

MARTHA LIEBERT PUBLIC LIBRARY

History

In February of 1965, the task of establishing a library was set in motion by Martha Liebert, Helen Elliott, Judy Blum, Stella Hill, Socorro Romero, Nora Frank, and Dorothy Darnell with Doris Lester and Ruth Hendrikson of Santa Fe.

For the next few months "volunteers" collected books from sources such as the Corrales and Placitas Libraries who contributed their duplicates. Donations were also received from Our Lady of Sorrows School in Bernalillo and St Joseph College. Mayor Hilario J. Torres offered the north room of the city hall as a location for the library. Wood for shelving was given by N.M. Timber, the construction and installation labor was donated by carpenters from the Bernalillo Public Schools, and VFW members painted the completed shelving.

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In 1969 the library moved to the newly constructed community building located behind the Roosevelt School. The city furnished a rug and heater which was installed by OEO, and in September of that same year the building was dedicated.

In October of 1969 a new Library Board was organized. Story hour, arts and crafts, recreation and games made up the Library Program. Manpower employees kept the library open eighteen hours per week. In January 1970 formal by-laws were written and a budget of eight hundred seventy five dollars was proposed.

Once again the library moved, with the permission of the Town Council, to the old Caldwell House. The entire building was re-wired with help from members of the VFW, and the lights came on Christmas Day 1974. When the old Caldwell house was demolished to make way for the subsequent construction of the Town Hall building on that site, the library was hosted by the Bernalillo Women's Club.

In February of 1978 the library moved once again into the new Town Hall Building designed by architect G.L Castillo. The building was famous for its circular wrought iron staircase. The library was housed in this building until 1995 when the library was moved to 134 Calle Malinche located in the restored Roosevelt Building. The library shares the downstairs floor with the K-2 elementary school library, and consists of approximately seventeen thousand volumes in its collection including those kept as reference in the Southwest Room.

The Southwest Room

In November 1997 the Southwest Room in the Town of Bernalillo's library was formally dedicated.

The Southwest Room is in the present day library in honor of Martha Liebert for her part in starting the collection.

The Southwest Room is a special collection of books and periodicals about the history, geography, culture of the southwest, focusing on New Mexico, but also includes materials from Colorado, Arizona and Utah. No books in this collection will be checked out. They are only to be used for research in the Southwest Room.

The Roosevelt Building

It is a 1930's two-story adobe and viga building. The ten thousand square foot plus building was built as part of the Works Projects Administration (WPA). The building was part of the Bernalillo Public School System, and was the first public school in Bernalillo, (often called "Escuelita 1-2-3" by the locals) but had fallen into disuse and abandonment. A joint venture between Bernalillo Public Schools, the Town of Bernalillo and Sandoval County, to fulfill common needs, led to joint funding through Bernalillo Public Schools and a Capital Outlay Appropriation of the 1993 New Mexico Legislature for the renovation of the building.

The building was reroofed and restuccoed, and received new windows. A new elevator and stairs were added to the back of the building and new mechanical and electrical systems were added. The new additions included restrooms, mechanical rooms, stairways and an elevator to make the building handicap accessible.

Future plans include restoration of the upstairs interiors to classrooms, community meeting rooms, office/workroom and public restrooms. The west classroom will be historically preserved with original light fixtures, chalkboards and radiators and will be available for various functions.

Dale Crawford and Associates Architects (DCA) worked closely with Ed Boles, Preservation Architect at the State Cultural Affairs Division, to design the renovation and addition to meet NPS standard for historical preservation. This project has been nominated to both the National and State Historical Registers.

The Bernalillo Roosevelt Library building is now the centerpiece of a revitalized area just west of Bernalillo Town Hall known as the Roosevelt Complex. What had been a collection of dilapidated, underused school buildings is now a lively complex including Head Start, Roosevelt Elementary School, a Cafeteria/Multipurpose building and a new school and public library. The building that children had feared, believing that it was haunted, is now a place they can go with their parents and learn about its past.

In 2006, a re-dedication ceremony took place at the Library's new present location, 124 Calle Malinche. You can see the press release regarding this location on the [Press Releases](#) page.