

**HISTORY OF  
THE ATKINSON PUBLIC LIBRARY  
DISTRICT**

**1920-2021**

**THE FIRST 100 YEARS**

**BY SUE WILDEMUTH**

**Revision by NINETTE CARTON**

**10-01-2021**

# **DEDICATION**

**Past and Present**

**Library Staff and Board Members**

**Of**

**The Atkinson Public Library District**

**Would like to thank**

**All the patrons, volunteers, businesses, and**

**Organizations**

**That**

**Have helped us over the years.**

**You are the reason we are here.**

**We dedicate this history to you.**

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**HISTORY  
OF  
ATKINSON PUBLIC LIBRARY  
DISTRICT  
(100 Years of Service)  
1920 – 2021**

**THE FIRST 100 YEARS**

**IN THE BEGINNING**

**The Reading Circle**

At the Turn of the Century, a number of Atkinson women founded what for many years was known as the Reading Circle. Reading and discussing the most popular books and current literature, the circle met every Monday afternoon with most of the members darning, mending, or doing plain sewing while one member read aloud. Later a group of younger women met and organized a Woman's Club. One by one, members of the Reading Circle joined the Woman's Club until finally the two organizations merged in 1915 to become the Atkinson Women's Club.

**Soldiers Memorial Library**

Atkinson's first library, The Soldiers Memorial Library, was organized by the Atkinson Women's Club and opened its doors to patrons in January, 1920 in a small frame building owned by Mrs. Vella Fenton. Located just west of the old Parson building on West Main Street, its entire collection consisted of 1400 donated books.

## **CLEORA HOWLETTE**

**(1920 - 1921) Head Librarian**

Miss Cleora Howlette, the first librarian, was paid by the club and the library was open Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday afternoons and Saturday evenings.

When Miss Howlette resigned, Mrs. Frank Macafee, Mrs. Lucy Humphreys, and Mrs. Nellie Humphreys donated their time as interim librarians until a replacement for Miss Howlette could be found.

year 1960



**MRS. CORA LLOYD  
HEAD LIBRARIAN  
(1921-1961)**

*New Atkinson Library Flag*

Atkinson members of the Grand Army of the Republic presented a new 36-star flag to the Atkinson Public Library Board at its meeting this week. Standing are Mrs. Adolph Krueger, president of the G.A.R., and Mrs. Cora Lloyd, librarian. Seated are Miss Mae Nickerson, president of the library board, and Mrs. John Rumber, veteran board member. (Dispatch Photo by Mrs. Bettie Verbeckmoes)

## **CORA (MACAFEE) LLOYD**

**(1921 - 1961) Head Librarian**

Sandra Vandersnick (Sturtewagon) (1960-1962) Assistant Librarian

The library became tax supported in April, 1921 when the township voted for a tax levy of 1 1/5 mills to support the library. Board members were elected on April 5, 1921 with Mrs. Lucy Humphreys - President, Orven Nickerson - Vice President, Mrs. Ruth Macafee - Secretary, Mrs. Nellie Humphreys, Mrs. Tena Graham, and Frank Rumler rounding out the library's first Board of Directors. They held their first meeting on April 11, 1921.

Cora Lloyd was hired as Head Librarian in May, 1921. Mrs. Lloyd was born September 11, 1876 in Pennsylvania, the daughter of John and Sarah Macafee. She was reared and attended schools in Atkinson. Mrs. Lloyd was a member of the Atkinson Congregational Church, the Royal Neighbors, GAR, a past worthy matron of the Atkinson Chapter, OES, and a member of the Atkinson Women's Club. After accepting her new post as Head librarian, Mrs. Lloyd posted the new hours the library would now be open every weekday afternoon and Saturday evening.

In 1923, the library's name was changed to Atkinson Public Library. The Atkinson Women's Club donated \$100.00 towards a fund for the purpose of moving the library from its present location in the 100 block of West Main to a new location.

In a report sent to the Bureau of Education pertaining to public, society, and school libraries in 1923, the Atkinson Public Library reported 280 cardholders (211 – adults/69 - children). The library's collection had grown to 1,775 volumes and the circulation total for that year was 8953.

In 1928, the Atkinson Public Library was moved to the P.E. Germinder building on East Main Street. The library joined the Illinois Library Association in 1929. Then in October, 1932, the library relocated to the Huys building next to the Township

Hall on South State Street. In March, 1954, it was moved again, to a building owned by Alma and Herbert DeRoo.

As of March, 1956 the library contained 10,140 pieces in its collection. In 1960 the first Assistant Librarian, Sandra Vandersnick (Sturtewagon), was hired and in January Board Member Alma DeRoo suggested that a summer reading program for children be started.

This program was entitled "Bookworm" and ran from June 1 through August 15.

## **ALMA DEROO**

**(1961 - 1963) Head Librarian**

Sandra Vandersnick (Sturtewagon) (1960 - 1962) Assistant Librarian

In 1961 Cora Lloyd was killed in a car-pedestrian accident in Atkinson while returning home from working at the library. Alma DeRoo, a Library Board Member, was elected to succeed Ms. Lloyd, but later resigned in 1963 to accept a teaching position at the Atkinson Grade School where she taught for many years.

During Mrs. DeRoo's tenure a bronze plaque was placed in the Atkinson Public Library in memory of the late Mrs. Cora Lloyd in recognition of her years of faithful service. Today, you can find this plaque proudly displayed, at eye level, on the end of a book stack in the non-fiction section.

## **SARAH NICKERSON**

**(1963 - 1985) Head Librarian**

Corrine Thies (Buysse) (1964 - 1966) Assistant Librarian

Judy Schehl (1966 - 1968) Assistant Librarian

Judy Wyffels (1967 - 1967) Assistant Librarian (Interim for 6 weeks)

Joyce Minnaert (1968 - 1994) Assistant Librarian

“When Cora Lloyd was Head Librarian, she used to have her daughters help her at the library,” Sarah Nickerson recalls, “when they couldn’t make it, they would ask me, if I could help, and I said, ‘Yes.’”

After Ms. Lloyd’s accident and Mrs. DeRoo accepted a teacher’s position at the grade School, Sarah Nickerson was hired as Head Librarian in 1963. When Nickerson began her library duties the Atkinson Public Library called a building on South State Street its home. The Board contacted an attorney in 1963 and plans to find a new site to purchase for a new library building were begun.

In 1963, a referendum passed to allow the Board to issue bonds to pay for the land and construction needed for a new library building. The site purchased included the area where the library was originally located in 1920. This property was on the corner of Main and Church Streets. The plans for the library were presented to the public in February of 1964. The architects were George W. Krumdieck and Associates from Moline, Illinois, the general contractor was Arvin Erdman Building Contractor from Geneseo, Illinois, and the cost of the building was \$40,000.

During the winter of 1964 the library moved to its location at 119 West Main Street. “The library was closed for several weeks while we were moving, and there was still a lot of work to do,” Nickerson said, “But we didn’t want to be shut any longer than necessary so we opened the doors of the new library, and operated out of boxes until everything was painted and ready for us.” On

February 7, 1965, the new building had an official open house hosted by the Atkinson Women's Club with 250 citizens in attendance.

The library joined the Western Illinois Library System in December, 1965 allowing local residents to borrow books, films, art prints, and reference material throughout the area.

On June 7, 1966, Ms. Nickerson ordered a big card catalog cabinet from Gaylord Brothers. This multi-drawer cabinet was "state of the art" for its time and can still be found in the adult section of the library today. It is on display even though we no longer use it.

Started by Sandra Glattly story hour for pre-school children became a part of the library programs in 1966. The Assistant Librarian served as reader during the winter months for the four through six year old children. Middle School age volunteers served as readers during the summer when the time period was extended to an hour and included games and outdoor activities.

Joyce Minnaert joined the staff of the Atkinson Public Library District as the new Assistant Librarian in 1968 and would remain in this position for the next twenty-five years helping two Head librarians in various capacities.

Air conditioning first came to the Atkinson Public Library District in the form of two Fedders window air conditioning units in July, 1974, making the library an even cooler place to visit on a hot summer afternoon. They would later be removed and the library would be updated with a central air unit.

A Reader Printer Micro-Fiche machine came to the library in June, 1978. In April, 1980, three Electro Micro-Fiche magazines-Reader's Digest, Time, and Newsweek 1977-1980 were available for patron use. A fee of ten cents was charged for each copy made.

On April 18, 1982, during National Library Week, a mortgage-burning ceremony was held outside the front entry of the building celebrating the final payment on the library. Those attending were past and present board members, Mayor Nick Simon, Township Supervisor Wilson DeReu, and Bank President Ralph Moens. The Atkinson Women's Club served coffee and cake during the open house.

Around December 12, 1984, a letter was drafted by Library Board Members, Pat DeReu and Cheryl Culbertson, and a news release was sent to the paper informing library patrons of a new service. Assistant Librarian Joyce Minnaert would now be delivering (and picking up) library materials to the homebound and elderly patrons of the Atkinson Public Library.

Through the late sixties and seventies the library had a steady growth in its collection. Although the original library began with 1,400 borrowed items, during Sarah Nickerson's twenty-two years of service, the library's collection would grow to over 14,000 items and 970 registered library users. Sarah Nickerson retired on December 31, 1985, but helped until the Library Board hired her replacement.

## **PATRICIA DEREU**

(1986 - 1996) Head Librarian

JOYCE MINNAERT (1968 - 1994) Assistant Librarian

RUTHANN CARTON (1994 - Present) Assistant Librarian

Pat DeReu began her duties as Head Librarian when Sarah Nickerson retired after twenty-two years of service to the community. Mrs. DeReu had been a full-time teacher for nine years in the Peoria Diocese parochial school system and had taught part-time in Atkinson and Geneseo for eight years before assuming her duties at the library.

Many technological and service changes came to the library during Pat's tenure, one of the first was in 1986 with the acquisition of a copier for staff and patron use. Purchased with the library's first per capita state grant money, along with federal revenue sharing funds received from the Village of Atkinson, a Sharp SF-760 copier was the first dry toner copier owned by the library.

On April 3, 1987, a resolution was passed to create the Atkinson Public Library District. The decision to become a library district was made to enable neighboring townships without library services to petition into the Atkinson Library in the future, to protect the library's present territory, and to gain governing autonomy.

In 1987, the Atkinson Public Library District and its patrons became the lucky beneficiary of a wonderful gift from the Frances Freddy family. A longtime resident of the town, Mrs. Freddy was involved in Atkinson government as both a village trustee and the village clerk. Before her political role, Frances Freddy and her husband operated the Atkinson-Annawan News. Following her death, money from her memorial, along with donations by her sons Bill, Atkinson, Illinois, Carl, Los Angeles, California, and Dan, Berthoud, Colorado, were used to bind and protect nearly sixty years of the Atkinson-Annawan News. The newspapers, folded and stored in piles in the library's basement were gathered and placed in

strongly bound books. Issues include some from 1916, 1926, and 1927 as well as complete listings of papers from 1928 - the present. This generous contribution from the Freddy family has enabled patrons of the Atkinson Public Library District to have fingertip access to years and years of Atkinson History and visitors to the community have also used them to find information about their families.

1987 saw the library's first electric typewriter purchased with state funds and donations from the Atkinson Women's Club. A donation of a phonograph for the children's reading programs, courtesy of Tray Pettis, was also received that year.

Thanks to the continuing generosity of the Atkinson's Kiwanis Club, portable tape players were purchased for the children's area and shelving units were built on the main floor of the library for the bound issues of the Atkinson-Annawan News. Four Polaroid Instant Cameras were also added to the collection in 1989. With grant money received from the Illinois State Library to fund 50% of the cost, a Sharp Model Fax Machine was installed at the library in September, 1989.

1989 also saw the formation of a Lay/Library Planning Committee. This committee was comprised of community representatives: Sandra Heller, Gregory Patton, Beverly Freddy, Eugene Heller, and Ardith Burton, along with library representatives: Pat DeReu, Joyce Minnaert, Larry Floreani, Donna Stuenkel, Cheryl Culbertson. Meeting twice a month until a plan was complete; the goal of the group was to create a new 5 year long-range plan to fulfill the requirements set aside for the 1989 Per Capita Grant. This planning process was a prerequisite for future grant money from the Illinois State Library. A 5 year plan was created and adopted by the group to improve the library's information technology, expand programs for youth and the elderly, and to establish a resource center on Belgian Culture.

In early 1990, the Atkinson Public Library District annexed a portion of Cornwall and Loraine Townships formerly located in the now defunct Atkinson School District and invited residents from those areas to sign up for library cards. This annexation added 236 patrons to the 1,603 patrons already being served within

the district.

A Sens-a-phone Environment Monitor, which alerted Library staff to unusual building conditions such as fire, temperature, and water levels, was installed. Library services and the card catalog files were continually updated under Pat DeReu's leadership.

February, 1990 marked the beginning of the Atkinson Public Library District's Collection on Belgian Culture. The first two items in the collection were donated to the library by Louis Coopmans, Moline, Illinois (formerly of Atkinson). The first piece was a calligraphy copy of "The Lord's Prayer" in Flemish and a picture of the Mauritania.

At a January, 1993 Board Meeting, it was voted on and passed that the library would display a "Friends of the Library" plaque. Each year an organization or resident who had generously given donations of goods or services to the Atkinson Public Library would be honored by the library and a brass plate with the year and donor's name would be added to the plaque.

The Frank VanVooren Family donated and installed an outdoor 25 foot aluminum flag pole with internal works in memory of Mr. VanVooren. The dedication ceremony was held on September 18, 1994 following the Atkinson Heritage Day parade. The American Legion Post, Library Board, and the VanVooren Family took part in the ceremony.

After twenty-five years of service to the Atkinson Public Library District, Assistant Librarian Joyce Minnaert retired from the library on June 30, 1994. A reception, honoring Mrs. Minnaert was held on April 20, 1994.

Ruthann Carton, a First Lutheran Preschool Teacher, was chosen as the new Assistant Librarian for the Atkinson Public Library District.

At the May 13, 1996 Board Meeting it was announced that Mapes Insurance had generously donated the funds to purchase protective sleeves for the new 3 year library cards.

It was also announced at the same May 13, 1996 Board Meeting, after nine years on the Library Board and ten more years as Head Librarian, Pat DeReu would be retiring from her position at the library effective July 31, 1996. On July 23, 1996, an open house was held to honor her for her many years of service to the community. Pat stayed on in a volunteer capacity and as a sub-librarian before she retired permanently from the library in 1999.

## **NINETTE CARTON**

(1996 - PRESENT) Head Librarian

RUTH ANN CARTON (1994 - PRESENT) Assistant Librarian

A librarian at St. Malachy's Catholic School, where she taught library and computer skills, Ninette Carton was chosen to be the next Head Librarian for the Atkinson Public Library District at a June 5, 1996 meeting of the Library Board.

Almost immediately after accepting the Head Librarians' position in 1996, Mrs. Carton's computer skills were put to good use as the library staff, members of the Library Board, and a dedicated group of volunteers (which included six students from the St. Anthony's Catholic Church Confirmation Class) began the process of putting the library's entire collection on computer.

The first step was to join the Resource Sharing Alliance with other libraries in the West Central library system. This extensive project consisted of barcoding each book, magazine, and periodical in the library's collection individually and then putting them on computer disks. The same information was collected from all West Central libraries and will be put on CD-ROM with each library then being able to access exactly what is in their "sister" libraries. Besides making record-keeping and circulation more efficient at the Atkinson Public Library, it would also enable a patron, wanting a certain book, information as to the location of that particular item in a more timely fashion. A portion of the funding for this project came from a \$1,000.00 donation from the Atkinson Booster Club and a 1997 Federal Grant of \$2,274.75, made available through the Federal Library Services and Construction Act, which enabled the library to purchase a new computer to be used in conjunction with the library's new barcoding system. In October of that same year, the Atkinson Booster Club presented the library with another generous donation of \$400.00 which allowed the library to purchase a new color printer.

In July, 1997, a flag was given to the library by the Charles DeCrane American Legion Post No. 724. Walt VanDeWoestyne, Atkinson, a member of the Atkinson American Legion was instrumental in obtaining the flag, with help from Congressman Lane Evan's office, which flew over the nation's capital in Washington, D.C. on June 1, 1997.

Internet access came to the Atkinson Public Library District in 1997. Patrons wishing to take advantage of this new service took part in a free one hour Internet class conducted by Head Librarian Ninette Carton. Children under 17 were required to have a parent or guardian accompany them to class. The first Internet classes began on December 15 and are still available, by appointment, to Atkinson Public Library District patrons today.

To better serve their Geneseo Middle School patrons, the Atkinson Public Library obtained extra copies of text books, available for check out from the library. NEWSWEEK and US NEWS were also available for check out to Geneseo High School patrons enrolled in the World Problems class.

September, 1998 marked the date of the first issue of the Atkinson Public Library District's Monthly Newsletter and a "Name Our Newsletter" contest was held. Atkinson Postmaster Jeanne Downing's entry won and "Footnotes" became the newsletter's official name.

Beginning in the fall of 1998, a book sale table was placed in the lower lobby of the library. The books, duplicates or donations, by patrons for this specific use, were sold for ten cents with the proceeds going to the children's programs at the library.

The Color Coding Project on the youth side of the library was completed in October, 1998, making selecting a book in the Children's Section simple. The following code was established:

<b>Spine Protector Label Color</b>	<b>Dewey Designation</b>	<b>Reading Level</b>	<b>Approximate Age</b>
Green	E	Easy Beginner	3rd grade and under
Yellow	E	Easy Chapter	1st, 2nd, 3rd grades
Orange	JF	Intermediate	4th, 5th, 6th grades
Blue	YF	Young Adult	7th grade and up

Two separate projects were begun in November, 1998 to make it easier to find books in both the Adult and Children’s Sections of the library. On the adult side, genre stickers were added to the spine labels of books containing specific themes. One of the first genres completed were books with western themes; mystery, inspirational, and others would soon follow. On the youth side holiday stickers were added to children’s books containing holiday themes with Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Easter, and others being represented.

Beginning in 1998, the Atkinson Public Library was invited to be a part of the Atkinson Grade School PTA Reading Night. Over the years since their first invitation, Head Librarian Ninette Carton and/or Assistant Librarian Ruthann Carton have attended this wonderful PTA Sponsored event on behalf of the library.

A winter “Read At Home” Adult Reading Program entitled ARKS-Adults Reading Kids Stuff made its debut at the Atkinson Public Library. Made possible through a generous donation from the Norwest Bank-Atkinson Branch, the reading program ran from February 1, 1999 to February 24, 1999 with a party and prize drawing held on the evening of February 24.

On April 12, 1999, the Atkinson Public Library District officially began checking out items from the library’s collection using the new computer system. This system made checking out and tracking library materials more efficient. At this same time, the Bibliophile computer, containing the collections of the majority of libraries in the entire Alliance Library System, was moved to the circulation counter to make patron access to this service easier.

National Volunteer Week was celebrated at the Atkinson Public Library the week of April 18-24, 1999. A Volunteer Appreciation Night, to thank and honor members of the library's dedicated volunteer force, was held on Wednesday, April 21, 1999.

The Spine Label Project, using the Dewey Decimal System, was completed in August, 1999. All of the books, videos, and audiotapes in the adult and children sections of the library have been spine labeled or re-spine labeled due to ink fading, making it easier for patrons to find materials on the shelves.

It was noted in the September, 1999 issue of FOOTNOTES voters could now register to vote with both Head Librarian Ninette Carton and Assistant Librarian Ruthann Carton.

Due to the growing collection of videos in both the adult and Children's sections of the library, the staff did a little rearranging to make access to the videos easier. On the children's side of the library the videos were moved to two racks along the windows. The videos in the adult section were placed near the large print books on the gray shelves near the old card catalog. An alphabetized video list, for patron's use can be found in the video section.

The Category List Project was completed by February, 2000. Category lists were compiled for the children's section of the library and will be constantly updated. Xerox copies were available to patrons at the circulation desk in a wide variety of topics, such as Valentine's Day, Newberry Award Books, Folk Tales, Indian, Caldecott Award Books, and many others.

Assistant Librarian Ruthann Carton's, April, 2000, Spring Preschool Story Hour was a great success. Middle School and High School students have been guest readers at various preschool/summer reading programs over the years, but this year guest readers from the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grade classes at Atkinson Grade School came to the story hour and shared their reading talents with the

preschoolers.

In May, 2000, Head Librarian Ninette Carton and the Library Board were pleased to announce that the Atkinson Public Library District was the recipient of a Networking Grant of \$11,892 from the "Educate and Automate" fund. This State of Illinois grant program is designed to improve access to electronic information, develop and expand electronic library networks, upgrade hardware and software and provide assistance and basic technology for the use of library patrons. Educate and Automate grants are awarded annually on a competitive basis. The grants are funded by a portion of fees collected by the Illinois Secretary of State's office for business-related services.

Due to this wonderful grant, adult and youth patrons will now have access to five computer stations. Four IBM compatibles (one with Internet access) were located along the wall in the junior/youth section of the library and our reliable old Mac is located near the Pre-School-Early Elementary section of the library. This same year, the library director and board members were happy to announce the Atkinson Public Library District was the recipient of an E-Rate Federal Grant of \$527.96 for increased Internet access. As of July, 2000 the library has increased Internet access on all the workstations.

In conjunction with the 2000 Summer Reading, a Preschool Program entitled "Book Buddies" was started at the library. Every Thursday afternoon between 2:30-3:00, two students were available to read to any children ages 3-7.

When asked, "What the mission statement is for the library?" Head Librarian Ninette Carton stated, "Our mission, at the Atkinson Public Library District, is to promote and make available to the residents library materials and information. These materials would include recreational, informational, educational, and cultural, with special emphasis on the Belgian culture. The library staff will also provide access to resources beyond the library's own collection."

In 2009, we were approached by the mayor, about moving the library into the vacant elementary school building. There was an area of five classrooms. During the renovations to the new area, we were packing up books, labeling boxes and taking down some book shelves in preparation for the move in date, Oct 31, 2009. We had so many volunteers to help move us, that the 4-H club started packing up boxes of books as well as taking down the shelves. Volunteers insisted on helping to put the books on the shelves in the new space. While others were assembling shelves in the children's area. Our move would not have been possible without the efforts of many volunteers. Jim Sorenson worked tirelessly each day to do anything and everything asked of him. Keith Carton with the help of Jason Carton and Sam Earley built the office and staff area.



With our move to 109 South State Street we had the ability to become handicap accessible. We could not have done this without Devin Petersen earning his Eagle Scout Award in the spring of 2010.

Renee Hamer and her parents, Gerald and Mary Kay Franks built a castle for the children. Ruthann Carton uses it for Story Hour. Others use it as a special place to read. Renee also pieced a patchwork quilt that looks like books on shelves: quilted by Rick Cathelyn. Bound by Pat Sorenson and hung by Pat and Jim Sorenson.

It wasn't long before the students and faculty from EXCEL started to visit the library. The resources that we provide supplement the classroom needs and provide leisure reading materials.

Recycling at the library was a special project with Mrs. Carton. She arranged with Cowboy Recyclers to do 2 different events. We still recycle inkjet cartridges with the proceeds going to computer supplies. In 2021 we started recycling books which will be made into pulp and then made into new books.

Through the years we have had many programs such as: The Gourds, a 6 week travel Spanish class, monthly greeting card making classes, monthly book club called "Book Share", Headstart visits, Story Hour programs, Internet and Computer classes, presented Women's Organization programs and sponsored the Bounce House at Heritage Days in Atkinson.

We had a visit by a group of Mormons who were researching ancestry materials and newspapers to update their database.

We had our Atkinson High School yearbooks scanned at a prison in Oklahoma. We have them on CD. I understand that some of the pictures have shown up on the "Ancestry" genealogy research database, according to Asst. Librarian Ruthann Carton.

In our community we have a large portion of the population that commute a fair distance. In the late 90's they used books on cassette. Some listened to them when they ironed or painted their homes. Around 2012 we started buying books

on CD for the listeners and in 2015 we became a partner with the other libraries in providing digital e-books. Usage has increased because of COVID-19.

Which brings us to March 18, 2020 when Mrs. Carton received a phone call from RAILS library system “asking why are you still open?” We closed that night at 8:00 PM. We started back to work on April 14, 2020 remodeling and moving out of our workroom. We were able to preserve some of our historical artifacts. Such as those wooden book shelves that were moved from location to location. The oldest was from one of the first libraries. It was placed in the doorway to our old workroom, making a perfect fit. In May we started doing curbside delivery. We opened our doors for in person visits in July, 2020.

On September 30, 2021, we put Fiber optic Internet in the library. The library has had 3 working networks for many years. The new computers have been on back order, because of COVID.

### **SOME OF OUR LIBRARY SERVICES currently in 2020**

**Preschool Story Hour Programs and Children’s Summer Reading Programs** Many preschoolers and Atkinson Grade students fondly remember participating in one of the Atkinson Public Library’s Preschool Story Hours or a library sponsored Summer Reading Program, where a Head Librarian, Assistant Librarian, Library Board Member, or a guest reader, who in partnership with their parents and teachers, introduced generations of Atkinson children to the wonderful world of reading.

**Renewals By Phone (309-936-7606)**

**Curb-Side Book Return**

**Curbside Returns During COVID-19**

**Inter-Library Loan Requests** may be made by patrons using their home computers to access their accounts and making inter-library loan requests or asking at the

library or by calling and the staff will do this for you.

### **Patron Internet Access and Internet Classes (By appointments)**

**Three Patron Friendly Computers with Word Processing Programs and Internet access.**

### **Educational Computer Games for In-house Use**

**Fax Machine** (936-7606) \$1.00 Fee for the each page. \$1.00 fee to receive a fax.

**Copy Machine** \$.15 fee per single copy and \$.20 fee per double-sided copy.

**Tax Forms in Season – We have access to IRS forms and will print them for \$.15 per page.**

### **Bound Back Issues of the Atkinson-Annawan News**

Years 1916, 1926, and 1927

Years 1928 to Present (Years Needed 1930 and 1931)

### **Geneseo and Atkinson High School Yearbooks**

Atkinson High School 1942- 1988 (Years Needed 1968, 1978, and 1986). These are available for searching on CDs. Inquire at the desk.

Geneseo High School 1995 – 2000? (Years Needed 1993 and 1994)

### **Voters Registration with Head and Assistant Librarian**

### **Audiobooks on CD and DVDs (No fees for rental)**

**Library Materials Delivered to Homebound and Elderly Patrons, please inquire.**

### **Children’s Category Lists on Various Themes Available for Copying**

## FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY PLAQUE

Each year an organization, business, or individual, who has generously given donations of goods or service to the Atkinson Public Library District is honored by the library and a brass plate with the year and the donor's name is added to the plaque which is displayed in the glass case. The following is a list of names you will find on the plaque:

Frances Freddy 1987	Frank Wyffels 1987	Atkinson Kiwanis 1989-90-92-99
Atkinson Boosters 1990-92-96-97	Atkinson Womens Club 1992	Farmers National Bank 1992-1996
Wal-Mart Foundation 1992	Sue Wildemuth 1992-96-97	Carol Cole 1990-91 -92
Charlesa Lawson 1993	Sarah Nickerson 1992	Wilson and Louise DeReu 1993
Jeanne Downing 1992-93	Mell and Anna VanDeRostyne 1993	Gus and Clara Moens 1993
Julie Blank 1993	Richard Sears 1994	Mae Nickerson 1994
Renee Hamer Debby Franks 1994	Frank VanVooren 1994	Shirley Little 1996
Clifford Carlson 1998-99	Ida VanVooren 1998	Mothers of World War II 1998
Norwest/Wells Fargo 1999	Donavon and Ann Stuntewagen 1999	Joyce Minnaert 2000

## **BIBLIOGRPAHY**

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**Atkinson Public Library District - Board Meeting Minutes, 1921 - 1998.**

**Centennial History of Atkinson, Illinois: One Century of Community Progress.  
Atkinson, Illinois: Atkinson Centennial Committee, Inc.**

**DeReu, Pat. History of Atkinson Public Library, 1982.**

**“Footnotes.” Atkinson Public Library Newsletters, September,1998 - June, 2000.**

### **Informational Source:**

**Ninette Carton, Head Librarian, Atkinson Public Library District**

### **Numerous Newspaper Articles:**

**Atkinson-Annawan News**

**Star Courier**

**Dispatch**

**News life**

**Geneseo Republic**

### **SPECIAL NOTE:**

This history is saved in the Library History file so in the future it can be added to.

We celebrated the 100+1 Anniversary of the library on Sunday September 26, 2021 with an Open House. Steve Wildemuth was at the library as a balloon artist doing balloon animal, etc. We had a display of books that were part of the Soldiers Memorial Library between 1920 and 1921. We had a display of circulation records from the 1950s. We gave \$20 gift certificates for winning contests, such as “How many books in the library?” The correct answer was 28,783. There was a scavenger hunt for children and families.

In 2023, Mrs. Carton won a \$10,000 grant from the American Library Association for small rural libraries. Two grants were awarded in each state. Atkinson Public used the money to make the sinks mobility accessible and to cover old stained tiles in the hallway rest room. Plumbing work was done by Wirth, Inc. The remainder of the money was used to replace the west exterior doors and the Horton handicap unit, work done by the American Industrial Door Co. and Cindy Ey painted them for us. The village trustees chipped in with the needed remainder of the funding for their community building.

In June of 2025, the library was able to purchase their first Fun Bundle pass to the Niabi Zoo, QC Botanical Center, the Putnam Museum and Science Center, sure to be used by many families in the community.

## **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

From 1920 to 2021, many changes have come to the Atkinson Public Library District, but one thing that has never changed in the last hundred years, is the Library Staff and Board Members' commitment to serving their patrons and community to the best of their ability.

# **SPECIAL THANKS**

**Many people  
made this book possible,  
a  
special  
thank you  
to each and every one.**