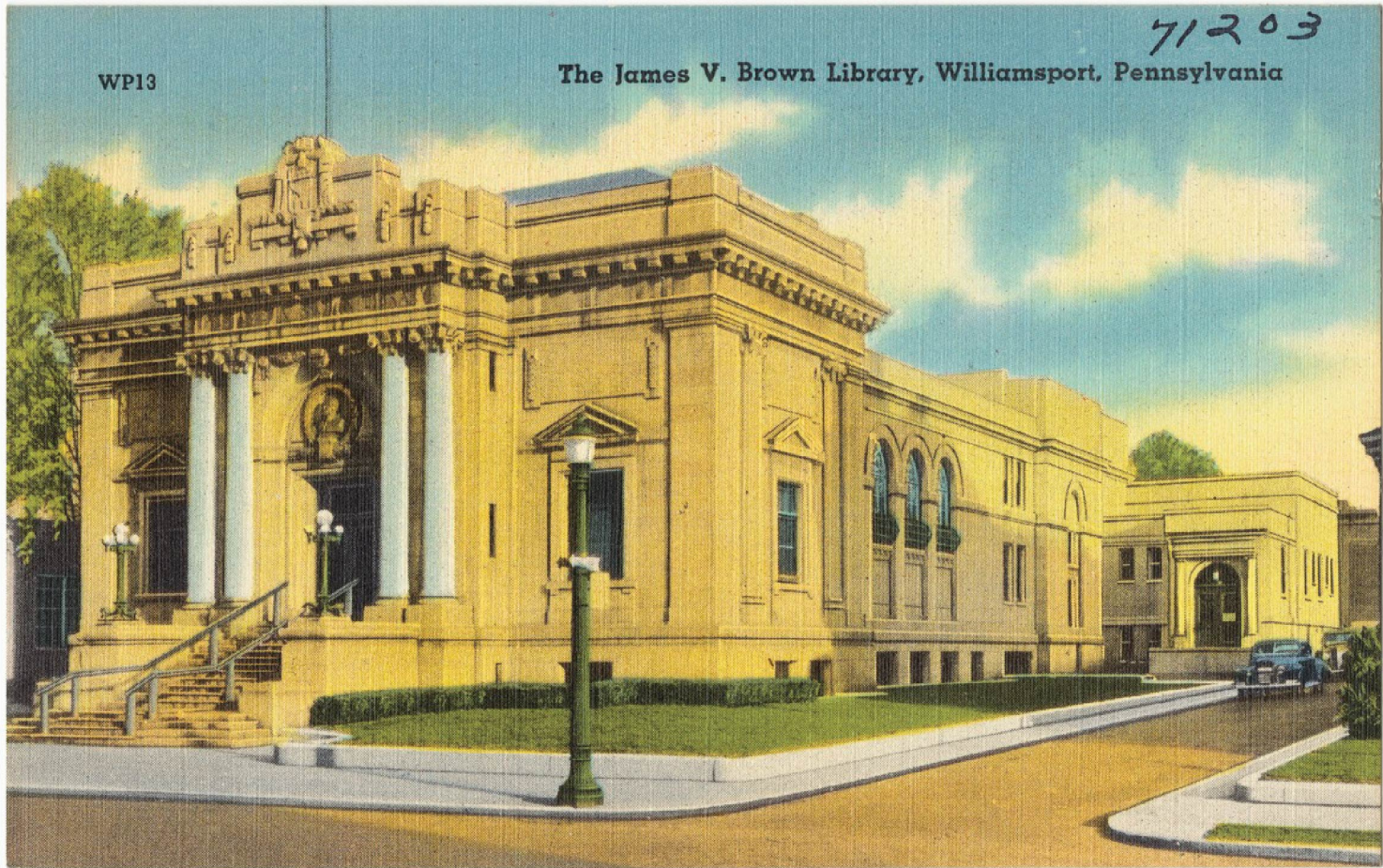


History of **The James V. Brown Library**

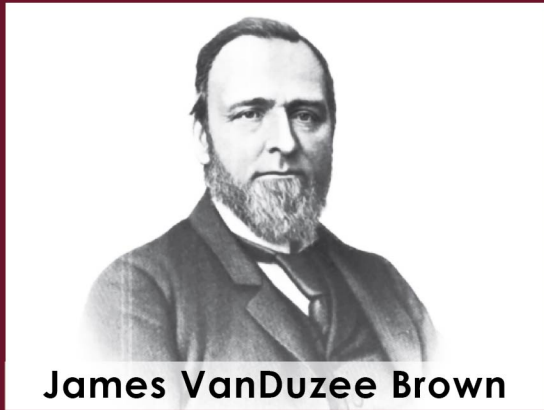


19 East Fourth Street, Williamsport PA

History of The James V. Brown Library



The James V. Brown Library opened in June 1907 and was a bequest to the city from lumber baron and philanthropist James VanDuzee Brown who died on December 8, 1904, at age 78. Already a widower with no children, Brown had dreamed for years of giving Williamsport a free, public library. The idea for the library was suggested by his late wife, Carile Brown.



James VanDuzee Brown

In his will James V. Brown bequeathed \$400,000 to the city of Williamsport, and stipulated that \$150,000 be used to erect and endow a public library at the corner of Fourth and State Streets for the use of the people of Williamsport and nearby communities.

His wishes also included how the library should be governed, a plan that is still followed today. Management of the library would be under the control of a nine-member board of trustees consisting of: the Mayor of Williamsport; the Rector of Christ Episcopal Church (where Brown was a member), the Superintendent of Williamsport Schools, a representative of Williamsport City Council, and five other representatives of Williamsport or nearby vicinity.

During the following years the Brown Library's services expanded to include branches and reading stations in Montoursville, Newberry and other city locations.

The Brown Library is one of Williamsport's most handsome historic buildings and it still remains true to its 1907



1906: Construction of James V. Brown Library on State Street

Victorian charm. Even more importantly, the library remains true to its original mission: to enable people to be the best they can be, to grow, to learn and to enjoy their lives while learning!

Now, the library has more than 225,000 visitors in a year and circulates a half-million items annually. A member of the Lycoming County Library System, the James V. Brown Library participates in PA Forward, a statewide initiative to promote literacies in our communities to power a better future for everyone.



Today, the library's mission is to be the place to go to learn, connect, and grow. The library's strategic goals champion the love of reading, open new doors to lifelong learning, provide a haven to those who seek, ensure the preservation of public library services for future generations, and to make James V. Brown Library the place to be.



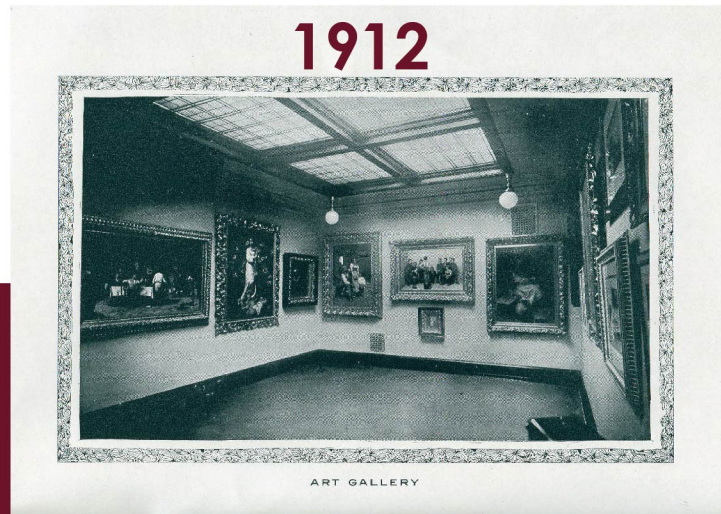
The Bidelspacher Building at the corner of Market and Edwin streets was demolished to make way for the new Welch Wing addition. A capital campaign raised \$6.5 million for the project. On February 14, 2009 the Welch Children's Wing opens to the public.



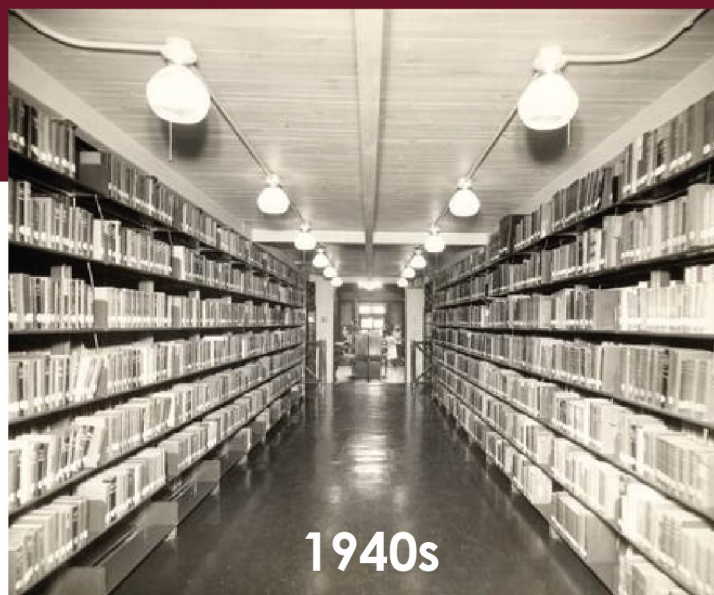
The James V. Brown Library opens its doors at 9 a.m. for the first time, to offer the citizens of Williamsport opportunities for educational development. 150 books were checked out by noon. Borrowers were limited to 2 books. The library's mission was to "serve as the People's University, providing educational resources and cultural enrichment opportunities for everyone, not just the fortunate few."



David A. Howe Reference Room built, providing an additional 35,000 volumes to the collection. This addition is now the main circulation area.



*James V. Brown Library Art Gallery
(second floor front west side)*



Brown Library stack room. This space is now the large-print area and adult computer lab.



1920

4th Street View (facing east).

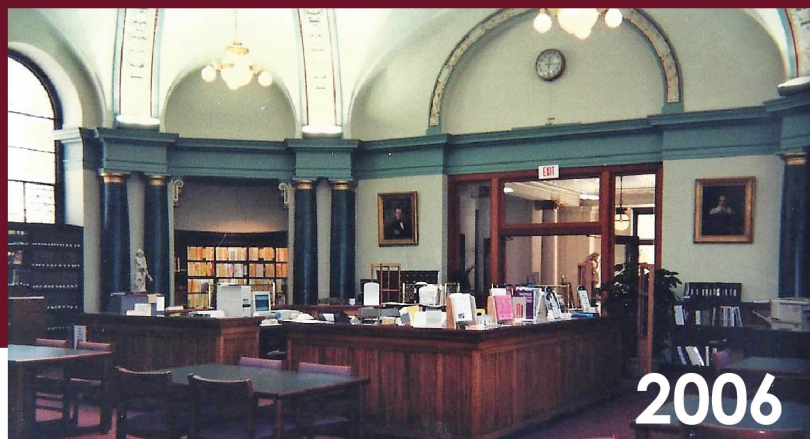


1936

March 17th, St. Patrick's Day floods closed the library and ruin many volumes of books. A Flood Aid Grant totaling \$46,000 helped the library to rebuild.



1947



2006



1950s

James V. Brown Library Community Room (second floor front east side). This area is now storage.



2019