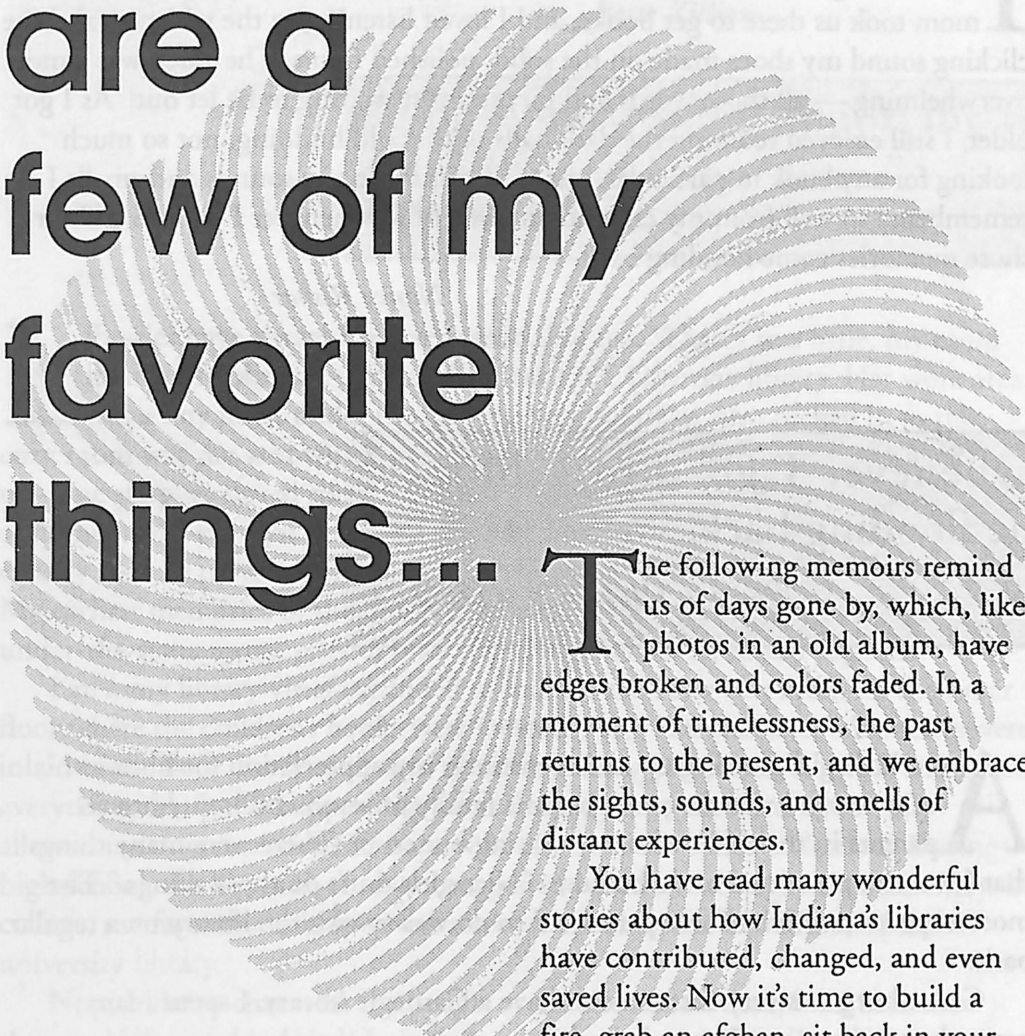

These are a few of my favorite things...



The following memoirs remind us of days gone by, which, like photos in an old album, have edges broken and colors faded. In a moment of timelessness, the past returns to the present, and we embrace the sights, sounds, and smells of distant experiences.

You have read many wonderful stories about how Indiana's libraries have contributed, changed, and even saved lives. Now it's time to build a fire, grab an afghan, sit back in your favorite chair, and indulge yourself in one of the most enjoyable chapters ever written about Indiana's libraries.

We'll see you down memory lane...

To reminisce in the sounds and smells I remember so well...

I would like to share a fond memory of my hometown library in Logansport. It was a large old building, much like the original one here in Goshen. My mom took us there to get books, and I loved listening to the whispers and the clicking sound my shoes made on the solid, polished floors. The smell was almost overwhelming — all those words and pictures just waiting to be let out! As I got older, I still enjoyed roaming the dark halls of that old building, not so much looking for any book in particular, but to reminisce in the sounds and smells I remembered so well from my childhood. Even now, whenever I go into a library those memories come flooding back.

Nancy Risher

“Even now, whenever I go into a library, memories come flooding back.”

Nancy Risher

As a little girl growing up in Greensburg, my appreciation for libraries came early. I was the youngest in a family of seven children, born to parents in their 40's who were caring but strict. There were many things that I was not permitted to do because, “Nice girls don't do those things.” The most important activity I was permitted to do was to visit the library on a regular basis.

Greensburg was very fortunate to have a Carnegie library. I spent many happy hours there, reading and checking out most of their books, or so it seemed to me. From that childhood experience, I developed a love of reading, a deep respect for books, and a great deal of human interest that has been beneficial to me throughout my life.

I can remember climbing those steps, walking through the doors to a wonderful world of books and the familiar smell, just as if those trips took place yesterday.

Lora Mae Schoettmer

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My mother decided to take me to the public library when I was about seven or eight years old. "We must be very quiet," my mother said. "We will also have to be very careful of the books and especially of those that we borrow." I was amazed because I had never seen so many books all in one place. I was overwhelmed, then delighted, and I was in love! What a wonderful treat for a literature-hungry little girl.

Bette Killion

"The library is an important resource and a valued friend in our lives."

Carol Rhudy

Libraries have always been very special to me. When I was little, my mom mended books part-time at the local 1901 Carnegie library. Her work area was a tiny nook under the curving back stairway. Also tucked in to this cozy room was the area which the library staff used for their lounge. One of the tea-time supplies stored there was a box of sugar cubes. We never had sugar cubes at home, and I thought they were the best treat in the world. My mother judiciously tried to prevent any pilferage, but I usually managed to sneak one or two. My earliest memories of the library have the pleasant feel of that hidden-away-under-the-stairs room, piles of books, and sugar cubes all mixed together.

Later, my library visits expanded to include the Peter Pan room on the lower floor where the children's books were located. Peter Pan character silhouettes were inlaid in the floor. Storyhours and summer reading programs followed, and I read everything that looked appealing. I was thrilled when the librarians finally allowed me to go upstairs and borrow books from the youth collection. During high school, the librarian at school suggested books she thought I would enjoy. In college, my favorite study spot was a corner carrel on the third floor of the university library.

Now, I like to chat with the people at the circulation desk, look over the reserve shelf, and ask what others are saying about new books. The librarians at the reference desk can always find anything I need from interlibrary loan.

A library is for me an ideal atmosphere. The quiet surroundings and endless collections of books and magazines are irresistible. A library is a friendly and predictable place in an unfamiliar city. My children are proud cardholders and frequent library patrons. The library is an important resource and a valued friend in our lives.

Carol Rhudy

My ticket to the universe...

From the time I learned to read, libraries were my second home. In them, I traveled to exotic lands I never thought I would see; I had conversations with Mozart, Beethoven, Abraham Lincoln, Booker T. Washington, and W.E.B. DuBois; I shared adventures with Buck Rogers, H.G. Wells, Mowgli, Hans Brinker, and Sherlock Holmes. I read books on how to build model airplanes, how not to be a 97-pound weakling, and how to win friends and influence people. I was inspired by the wonderful stories in the Bible, the life of Gandhi, and the slave narratives, and I cried when I read the stories of the Titanic, the Hindenberg, the Lindbergh kidnapping, and The Diary of Anne Frank.

I empathized when I saw Burgess Meredith in an episode of The Twilight Zone about a bookworm who survived nuclear holocaust. He now had time to read all of the books in the Metropolitan Library, but broke his glasses.

David Baker

I have traveled throughout the world — the glory of ancient Egypt, the pomp of Old England, exotic remote islands, and the far reaches of our own great country. My library card has been my ticket to the universe, and the librarians the conductors for my trip through life.

William B. Hopp

As a youngster growing up in a small, Indiana town in the middle of the depression, my library card was my passport to the outside world.

Bill Blass

When I was young, I developed rheumatic fever which held me bedridden for many months. After visiting the local library, my father came into my room and handed me a book that he had checked out.

"This was the first book I ever read," my father said. "Give it a try." The book was The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. I read it and loved it. Those many months, I never left my bed, but I traveled to Sherwood and met Robin; faced danger with Hawkeye, Chingachgook, and Uncas; discovered footprints in the sand with Crusoe; walked the street of Tombstone with Wyatt; and sat with Arthur at the Round Table. The library introduced those wonderful friends to me...friendships that have lasted a lifetime.

Michael Yurichovich Jr.

When I was a child...

My father was one of six children in a not very prosperous household during the Depression. When he was in high school, he had a part-time job as the custodian of the Carnegie library in Wabash. He spent every evening with all those marvelous books for company and could dip into them when his work was finished. As a child, getting my own library card was a momentous occasion. The library was one of the first public places I was allowed to visit on my own. I'd carefully pick out my four books and start reading them on the walk home with one arm stretched out in front of me, so if I veered off the sidewalk into a tree, I wouldn't be knocked unconscious.

Tracy Wimberly

"I'd carefully pick out my four books and start reading them on the walk home with one arm stretched out in front of me, so if I veered off the sidewalk into a tree, I wouldn't be knocked unconscious."

Tracy Wimberly

When I was a lad still learning to read, my father, who was a minister, would sometimes go off to a research library. He was wise enough to leave me at home when he needed to entrench for a few hours. He did, however, take me along when he returned a book or consulted references only briefly. I liked to go with him. He would leave me for a few minutes in a balcony overlooking a large, busy reading room. I was not afraid because I could see him from this perch. I could also view dozens of scholars engrossed in their work, seemingly oblivious to all else that was going on around them. What could be so absorbing as to transfix people for long periods?

As a robust child, I did not comprehend what was going on in that reading room. But I did understand that the treasures of that library beckoned my father and that he derived great pleasure from studying there. He also read good books to me and my siblings after dinner and had us read to him. By the time I was 20, I too was visiting that same reading room and studying history for long hours. A few years later, while working on my doctorate, I was spending as many hours there as I was spending in our nearby apartment. And before our oldest daughter learned to read, I brought her to that balcony to overlook another generation of scholars.

Peter Harstad

As a child I had an intense desire to read. As I sat on the wood box beside our old cookstove, my mother, while preparing meals, taught me letters, then words until I could read. My world expanded. One time, my father bought a book for me in town, and by the time our horse and buggy reached home, I had read the entire book. It became my favorite pastime.

Through the years, the desire to read has stayed with me. I was fortunate to marry a man who also loves to read. Now, as we have passed our 50th anniversary, we live just a five minute walk from our town library. We do a lot of armchair traveling to all parts of the world.

The library is a god-send, for we are now handicapped and read more than 100 books a year. We so appreciate the library and visit it at least once or twice a week. I rate our well equipped library and helpful staff next to our church. It is indeed a comfort to have the library as a good friend.

The Fountain of Wisdom flows through books. This is an original poem I wrote for a talk I gave on reading.

Books! Books! Everywhere I look,
On the table, on the chair, on the chest, and on the stair.
I love to read of far off places, and the many varied faces.
Sometimes I think they're all I need, for they are truly friends indeed.

Grace W.

“I was fortunate to marry a man who also loves to read. Now, as we have passed our 50th anniversary, we live just a five minute walk from our town library. We do a lot of armchair traveling to all parts of the world.”

Grace W.

My wife, Jean, and I both have fond memories of the library's role in our love of reading. In my case, as an 8th grader who lived five or so miles from the library, I would ride in on Saturday morning during the school year and walk home with as many books as I could carry. In the pre-TV days in my family, the library was the only show in town.

My wife recalls that about that same time, she decided to read, in a summer, all of the mysteries in the collection. Even though she ran out of time, she nearly got through the “M’s”!

Robert Burns

I remember the librarian...

A long, long time ago in a country far away, there lived a small girl who liked to read more than almost anything (popcorn and ice cream were better). Each week she would bike to her small town library where the librarians, Mrs. Lott and Mrs. Tew, took a special interest in avid readers like her. They let her buy two library cards so she could take home two fact books and two mysteries each week. And when they discovered she had read an abridged version of Pearl Buck's *My Several Worlds*, they let her into the adult section to read the whole book! What happened to her? You guessed it. She's a librarian at your local library.

Amy Paget

“Each week she would bike to her small town library where the librarians, Mrs. Lott and Mrs. Tew, took a special interest in avid readers like her.”

Amy Paget

My lifelong love affair with libraries and librarians began when I was nine. With my brand new library card in hand, I trudged up the wooden stairs to the public library. Elderly Miss Harper guided me to the right stacks where I chose a beautiful bird book. I read it quickly and returned it. But soon I was horrified to receive an overdue notice. With quavering voice I explained I had returned it and showed Miss Harper where I had shelved it. She kindly gave me a lesson in library procedure. My library love affair continued — I married a librarian.

Anonymous

My earliest recollection of our Carnegie library was one of quiet and solitude. It was a haven for study and research and was operated by a Miss Vernie Baldwin. There is no doubt that our public libraries have played a part in my being mayor of the City of Greenfield, and I hope our library will continue to expand and help all of us in our search for knowledge.

Keith McClarnon

How things have changed since I was a 12-year-old boy walking home from the old Main School in downtown Highland. I wanted a book about the love of my life — automobiles and racing. The librarian suggested *Hot Rod*, by Henry Gregor Telson, a classic of the genre.

You see, my family was going to a relative's cottage in Wisconsin for the weekend. It ended up being a miserable two days outside, but inside was warm and inviting as I lay on the bed and partook of all the excitement within *Hot Rod*. Not such a bad weekend after all, and my appetite for reading had been opened for life. Now I'm 39 and an avid reader of all diverse subject matter. But the sweet memories of that spring weekend in 1966 will never fade.

Jack Robinson

Many years ago in a place that has long since changed, I first entered the world of the library. For the first time in my then short existence, I was given this wonderful choice of books and magazines. In this strange, new building was a friendly librarian who helped me explore this new found treasure. The Brookston Carnegie Library became a source of my own personal love affair with books and other reading temptations. In the library I can always find new ideas, adventures and wonders that add brightness to life. The library is my sanctuary. It is my personal treasure.

Today, everywhere I travel, I always look for the local library. I know that when a community cares enough to support a library, there are going to be young people who have a world that is bigger than their immediate neighborhood.

William Christopher

I travel back in memory to libraries I have known. The first was in a little room that led to the basement of the one-room school I attended. On the wall hung a bookcase with all the books I knew for eight years. Some of them I read several times.

The second was the Sterling Public Library of my high school years. It was not available to me because I lived seven miles outside the city limits. But one year, my English teacher called me to her desk as class was dismissed. In her hand she held a card to that library, her personal card.

"I want you to have it for this year," she said, handing the card to me. That woman knew book starvation when she saw it. I remember walking out of that room feeling rich, rich!

I remember well the bricks and stones of that building. But more, I remember the librarians who served there. They were something like high priestesses mediating the blessing of a larger world of ideas.

Helen Alderfer

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When I was ten and living in Bedford, a Latin teacher aunt asked me to go on an errand to the public library. She was working on an extremely difficult double crossword puzzle and needed a six-letter word beginning with “E” that described a mountain peak in Antarctica.

[At the library], I asked for help and was shown to a heavy wooden platform stand in the corner of the library near a sunny window. Without further help, I found Antarctica in the index, and Mount Erebus on the map. I remembered it all the way home and to this very day.

Imagine my joy when, as a writer, columnist, newspaper editor, and author, I gave a program based upon one of my biographies in the basement of the Bedford Public Library. The audience sat one floor below the atlas — long since removed and no doubt destroyed — that laid opened on its stand in 1942.

Researching information and imparting it in new ways to contemporary readers, has been a dominant part of my working life, as have libraries.

Robert Kreibel

