



## Carnegie Library

1 N. Sheridan Rd.  
Bicentennial Landmark

The gray brick and stone building at the northeast corner of Sheridan Road and Washington Street, which now houses the Waukegan Servicemen's Center, has a history which predates its construction in 1902.

As site of Waukegan's first public library, it was actually conceived in the hearts and minds of early scholars who organized the Little Fort reading room and library association in 1845. That group and succeeding ones had their ups and downs until the Sesame Club organized in 1894 and soon began pushing for a free library. After achieving their goal in 1898, the next step was financing a building.

Board member A.K. Stearns wrote to Andrew Carnegie, noted philanthropist, and reminded him that by virtue of his steel holdings, he owed Waukegan a library. His bold ploy worked and Carnegie came up with \$25,000.

Built into the side of the hill the structure is unique in style with its semi-circular rear wall descending five stories to house storage and work rooms.

The semi-circular look is repeated at the front entrance, which is flanked by Greek Ionic columns rising two stories high.

Elements of the Second Renaissance Revival style of architecture can be seen in the projecting string course separating the floors, the projecting cornices and detail work above.

The building was dedicated Oct. 1, 1903, and continued to be used as a library until April, 1966.