, and that beautiful contemporary facilities be built at Fairfield in 2001, at the Hamilton Community Technology Center in 2013, and at Oxford in 2015. With generous community support, for 150 years the board's service on behalf of the public has looked toward needs of the future, allowing the Lane Libraries to thrive as they serve the evolving needs of their multigenerational patrons and diverse communities.

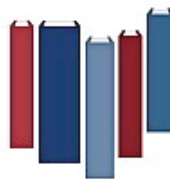


## Collections and Digitization

In 1866, Clark Lane envisioned the Lane Free Library to be a center of information featuring books, magazines and newspapers about many subjects and contrasting points of view on controversial issues. He never envisioned the library as solely a book depository. When he initially stocked it with \$3,000 worth of material, he included newspapers and magazines that would be bound for preservation. Library Director Florence Schenck, who pioneered a book-order card service, reported in 1898 that over 400 “judiciously selected” volumes had been added to the collection, thirty-seven volumes of magazines purchased for the reference department, and fifty magazines and newspapers received.

At that time, the director and a book committee likely determined what would be added to the collection and patron demand began shaping collection decisions. In the 1940s, the library was collecting pamphlets, pictures, and maps, all heavily used. Director Gladys Sepin reported that by November of 1940, 80,219 books had been checked out that year and 16,210 magazines, pamphlets, pictures, and maps had circulated. In 1950, the library joined the Western Ohio Film Circuit to offer 16-mm sound films for checkout from an Audio-Visual Service Center. Patrons could obtain long playing (LP) record albums and the library created a listening room for sampling records before checkout. At the library’s 85th Anniversary in 1951, Sepin said, “The challenge to the library of tomorrow lies in keeping the book collection and services aligned with the times so that we may more nearly fulfill the requirements of the people living in our community.”

Print materials including substantial reference items remained central to the collection for many years. LP records and 16-mm films continued to circulate, but new formats were adopted as the community embraced innovative technologies and information-delivery devices. VHS film replaced the 16-mm format in the late 1980s. Music cassettes and CDs replaced LP albums by the mid-1990s. CD-ROM, software and video games were added for checkout and audiobooks were introduced. Access to a fluid collection of databases via computer was offered in the 1990s. Collections were supplemented by borrowing items from elsewhere via interlibrary loan or from statewide services such as SearchOhio and OhioLink. As the popularity of formats changed, the materials budget was prioritized to community demand. The libraries also committed resources and space for a large-print collection.



## THE OHIO DIGITAL LIBRARY

In the 21st century, the Lane Libraries expanded access to materials in digital formats and demand for digital options grew dramatically. Since 2012, the Lane Libraries have held the rank of “top circulating library” for the Ohio Digital Library (ODL) among 200 member libraries across the state. Online collections accessible from the Lane website allow 24-hour access to eBooks, eAudiobooks, digital magazines, and comics, as well as music in downloadable and streaming formats. Digital services for online collections are regularly reviewed for relevance, ease of use and expense, and digital checkouts have more than doubled since 2013.

Responding to a 21st century growth of interest in history and genealogy, the libraries are offering local history resources online. In 1997, over 3,000 photographs of the Hamilton area from the George C. Cummins Collection were digitized and made available through the library catalog. A collection of columns dating to 1988 about Butler County history written by City of Hamilton Historian and former *Hamilton Journal-News* editor Jim Blount have been featured on the Lane website since 2009 and more than 20,000 patrons receive his new columns by email. The Clyde Bowden Digital Postcard Collection from Smith Library of Regional History includes images of Oxford and other areas of Butler County. Smith Library of Regional History provided digitized images to the Greater Cincinnati Memory Project and Ohio Memory Project and created digitized collections of Fairfield Historic Photographs, Great Migration Oral History Project interviews, and walking tour booklets of Oxford’s historic districts. City planners, historians, and homeowners frequently consult the Lane Libraries digitized collection of the Ohio Historic Inventory and work continues on digitizing Hamilton city directories, church records, and numerous other items of keen interest to historical researchers, genealogists, and other interested patrons.

## Outreach to Children and Youth

Librarians select the best books for children's and youth collections and share them in story times for children and parents. They provide booklists and classroom collections for teachers and work with schools to encourage reading for academic achievement. These efforts echo the spirit of Clark Lane's desire that the library be available for "apprentice boys and their associates." In 1915, library stations opened at school buildings in East Hamilton, Lindenwald, and the West Side, and at Champion Paper & Fibre Company, Beckett Paper Company, American Can Company, Miami Knitting Mills, and Shuler & Benninghofen Company. In 1923, the library expanded service beyond Hamilton city limits to six school districts and by 1933 was providing books in eighty-nine classrooms, playgrounds, and summer camps, and at Mercy and Fort Hamilton Hospitals.

As recently as 2013, bookmobile services initiated the Raise a Reader program for newborns at Fort Hamilton Hospital. The children's collection in 2015 was 321,043 items in a total library circulation of 1,798,411.

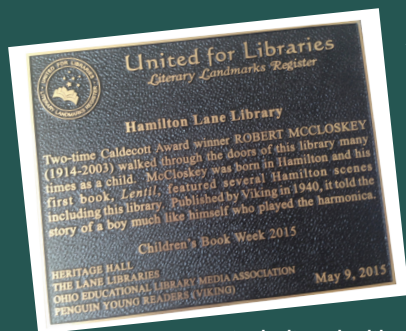


*Madcap Puppets, 2015*

The Lane Libraries have a long tradition of connecting children and youth directly with creators of books as well as storytellers and performers. Nationally prominent author and illustrator Robert McCloskey, who was born in Hamilton, visited the Hamilton Lane Library five times and as recently as 1984, as did Rita Williams-Garcia, 2016 winner of the Coretta Scott King award, in 2015. Other visiting authors and illustrators focused on children and youth have included Peter Catalanotto, Andrea Cheng, Melissa Sweet, Will Hillenbrand, Louise Borden, Keiko Kasza, Margaret Pederson Haddix, Gennifer Choldenko, and Cris Crutcher. Storytellers have included Grammy award winner Bill Harley, and Lyn Ford, Thomas MacGregor, Rick Carson, Tom Sparough, and Cathy Jo Smith. Performers have included Stevens Puppets, Madcap Puppets, musicians Joel Caithamer, Zak Morgan, comedian Mark Wade, magicians Charlie Cadabra, Dave Kaplan, Mike Hemmelgarn, astronomer Dean Regas of Cincinnati Observatory, the Kinderballet of Cincinnati, My Nose Turns Red Youth Circus, Cincinnati Zoo bats, armadillos, snakes, penguins and more, and Police Officer Bob and his horse Sydney.



## Honoring Robert McCloskey



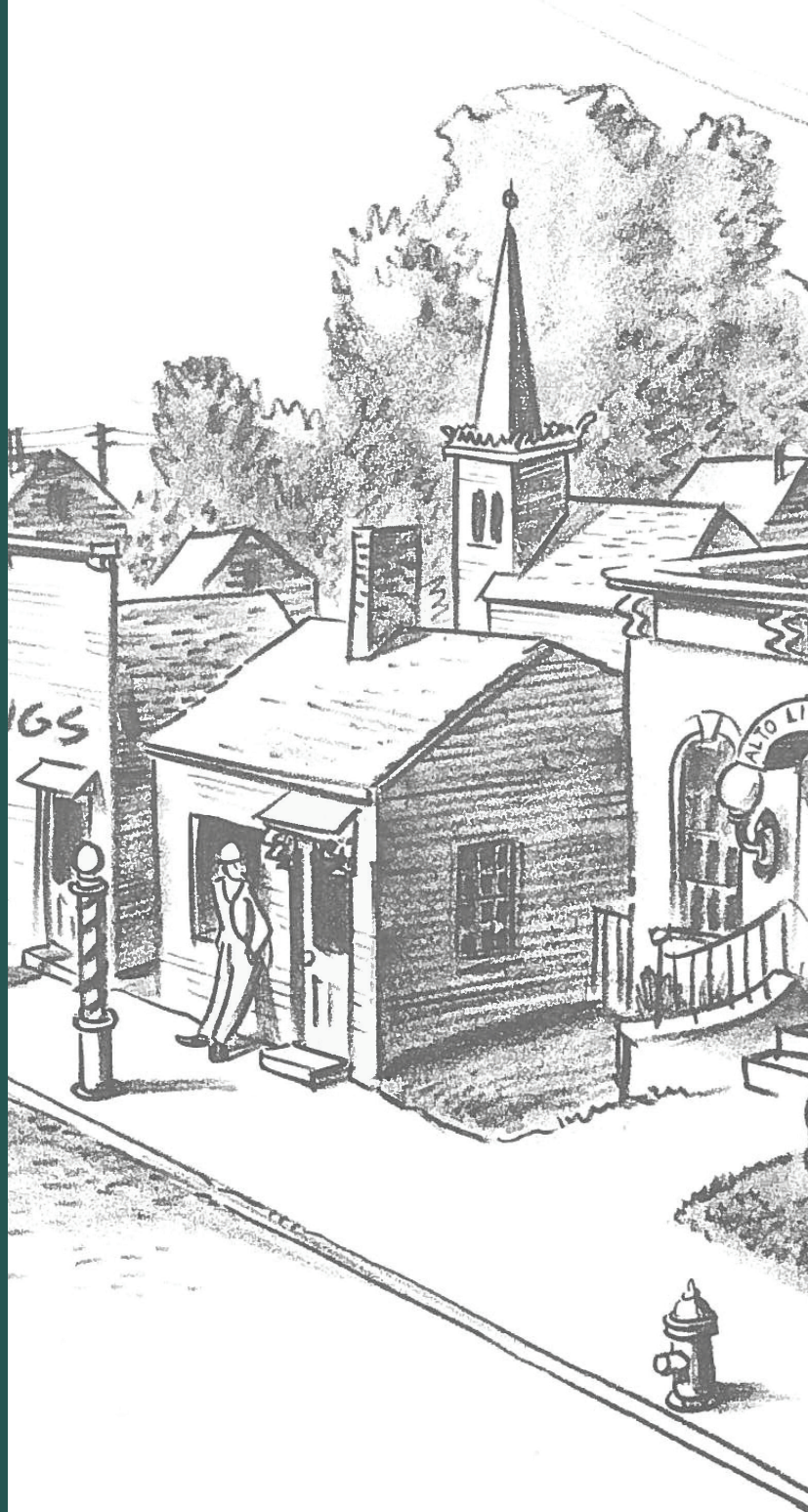
A 2015 plaque on the Hamilton Lane Library reads “Two-time Caldecott Award winner ROBERT MCCLOSKEY (1914 - 2003) walked through the doors of this library many times as a child. McCloskey was born in Hamilton and his first book, *Lentil*, featured several Hamilton scenes

including the library. Published by Viking in 1940, it told the story of a boy much like himself who played the harmonica.” Heritage Hall, the Lane Libraries, the Ohio Educational Library Media Association and Penguin Young Readers gave this Literary Landmarks Register plaque during Children’s Book Week in May. In the previous month, Leonard S. Marcus, noted children’s book historian, author and critic, spoke at the Wilks Conference Center, Miami University Hamilton on “American Dreamer: Robert McCloskey and the Art of the Picture Book,” sponsored by the Michael J. Colligan History Project and the Lane Libraries.

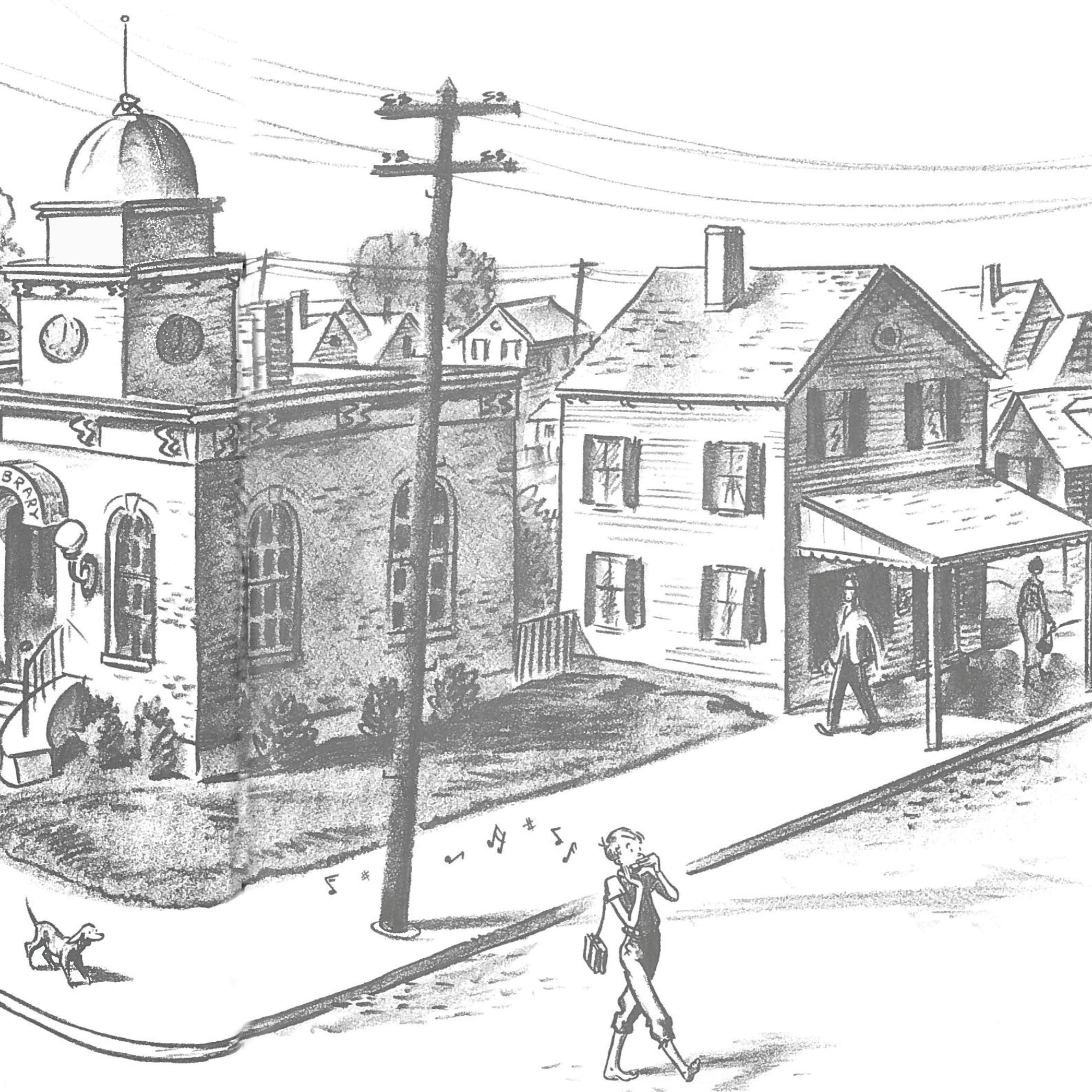
A celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the birth of Robert McCloskey, who was born in Hamilton on September 15, 1914 and died in Maine in 2003, was held in September, 2014 at Wilks Conference Center, Miami University Hamilton. Sally and Jane McCloskey, Robert and Peggy McCloskey’s children who live in Maine, were present for the premier of the feature length documentary *Robert McCloskey: The Life for Me*, produced by Sam Ashworth. A panel discussion about McCloskey that included author Peter Roop drew an enthusiastic crowd and was followed by a reception with birthday cake and a toast by Hamiltonian Dave Belew.



*Illustration from Lentil © Robert McCloskey  
The Lane Public Library has the right to use  
this drawing by permission from Jane and  
Sally McCloskey as his successors in interest.*









## Friends of the Libraries

In the 21st century, the Hamilton, Fairfield and Oxford Lane Libraries have active organizations dedicated to the support of unbudgeted library projects. In the early 1970s, although the Lane Library in Hamilton had a Friends organization, the other communities had none and support of this kind was apparently lagging.

A committee of the American Association of University Women was predecessor to the Friends of Oxford Lane Library, and Avis Cullen, a Lane Public Library trustee who in 1975 chaired an AAUW committee to raise funds to build a new Oxford library facility, was elected the first Oxford Friends president. Its purpose was “to increase community interest in and support of Lane Public Library, Oxford, Ohio Branch, by broadening its services, enlarging its resources, and advancing its programs for the educational enrichment of the community.” Cullen was a zealous advocate and by May, 1977 Oxford Friends had more than 300 members.

In August of 1978, Cullen turned her attention to creating a Friends organization in Fairfield. She personally recruited fifteen charter members from the Fairfield community by telephone and they in turn persuaded more than 100 others to telephone additional potential members. That initiative, supported by favorable newspaper coverage, resulted in a charter Fairfield membership of over 800 people including Fairfield’s mayor and members of City Council. In November 1978, the Friends of Lane Public Library, Fairfield Branch, published a *News Letter* item thanking Cullen as “a most charming lady whose energetic zeal is contagious” and without whom “Fairfield would not have a Friends of the Library Organization.”

Soon thereafter, Cullen undertook a project to revive the Hamilton Friends of the Library. She organized a “Dinner with the Authors” event in Hamilton featuring local writers, to which library patrons and the public were invited. Tickets sold for \$10, a price that included membership in the Friends, and the *Hamilton Journal News* publicized the event heavily. An author reception, book sale and signing were held before the dinner on April 30, 1979, which attracted more than 200 people.

The current Friends of the Hamilton-Fairfield Lane Libraries organization came from a merger of these earlier Hamilton and Fairfield organizations. It gained tax-exempt status for the mission of supporting objectives and services at the Hamilton and Fairfield libraries as well as the Lane bookmobile. It seeks to enhance the Hamilton and Fairfield libraries by encouraging community support and gifts, and to enrich the educational and cultural opportunities available to library patrons. For many years it has provided financial support to the Summer Reading Program for all ages; to *Sunday Sounds*, a musical performance on the second Sunday of each month that rotates between the two libraries; to author visits serving children, teens, and adults; to *Reading and All that Jazz*, a summer adult program at Hamilton featuring patron book reviews and jazz artists; to Hamilton renovation projects; to an initiative for digitizing the Cummins photograph collection; and, to acquire all furnishings for the children’s area of the Fairfield library when it opened in the Village Green. The major fundraising event for the Hamilton-Fairfield group is a used book sale annually in May. In addition, the Friends have fundraised throughout recent years with a Friends’ cart in Hamilton and a Friends’ area in Fairfield, offering patrons a selection of used books for all ages.

From the outset, the Oxford Friends group was engaged at the library with committees changing a display case monthly, scheduling monthly book reviews, sponsoring a monthly travel presentation and holding annual book sales. In 1978, its membership campaign raised \$3,868 from more than 1,000 donors. In 1979, the Oxford Friends supported Oxford Heritage Week by organizing window displays in Uptown businesses featuring photographs of 19th century life and preparing historical displays at the library and at Oxford College Hall. In 1980, they helped raise funds to match a \$50,000 grant from the Smith family for construction of the Smith Library of Regional History. For these and other efforts, in 1980 Ohio Friends of the Library recognized the Oxford Friends as “the outstanding program supporting or promoting a library.”

Monthly book sales did not begin in Oxford until 2004, when Barbara Kleefeld offered books for sale from a cart at Family Fun Night and made \$63 in two hours. By 2006, the Friends were holding regular sales and since 2013 have organized two large sales annually in addition to monthly sales. The Oxford Friends also sponsor the annual Sandy Hormell Book Celebration for middle school students.



When planning for a new Oxford building began in 2014, the Friends committed \$20,000 to the project. Challenged by Oxford Lane Library Manager Rebecca Smith to raise additional funds for amenities not in the construction budget, the Friends board held a fund drive and sold engraved patio bricks and planters. Far exceeding their initial goal, the community bought 300 bricks and twenty-one planters, patronized book sales, auctioned decorative fish from the former children's section, and sold puppets, games, furniture, file cabinets and anything else patrons could carry from the former building.





## Benefactors

Clark Lane's philanthropic spirit has echoed in acts of many others during the century and a half since he gave his library to the people. The generosity of benefactors and donors has expanded services, built collections, added novel and distinctive features, replaced outmoded facilities, and embraced an unfolding future. Their stories highlight an enduring tradition of deep civic support in our communities.

### Friends of the Libraries

Friends organizations were formed in the 1970s by community and patron volunteers in Hamilton, Fairfield and Oxford to support a variety of unbudgeted library projects. They raise funds to purchase new materials, underwrite programs for all age groups and enhance facilities and equipment. By sponsoring book sales and other initiatives, they raise community awareness of the evolving value of our public libraries.

### L. P. Clawson

Hamilton industrial leader L. P. Clawson was memorialized in a trust fund established by his sister-in-law Emma Hughes in 1924 to purchase technical and scientific books of wide scope that would be especially helpful to "shopmen of Hamilton."

### Eugene H. Hughes

Eugene Hughes created a trust fund in 1941 with proceeds designated for construction of a Hughes Room devoted to technical books aiding young men in the study of mechanics. It also held books of the Hughes family and was dedicated at the library's 75th Anniversary.

### Edith Clawson

A bequest in 1951 from the estate of Edith Clawson was used to build the Edith Clawson Memorial Wing at the Hamilton Lane Library and provide new operating space, a garage for bookmobiles, a book lift, catalog department, business office, director space, and a boardroom. Descendants of Clark Lane

attended its dedication at the 85th Anniversary.

### William E. & Ophia D. Smith

The collected research materials of W. E. Smith and his wife Ophia Smith formed the nucleus of holdings in the Smith Library of Regional History. It was funded by a challenge gift matched and exceeded by the Oxford community. A wing was added to the Oxford facility for the library in 1981, and Ophia Smith left another trust for its support.

### The Shuler Family

Proceeds from the sale of two paintings given by the Shuler family combined with other funds allowed a major renovation of the Hamilton Lane Library and a new Shuler Wing in 1984. It nearly doubled the building's size and provided new seating and worktables, a reference room, microfilm center, children's department, workspace for an Extension Department, a public elevator, and the Cummins Local History Room. A meeting room was named for Lt. Asa William Shuler. More than 800 people attended its opening.

### Alice Fitzpatrick Hogan

A significant bequest in 1985 from the estate of Alice Fitzpatrick Hogan benefitted the Oxford Branch Library.

### Maryette Brown Lane

The Smith-Maryette Lane Fund was created by a 1985 gift designated for development and future expansion of Smith Library of Regional History. Interest on invested funds was used to purchase

primary source material.

### Havighurst Trust Fund

A major endowment created in 1994 by Walter and Marion Boyd Havighurst was designated for construction of a new library in Oxford. Investment nearly quadrupled this very significant gift, allowing it to fund approximately half the cost of a new Oxford facility that opened in September 2015, where the meeting room is named for the Havighursts.

### Edna & Naomi Hurm

A generous bequest by the Hurm sisters enabled extensive renovation from 1995 to 1997 at the Hamilton Lane Library. Staff areas were consolidated, new public stacks, study areas and a second elevator added, the South Reading Room converted to a periodical room with new furnishings, and the business office changed to a children's picture book and story-corner space. A new service desk for the reference department was installed, a grand staircase added to connect four floors, and the library cupola lost in the 1919 fire was reconstructed.

### Mary Jane Noe

A bequest from the estate of Mary Jane Noe updated the Octagon Room during the 1995-1997 renovation. A false ceiling was removed, a new circulation desk installed conforming to the room, and beams and plasterwork restored to recreate its 1866 style.



### **Marion F. Hawk**

Marion Hawk established the Lane Library Fund in 1998 at the Hamilton Community Foundation. Some proceeds were used for a large-print collection at Hamilton Lane Library. By 2015, the fund value had increased fifteen-fold, allowing it to cover the Lane Libraries' share of costs for constructing a public plaza on Third Street.

### **Beverly Latta**

Beverly Latta was a library trustee who earlier worked as a librarian at Hamilton. Her generous bequest in 2008 helped underwrite a major renovation that year of the Hamilton Lane Library. It upgraded former staff areas for public use, consolidated service desk functions into one efficient service point, provided community seating and program space in the Octagon Room, created a quiet study room and enhanced areas for children and teens.

### **Rupert Beltz**

Creation of this significant fund in 1999 helped cover costs of the 2008 renovation at Hamilton Lane Library.

### **Barbara Wright Reed**

The Arthur F. Miller African American History Fund was created by Barbara Reed in 2007. Her gift to the Smith Library of Regional History was made in memory of a lifelong civil rights advocate who served as Oxford's first African American vice mayor. This discretionary fund has been used for a series of public programs.

### **Robert E. White, Jr.**

Robert E. White was a longtime owner, editor, and publisher of the *Oxford Press* and Chair of the Smith Library Advisory Board. A generous bequest from his estate in 2009 provides grants to the Smith Library of Regional History for a variety of uses.

When the trust closes in 2019, the Smith Library of Regional History will have benefited from major funding.

### **Joseph W. Smith**

Upon his death in 2009, the son of William and Ophia Smith left a major trust fund at a California foundation specifically to benefit the Smith Library of Regional History. Annual earnings are used toward its operation. He donated matching funds from his employer Chevron for many years before his death.

### **Leroy Roesel**

A very generous bequest to the Hamilton Lane Library in 2010 from the estate of Leroy Roesel created the annual Roesel Lecture that brings a prominent author for a public presentation. This fund also underwrote creation of the Lane Community Technology Center in 2013, supports its operating costs, and provided new furniture and equipment at the Hamilton Lane Library.

### **Elmer B. & Thelma M. Rose**

The Rose Fund was established in 2011 by Sharon R. and Raman J. Singh in memory of her parents and designated for the benefit of the Fairfield Lane Library. It has underwritten the purchase of materials on national and state parks in Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky, on national parks throughout the world, and other nonfiction materials.

### **Edwin Feintheil**

A trust fund was created to benefit the Fairfield Lane Library in 2011 for acquisition of books, equipment, software, and related materials on self-improvement through education, finance and investment, and general self-improvement. New study rooms and renovation of the youth area were underwritten by this fund in 2014.

### **Lois A. & Joe Koefler**

The estate of Lois A. Koefler created the Koefler Fund at the Hamilton Community Foundation in 2013 to benefit library patrons by improving collections and services.

### **Anne B. Koehler**

A generous donation by Anne B. Koehler in 2014 was designated for the new Oxford Lane Library completed in 2015. It provided technology throughout the library, a special furniture installation for the children's area, support for the teen area, and for collection development.

### **Helen Weinberger**

A significant bequest was left in 2009 to benefit the children's area at the Oxford Lane Library, where the activity room was named for the donor.

### **Ruth Wiley Smith**

A generous 2003 bequest was left for acquisition of books for the Smith Library of Regional History.

### **Louise Caldwell Peters**

The Louise Caldwell Peters Memorial Fund was established in 1987 to acquire local history resources for Smith Library of Regional History. It generated income for many years.

### **C. C. Fracker**

A memorial gift was made in 1974 to acquire books about theater for the Lane Libraries collections.

### **Mildred Probst**

An unrestricted fund was given in 2015 to the Lane Libraries.

### **Fitton Family**

This fund was established in 1966 at the Hamilton Community Foundation to benefit the Hamilton Lane Library.



## Levy Initiatives

Ohio public libraries have historically been funded almost entirely at the state level through the Public Library Fund, which is allocated a percentage of the state's general revenue and distributed to counties for library services. That source accounted for 95% of the Lane Libraries' total revenues until 2009, and provided adequate funding for library services throughout the service area. In a State of Ohio financial crisis during 2009, the Public Library Fund was reduced by 25%. This forced the Lane Libraries to scale back both operating hours and expenditures for materials, and to reduce staff. In order to return to providing the library services of high quality that Lane's communities and patrons were accustomed to experiencing, in 2010 Lane turned to local voters for new funding in the form of a .75-mill 5-year operating levy that was placed on a May 2010 public ballot.

The campaign for passage of Lane's first library levy was developed with the leadership of Director Mary Pat Essman. Patron volunteers included Dave Belew, Susan and John Vaughn in Hamilton, Prue and Steve Dana in Oxford, Gregg Stagg in Fairfield and Rebecca Richards in Ross. They had assistance from the Friends of the Library organizations in Fairfield, Oxford and Hamilton and from many community volunteers. The goals were to expand library hours, increase the purchase of books and other materials, enhance access to digital technologies, and provide training for using them. The 2010 levy initiative passed with a 64% approval rating by voters. It provided a new source of funding that would subsequently account for 35% of Lane's total revenue. As a result, operating hours were expanded by 50%, materials expenditures were increased by 25%, and access to current digital technology and classes about its operation were offered in all Lane locations.

In 2015, voters renewed the operating levy for ten years. The second levy campaign was conducted with the leadership of Director Joseph Greenward. Patron volunteers Mike and Cindy Dingeldein in Hamilton, Prue and Steve Dana in Oxford, Rebecca Richards in Ross, with the Friends of the Library organizations and community volunteers, strongly supported the levy. Reflecting sustained and growing support of the Lane Libraries among voters, this levy initiative was approved by a 78% margin.



## CONTRIBUTORS

**The Life and Legacy of Clark Lane** – James Schwartz

**Hamilton Lane Library** – Carol Bowling, James Schwartz

**Early Outreach and the Bookmobile** – Joseph Greenward

**Booker T. Washington Branch Library** – Carol Bowling

**Lindenwald Branch Library** – Carol Bowling

**Oxford Lane Library** – Valerie Elliott

**Fairfield Lane Library** – Mary Pat Essman

**Smith Library of Regional History** – Richard Sollmann

**Lane Administration Center** – Mary Pat Essman

**Lane Community Technology Center** – Chip Kruthoffer

**Directors** – Carol Bowling

**Board of Trustees** – Joseph Greenward

**Collections and Digitization** – Carol Bowling, Katrina Bate, Chip Kruthoffer

**Outreach to Children and Youth** – Gratia Banta

**Honoring Robert McCloskey** – Gratia Banta

**Friends of the Library** – Robert C. Johnson

**Benefactors** – Carol Bowling, Robert Carringer

**Levy Initiatives** – Joseph Greenward

**Did You Know?** – Carol Bowling, Valerie Elliott, Fran Meyer, Rebecca Smith, Cynthia Stafford

**Historical Information** – Jim Blount, Valerie Elliott, Ann Berg, Brad Spurlock

**Buildings of the Lane Libraries** – Mike Dingeldein

**Images** – Mandy Thoman, Carrie Mancuso, Carol Bowling, Brad Spurlock

**Design** – Carrie Mancuso, Mandy Thoman

**Editing** – Curtis W. Ellison

**Chair, Lane150 Sesquicentennial Committee** – Carol Bowling





# MISSION2016

Find it at the Lane! The Lane Libraries provide materials, services and technology aimed at satisfying the curiosity, intellect and imagination of our patrons throughout our communities, on our website and by engaging in strategic partnerships.



## STAFF2016

### Joseph Greenward

Director

### Robert Carringer

Fiscal Officer

### Carol Bowling

Manager, Hamilton Lane Library

### Fran Meyer

Manager, Bookmobile Services

### Rebecca Smith

Manager, Oxford Lane Library

### Cynthia Stafford

Manager, Fairfield Lane Library

### Valerie Elliott

Manager, Smith Library of Regional History

### Ryan Gay

Manager, Lane Community Technology Center

### Gratia Banta

Manager, Youth Services

### Katrina Bate

Manager, Collection Development

### Chip Kruthoffer

Manager, Systems

### Bryan Isay

Manager, Human Resources

### Carrie Mancuso

Manager, Public Relations

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES2016

### Eva Kessler

President

### Curtis W. Ellison

Vice President

### Sonja Kranbuhl

Secretary

### Kelli Lyon Johnson

Past-President

### Daniel Hall

Member

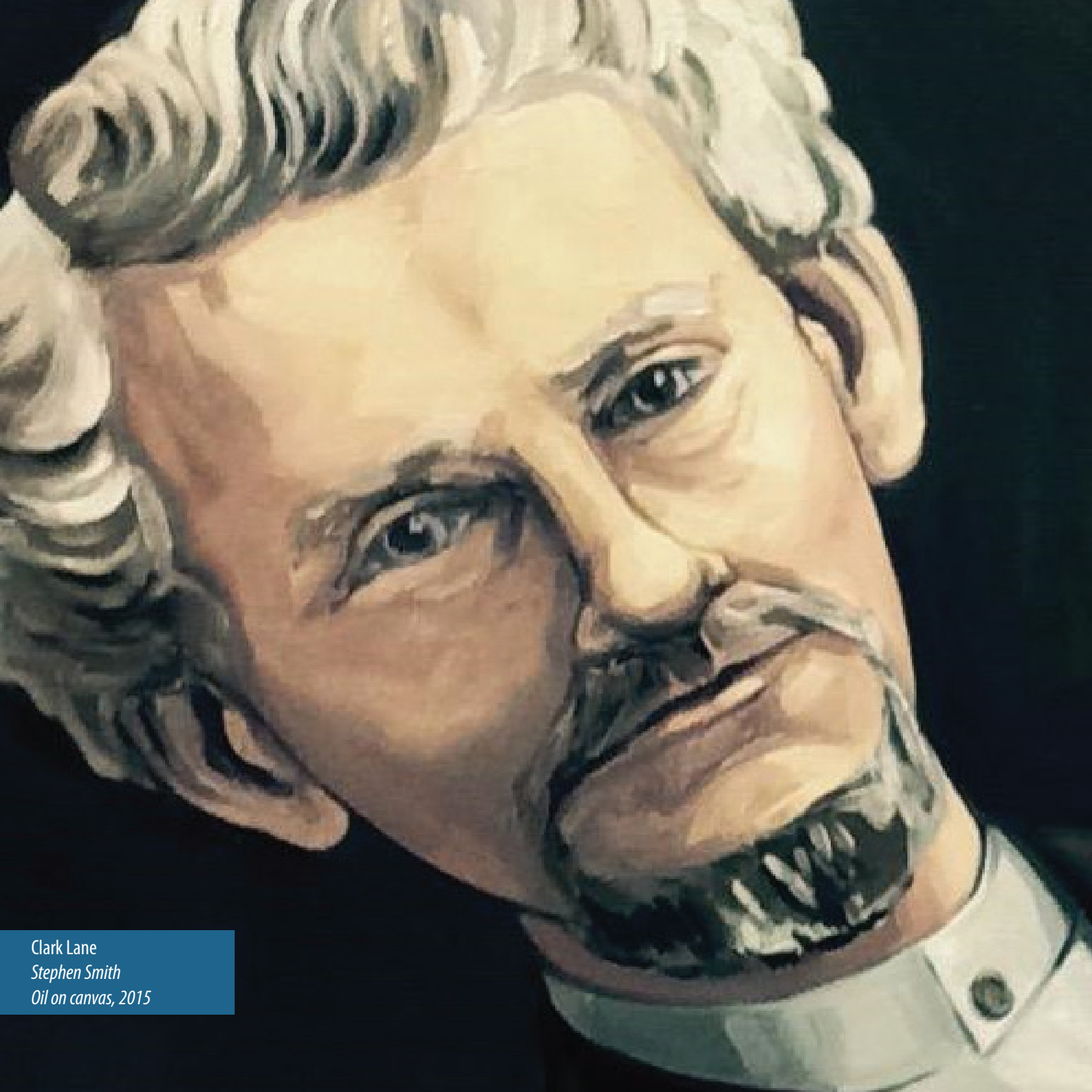
### Ted Pickerill

Member

### Sandra Pizzano

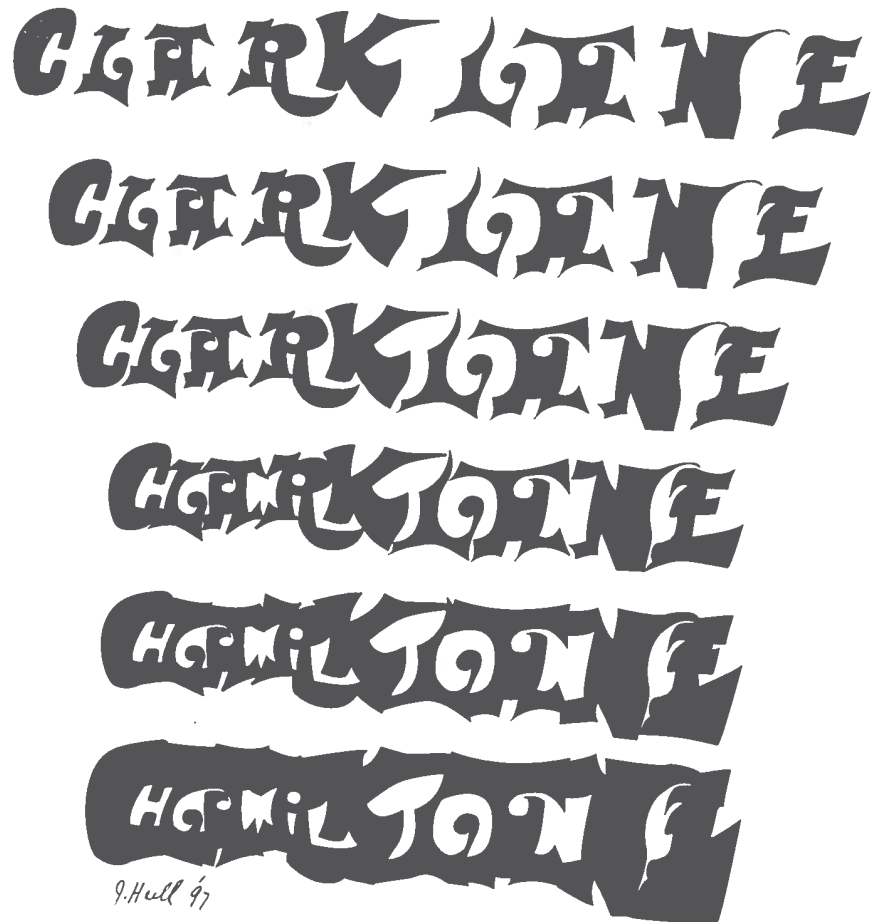
Member





Clark Lane  
*Stephen Smith*  
Oil on canvas, 2015

# *He Helped Make Hamilton*



James Hull created this morph titled *He Helped Make Hamilton* in 1997. James is the husband of Suzanne (Susie) Hull who is the great-great-granddaughter of Clark Lane.

The piece was presented to the Lane Libraries by the family of Clark Lane at the 1997 rededication of the Hamilton facility following the 1995 - 1997 renovation.



