

Library History

Back in 1897, Greenwood was a bustling mining community: a city of over 3,000 people, with hotels, general store, brewery, even an opera house. Over the next few years, Greenwood became the government center for the Boundary region, and by 1905, had over 100 firms in its business district. Yet, even with its booming population and economy, there was no library.

When the copper market plunged, so too did the city's population, and by 1942, only 200 people remained in Greenwood. This changed dramatically during World War II, when Greenwood became an internment center for approximately 1,200 Japanese Canadians.

This time the local residents did see a need for a public library, and in 1943, the newly-formed Greenwood Community Association made it their first project. Through volunteer labour, a building from the Dentonia Mine site was moved to a vacant lot (across from the present Credit Union) and furnished with paint and shelving.

According to pioneer Mollie McArthur, daughter-in-law of W.E. McArthur, "all was finished when they realized they had no books, so a call went out to the community for books." Once the shelves were stocked, the library opened its doors and operated through the efforts of a volunteer staff.

On February 20, 1945, the Greenwood Public Library was registered officially as a Public Library Association.

At this point, the town population was remaining fairly constant, yet the needs of the community were outgrowing the continuing expansion efforts on the small library building.

In 1958, under the leadership of Mr. W.E. McArthur, mayor of Greenwood, the main street hardware store-turned-furniture store-turned-funeral home became a multi-functional community center. Two years later, the Greenwood Public Library moved into its present location in the community building, appropriately named the McArthur Centre. Expansions & renovations in the ensuing years have kept the library apace with the changing needs of Greenwood's residents. Please drop in to visit us!