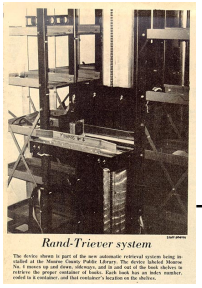
# Library History 1965-1971

**MCPL**

In 1965 the Bloomington Public Library merged with the Monroe County Public Library system. As the collection and library use continued to grow, crowded conditions hampered further development of services. Plans for a new building were developed based on the concept that the new facility should be a kind of "nerve center" for the community. Ideally, it should reach out to the community with all the sophisticated tools of communication that modern technology could provide.

In 1966, Miss Alice Freese, daughter of Bloomington stone operator Simeon Freese, left half of her estate ($620,000) to the library. A long time patron, Miss Freese was quite friendly with Miss Ashby. At the time, this bequest was the largest single act of private philanthropy in Bloomington history. This money was targeted for purchasing a site for the new library building on the corner of Kirkwood and Lincoln Avenues. It was proposed that the children's reading room in the new library facility be named after Miss Freese.

A storefront branch library was opened in Ellettsville in 1968. It was located on Sale Street and provided the town with more immediate service than the bookmobile.




The Monroe County Public Library was constructed with Indiana Limestone.

Construction began in 1968. It contained an auditorium, a special reference section for Indiana (the Indiana Room), a processing room, a children's room, a board room, a librarians' room, study carrels, a staff room, and a fine arts gallery where local art could be displayed. A Randtriever, a series of shelves accessed by robotic arms, reduced the amount of space needed for book storage. The Randtriever was funded by a federal grant and was thought to be a good investment in terms of saving space. The move to the new library building began in November 1970. In November 1971, the building was formally dedicated. At the time of its opening. the library contained 105,000 books and served 25,000 borrowers.

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