



Carnegie Center Historical Notes

The Carnegie today...

Owned by the Village of Paw Paw, this former Carnegie Library is now home to the **Greater Paw Paw Chamber and the Paw Paw Downtown Development Authority**. This

beautiful historical building, at 129 S. Kalamazoo St., is also home to the Paw Paw Garden Club which provides care and maintenance of the grounds around the building.

Check out the DDA Grant and Loan programs and other services at www.pawpaw.net/dda.html and check out the GPP Chamber of Commerce, its programs and services at www.pawpawchamber.com

The Carnegie through time...

January 25, 1917 – An article in the local paper, the *Free Press and Courier*, reported Mrs. Harvey offered the Village of Paw Paw the large private library of her late husband, the Rev. E.H. Harvey, as a nucleus for a public Library if there was a suitable building erected and used as a public library.

The Village Council decided to pursue the idea. Council seeks a grant from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation for funding for a public library.

1917 – Records indicate the Carnegie Foundation awards Village \$10,000 toward the construction of the public library. The Village Council moves to place a vote before the Village electors to sell bonds to go with the grant monies.

March 1, 1918 – An editorial in the local paper, *The True Northerner* supported the vote

March 11, 1918 – Village voters authorized bonds in the amount of \$4,500 to go with the \$10,000 grant to construct a public library. (Approval for nine (9) \$500 bonds with 5% annual interest.)

May 6, 1918 – The Village conferred with architect Claire Allen regarding a design for the library building.

August 26, 1918 – Bids opened and let to John W. O’Conner (Kalamazoo) in the amount of \$11,500 excluding plumbing, heating and wiring. Bid let to Max Benton for plumbing and heating in the amount of \$ \$1,982.22. The Village also authorized \$1,000 per year for annual maintenance and established an annual levy to raise the \$1,000. The Village purchased the land for the Carnegie Library with a \$3,000 donation from Mrs. William J. Sellick.



March 10, 1919 – The Village passed a resolution to raise the annual upkeep to \$1,450 and authorized a necessary levy to raise this amount.

March 18, 1919 – The Village amended the architectural plans for the library.

June 13, 1919 – The Village Council instructed the Village President to enter into an agreement with Paw Paw Township for the support of the public library.

June 26, 1920 – Opening Day for the free Public Library!

November 11, 1929 – The Carnegie Library honored in the Village’s centennial celebration.

June 26, 1920 through 1991 – The Village of Paw Paw Carnegie Library remains in continuous operation.

Carnegie building closed and falling into disrepair.

June 12, 1995 Ethel Dillon spearhead efforts to reopen the Carnegie building as a Community Center. Through her efforts the Carnegie Commission raised \$13,907; received a Gilmore Foundation grant in the amount of \$45,000; and, received \$43,059 in donated services. These funds were used to repair the building.



Land Transactions according to title search records April 1918 through July 28, 2000



- Barnabus O’Dell sold some of the land to the Village of Paw Paw April 2, 1918. Recorded on April 8, 1918; Liber 172, page 504.
- Thomas Cavanaugh sold the other portion of the land to the Village April 2, 1918. Recorded on April 9, 1918; Liber 172, page 508.
- Village deeded a 23’ by 110’ section of the land to Jennie T. and A.A. McNeil on February 11, 1948. Recorded on March 1, 1948; Liber 400, page 33.
- Village deeded land to the Paw Paw Public Library on January 15, 1988. Recorded on same date; Liber 836, page 249.
- Library deeded land to the Village of Paw Paw on August 26, 1991. Recorded on September 11, 1991; Liber 918, page 173.

Plate # 866-A; Parcel # 80-47-112-001-10



Andrew Carnegie (Born June 11, 1835 in Scotland)

Andrew Carnegie emigrated to the USA in 1848. In 1853 he joined the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. In 1865 he started the Keystone Bridge Company. In 1872 he left the Pennsylvania Railroad Company and founded what became the Carnegie Steel Company. In 1901 he sold this company to J.P. Morgan’s United States Steel Corporation for \$250,000,000 and began concentrating his efforts on his philanthropic activities; including establishing libraries in the USA, Great Britain and other English speaking countries.

Carnegie Libraries in the USA and Michigan

A 1991 University of Michigan study reported Andrew Carnegie’s funded more than 1,700 libraries in the USA, Great Britain and other countries. 58 communities in Michigan received funding from Carnegie for libraries. Many of these still remain standing today. Most are not used as libraries.

Was Paw Paw one of the last 2 Carnegie Libraries funded?

In a book by Abigail A. Van Slyck, titled *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries and American Culture*, Carnegie documents between 1899 and 1917 were explored. According to Ms. Van Slyck, Paw Paw and Lackawanna, New York were the last two libraries funded by Carnegie. Van Slyck’s book documented no other funding for libraries after 1917.

For Paw Paw baseball players connected to major league baseball or Paw Paw's role in the Civil War and the Capture of Jefferson Davis, or on Cinco de Mayo, see the separate files also on this Website.

**Some historic photos of the Village of Paw Paw are located on line at:
<http://www.pawpawchamber.com/members/chamberweb/gallery/album003>**