

## Books at War: Indiana's Libraries During WW II

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Noraleen A. Young  
Indiana Division  
Indiana State Library

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World War II marked a special time for libraries in Indiana as they went beyond their traditional services to activities that involved the library within the community through both state-wide events and locally needed services. The Victory Book Campaigns of 1942 and 1943; the Third, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth War Bond Drives; and the work with the Indiana War History Commission in documenting the war effort in their communities brought librarians together on a state-wide basis. At the state and local level, librarians realized the importance of the dissemination of war information, and, through institutes and war information centers, then provided expanded reference service to the state's residents. Locally, librarians provided relevant book lists, displays and special activities for a great variety of users, from victory gardeners to returning veterans. Librarians also provided outreach services to local defense plants and military

bases. Libraries, due to their viability in the community, served as community centers and even as bomb shelters in case of air raids. Indiana's libraries went to war along with the rest of the nation.

### **Victory Book Campaign**

The Victory Book Campaign was the first major activity undertaken by libraries within the state. Patterned after the book drives of World War I, the campaign sought to collect books in good condition on a variety of topics for servicemen in camps, both in the U.S. and overseas, for hospitals, and for servicemen's centers. The drives, sponsored nationally by the American Library Association, the United Service Organization, and the American Red Cross, began locally when Florence Allman of the Indiana Library Association recruited Ethel Cleland of the Indianapolis Public Library to be the state chairman soon after U.S. entry into the war in December 1941. Temporarily released from her duties at Indianapolis Public Library, Ethel Cleland

established an office in the Extension Division of the Indiana State Library and attended the 1942 Midwinter Meeting of ALA for training sessions.

Organization for the collection drive was based at the local level. Ethel Cleland assigned all 235 public libraries as local collection sites, with the State Office coordinating the activities. The initial drive began on December 29, 1941 when a letter was sent to all the public libraries appointing the head librarian of each library as director for the local community and adjacent areas where there was no library service. The Extension division of the Indiana State Library sent a separate letter to encourage participation. Governor Henry F. Schricker endorsed the campaign with the following proclamation:

*The nation-wide drive to procure books for soldiers, sailors and marines in hospitals, in camps, and on ships, is a very praiseworthy undertaking, and I wish to compliment the American Library Association, the American Red Cross, and the United Service Organization for sponsoring the Victory Book Campaign.*

*It is important that the morale of our soldiers, sailors and*

*marines be maintained. Nearly every person possesses books which he can very well donate to this cause. I am hopeful that citizens of our state will respond generously to this appeal.<sup>1</sup>*

The committee asked college and special librarians to assist the local directors. Each director received posters, sample news releases, and labels for shipping the books. Cleland had a small budget for the campaign, and most libraries requested five to ten dollars to cover publicity and shipping expenses. Many libraries either absorbed the cost or raised the money by selling the waste paper they collected along with the books.

Collection campaigns varied from city to city. In Gary, the "Books for Buddies" campaign was supported by the street car company who put signs on the cars and allowed passengers to leave books on the cars, which would then be dropped off by the company at the library. At the Indianapolis Public Library, staff piled collected books into a large "V" in the entrance hall of the building. Knightstown Public Library conducted a house-to-house canvass using cartons donated by local businesses and collected over 300 books.

Some smaller libraries were concerned about their participation in the campaign. As Louise M.

Hubbard of the New Harmony Public Library explained, "We put a notice in the local paper but did not get a very flattering response, but, as our library is so old and our community so small, the public have always depended upon us and the only books they have are precious ones they do not wish to part with."<sup>2</sup> They were still able to send about 300 books after weeding their own collection and accepting community donations.

Indiana's libraries collected over 200,000 books that were eventually distributed across the country. More books were actually collected, but many were deemed unsuitable for distribution due to their condition or their subject matter. Ethel Cleland called upon libraries to forward children's books that were collected to defense plant communities. WPA workers repaired some of the damaged books so they could be sent on.<sup>3</sup>

The second Victory Book Campaign began in March of 1943. Harold F. Brigham, Director of the Indiana State Library, served as chair of the campaign. More than 200 libraries participated and collected 145,512 books.<sup>4</sup> Many of these books were sent directly to local camps and military installations within the state. Librarians reported on the wide community support the drive received. Louise Warner, assistant director of the campaign, said in her report that at one library "one local group gave a benefit party and turned over money to buy twenty new books ... one donor gave nine-

teen of her new Book-of-the-Month Club volumes."<sup>5</sup>

Ethel Cleland and Harold Brigham were very pleased with the response of Indiana's libraries in both campaigns. Cleland praised the role of the librarians in the first campaign:

*I can't express my appreciation of the intelligent, prompt reception you local directors have given to the call to conduct the Victory Book Campaign in your communities. I don't know which has been most helpful, your efficient organization, your enthusiasm, your cordial cooperation, or your patience under delays and difficulties. Since I know how busy all of you are and what extra work the Victory Book Campaign has meant for you, I think the way you have organized and carried on the Drive and what you have accomplished have been splendid. It all goes to prove what high ideals of community service librarians have.<sup>6</sup>*

There was praise for the involvement of the local community:

*Remarkable support, practical and finan-*

*cial assistance have been given the drive by all sorts of local groups and associations. This is cheering evidence of the high place the public library plays in the life of our Indiana communities. It has been a good experience for us all to be a part of such a big patriotic movement, to have done so well and to have been so cordially supported by our fellow townspeople.<sup>7</sup>*

Brigham had equally nice things to say about the participation of libraries in the second campaign. In his final report of the campaign, he stated:

*It has been inspiring, however, to find many communities, even small ones, repeating the same fine job they did a year ago and getting remarkably good results in spite of slim pickings, and in spite of the serious personnel problems that all of us have faced this year.<sup>8</sup>*

### War Bond Drives

The largest organized effort undertaken by Indiana's libraries was the promotion and support of the War

Bond Drives. The State War Finance Committee in conjunction with the New York Authors Guild scheduled several "Book and Authors for Bonds" rallies across the state for the Third War Bond Drive in the fall of 1943. The Indianapolis rally had been scheduled during the Indiana Library Association's and Indiana Library Trustee Association's annual conference. As Harold Brigham explained to Esther Moore of Jennings County Public Library,

*...in trying to adjust this conflict the State War Finance Committee asked us if we would not sponsor the Indianapolis rally and a state-wide library war bond campaign at the same time. The directors of the two associations agreed to do this, feeling it was a request that could not be refused in the midst of war and that such an effort would reflect credit on libraries in the public estimation.<sup>9</sup>*

Bonds purchased by librarians, library trustees, and the general public would be credited to a particular library. Libraries had two weeks, September 25, 1943 to October 7, 1943, to sell the bonds and as the Third War Loan Drive had already begun, bonds purchased prior to September 25th could not be credited to the library campaign. Those

librarians and trustees purchasing a bond would be given a ticket to the Indianapolis rally. Those purchasing one thousand dollars or more in bonds would be given a reserved seat. It was also decided that the libraries which sold the largest dollar amount of bonds per capita would be presented a prize.

Irene M. Strieby, Eli Lilly Company librarian, chaired the committee and J. W. Van Briggles of the Railroadmen's Federal Savings & Loan Association of Indianapolis directed bond sales and promotion. At the rally, authors Ilka Chase, Franklin P. Adams, Carl Van Doren and Cleo Dawson gave pep talks to the audience which encouraged additional bond purchases of \$2,625.00. A draft manuscript of Booth Tarkington's Kate Fennigate was auctioned off for \$27,500 and presented to the Indianapolis Public Library with the money given toward the campaign.<sup>10</sup>

Even though libraries had little preparation for the campaign, it was extremely successful. Harold Brigham in a letter to William Hepburn of Purdue University stated that "we are finding that the mere mention of the fact that the libraries are sponsoring a bond campaign is stirring people, not only librarians and trustees but friends of libraries as well, to buy an extra bond, and this is what the State War Finance Committee wants us to do."<sup>11</sup>

When the campaign was over, Indiana libraries had sold over two million dollars worth of bonds. (Indiana sold \$118,000,000.00 worth

of bonds during the Third War Bond Drive.<sup>12</sup>) Libraries from all over the state participated. (See Table 1) Jasper Public Library sold \$77.44 per capita and won an Ilka Chase manuscript and autographed books by Franklin P. Adams and Carl Van Doren. Converse Public Library finished second and won a manuscript of James Whitcomb Riley's Bereaved. Third was Warsaw Public Library, which won a Van Doren manuscript; fourth was Anderson Public Library which was awarded a manuscript of Salten's Forest World. Muncie Public library was fifth and received a manuscript of Adams; Pennville, in sixth place, won an Ilka Chase manuscript and an autographed copy of a Van Doren book; the seventh place prize, to New Castle, was a manuscript of Hans Habe's Katherine; in eighth place was the Indianapolis Public Library which received a manuscript of Salten's Good Comrades. The participation of Indiana's libraries in the Third War bond campaign marked the first time libraries in the nation participated in a War Bond campaign.<sup>13</sup>

Libraries in Indiana did not participate again in the war bond drives until the Sixth Drive, which ran from November 20, 1944 to December 31, 1944. The drive was the first nationally organized effort for libraries, and Indiana was one of twenty states to participate. Louis J. Bailey, former director of the Indiana State Library, was the national director of the Library War Bond Committee.<sup>14</sup> By this time most communities had

become well organized for bond selling, and many librarians had realized even during the Third War Bond drive that they were not in a position to sell bonds. In a letter to Bailey, Brigham stated:

*we recognized as a result of our maiden experience with a state bond selling campaign in 1943 that many libraries would not undertake actually to sell bonds and seek library credit for such sales. Our discussions at the annual library conference reflected a strong conviction on the part of many libraries that the injection of a library campaign into the general local campaign would be considered to disturb the already established organization for selling bonds locally and could hardly be expected to produce enough extra bond sales to justify the attempt all things considered. For this reason we encouraged all libraries to participate in the 6th War Loan Drive with publicity and educational undertaking, and we urged all to*

*consider also participation in the bond selling campaign.<sup>15</sup>*

Even so, \$142,312 worth of bonds were credited to libraries. Due to the smaller participation in actual bond selling but a larger role by many libraries in promotion, the awards committee gave two sets of awards: one set for selling bonds and the second for promotional activities. The winners were as follows (*Bond Selling; Amount Sold Per Capita*):

*Converse-Jackson Twp.  
Public Library ;  
\$103,456.00 , \$52.40.*

*Linton Public Library;  
\$9,116.75, \$1.0.*

*New Castle Public Library;  
\$20,318.50, \$.60.*

*Montpelier Public Library;  
\$150.00, \$.50.*

*Promotion*

*Indianapolis Public Library  
Seymour Public Library  
Anderson Public Library*

Awards included manuscripts of *My Friend Flicka*, *Jezebel the Jeep*, *No Other Road to Freedom*, and Pop Warner's *Book for Boys*, a packet of letters from Agatha Christie, Dashell Hammet and Vincent Sheehan, and two drawings: a Chinese drawing by Kurt Wiese and a pen and ink illustration by Kathern Milhous.<sup>16</sup>

The Seventh War Bond Drive occurred in the spring of 1945. Libraries were more involved in promotion of the drive than in the actual selling of bonds. Converse-

Jackson Township Public Library won for selling the most bonds with \$14,475 or \$7.32 per capita. Linton Public Library won for the greatest amount of educational and promotional work. Indianapolis Public Library won for the best exhibit promoting war bond sales. The report in *Library Occurrent* also mentioned a rally with Governor Schricker at Fortville, and the Scott County Public Library did a display on the history of the Marines.<sup>17</sup>

The Eighth or Victory Loan Drive was also supported by libraries but no awards were given or records kept of the participation of particular libraries. Overall, library participation in the promotion and sale of bonds throughout the war bond campaigns was successful. Libraries played an active part in a major community event and in many cases, the librarians drew upon personal contact to make it a successful project.

### **Indiana War History Commission**

A smaller but important organized activity was the work of librarians with the Indiana War History Commission. Clarence A. Jackson, when appointed Civil Defense Director by Governor Schricker in March, 1941, tried to find a history of similar work during World War I. Although some work had been done, little had been preserved. Jackson called upon President Herman B. Wells of Indiana University to assist him with developing a plan to preserve the history of Indiana's participation on the home front. Initially a faculty committee handled the responsibili-

ties, but in December 1943, the Indiana General Assembly established the Indiana War History Commission. The Commission, composed of forty-five members representing a broad spectrum of Hoosiers, created six divisions: the Division of Economic Changes, the Division of Agricultural Developments, the Division of Armed Forces, the Division of Government and Political Changes, the Division of Social Forces, and the Division of Libraries, Historical Societies and Museums.

Chaired by Harold F. Brigham, the Division of Libraries, Historical Societies, and Museums had a threefold mission: 1) guide local libraries in making collections for their own institutions; 2) assist the War History Commission in its task to collect the records of the war; 3) create a state-wide bibliography of the materials which record Indiana's part in the war and the effect of the war on Indiana. Articles in *Library Occurrent* described the types of records libraries were to collect. They included publications of local units of government, newspapers, local periodicals, military service records of members in the community, and records of groups and organizations of the community. The Division strongly encouraged librarians to make sure that the records of local government were also being preserved. Materials collected would be housed by the library or sent on to an appropriate agency. Librarians were encouraged to keep a running inventory of what

items were collected and to send a copy of that inventory to the State Library.

The April-June 1944 issue of *Library Occurrent* was devoted entirely to the Indiana War History Commission. It included a description of the other Divisions as well as a report on the activities and plans of Indiana's libraries. A survey sent out in April 1944 had limited response but found that most libraries collected local newspapers and maintained records of local men and women in the military. Librarians voiced several problems both in the questionnaire and in district meetings held that spring. Housing the records, financing the project, staff limitations, cooperation and duplication were all noted as concerns. The program continued through the rest of the war.

### War Institutes and Information Centers

Amidst these special projects, many librarians believed the war created special information needs. War institutes held by librarians identified the issues and the way libraries could help the public to understand the war and to plan for the postwar period. A second response to the special informational needs of the period was the establishment of War Information Centers.

Sponsored by ALA first on a national level, then regionally and finally on a state-by-state basis, institutes on war and postwar issues sought to "stimulate and help librarians to undertake the most important adult education job of this genera-

tion, namely, helping the American people to clarify war and postwar issues by encouraging reading and thinking about these issues."<sup>18</sup>

Institutes were held at Winona Lake and Spring Mill State Park in June of 1943 and a follow-up session was conducted at Indianapolis in October of 1943. The institutes were divided into three sessions, each with its own agenda: first, the issues and their importance and the problems of reaching people; second, the job libraries had before them and how to "bring out new ideas and new emphasis for library service that would be unhampered by traditional library thinking"; finally, putting the library to work at this job.<sup>19</sup>

Over 150 librarians met at the two June institutes. The results of the institutes included observations by lay leaders that many rural residents did not have access to a library, that libraries should use film, radio and public presentations and that libraries should train staff in the methods needed to make personal contact. The institutes provided librarians with the intellectual framework to assist their communities in dealing with the war and in planning for post-war recovery.

Libraries also served as War Information Centers. Indiana University, Purdue University and Notre Dame University served as the main centers for government information and collected publications and audio visual materials to distribute to the public as well as providing speakers and discussion leaders for meetings.

As the war came to a close, librar-



ians shifted their focus to help the returning veteran adjust to his new life and to assist their communities in post-war recovery and planning. In the September 1945 issue of *Library Occurrent*, Wilbur I. Nagley, Public Relations Director, Indianapolis Public Library, wrote,

*the thunder of death-dealing bombs has ceased. It is quiet on the far-flung battle-fronts of World War II. Victory over the infamous Axis is ours, but only at an irreparable price.*

*Today, in the wake of the world's most terrible holocaust, there is a great cry for a lasting peace. But before lasting peace is attained, many related problems must be solved . .*

*. . . To the building of a lasting peace must be dedicated great work in which libraries are destined to play an important part. Now is presented the opportunity for libraries to show their true worth to the people and the causes they serve.*

*Libraries are confronted with the great*

*challenge of making people more conscious of the truths upon which their freedom hinges. Libraries must help create a better understanding and appreciation for one another among peoples of the world. This is essential to peace . . .*

*. . . From now on libraries will probably be busier than ever. They should remember that friendly and courteous service during the war years enhanced their prestige and acceptance by the public. Such service must continue even in the face of heavier work..*

*What will be the librarian's reward for greater service? It will be that of having helped to lay a plank toward of the foundation of "peace on earth, good will to men"<sup>20</sup>*

Indiana's libraries, like many other institutions within the community, supported war-related activities. Libraries provided valuable service in assisting patrons with their regular

and special informational needs during the war years. Librarians in many Hoosier communities went beyond their traditional roles to involve themselves and their libraries in the larger community.

**3rd War Bond Drive  
Reporting Libraries**

Akron	\$1,556.25	Indianapolis, Indiana Medical School Library	\$1,500.00
Anderson	\$530,737.50	Indianapolis, Indiana State Library	\$8,572.50
Aurora	\$3,918.75	Indianapolis, Indiana State Welfare Dept.	\$7,706.25
Bedford	\$768.75	Indianapolis, Indiana University Extension	\$468.75
Bloomington, IU School of Music Library	\$1,443.25	Indianapolis, Indiana War Finance Committee	\$2,250.00
Columbus	\$18.75	Indianapolis, Lukas-Harold Corporation	\$2,062.50
Converse	\$37,844.50	Indianapolis, Shortridge High School	\$450.00
Crawfordsville	\$187.50	Indianapolis, Thomas Carr Howe High School	\$337.50
Decatur	\$18.75	Indianapolis, Warren Central High School	\$1,125.00
East Chicago	\$393.75	Jasper	\$390,339.50
Elkhart	\$1,206.25	Jeffersonville	\$562.50
Fowler	\$75.00	Knightstown	\$1,968.75
Francesville	\$1,500.00	Kokomo	\$23,037.05
Franklin	\$4,537.50	Linton	\$19,918.75
Greencastle	\$750.00	Logansport	\$487.50
Greenfield	\$2,475.00	Madison	\$25,293.75
Hammond	\$1,025.00	Mishawaka	\$150.00
Huntingburg	\$19,312.50	Montpelier	\$3,112.50
Indianapolis Public Library	\$391,787.50	Mooresville	\$1,631.25
Indianapolis, Arsenal Technical High School	\$3,093.75	Muncie	\$364,730.00
Indianapolis, Broad Ripple High School	\$450.00	New Carlisle	\$543.75
Indianapolis, Crispus Attucks High School	\$543.75	New Castle	\$27,425.00
Indianapolis, Emmerich Manual High School	\$581.25	Noblesville	\$15,168.75
Indianapolis, George Washington High School	\$1,350.00	Pennville	\$1,218.75
Indianapolis, Indiana Central College	\$168.75	Plymouth	\$100.00
		Roann	\$506.25
		Rochester	\$5,250.00
		Rushville	\$300.00
		Scottsburg	\$1,837.50
		South Bend	\$37.50
		Thorntown	\$337.50
		Vevay	\$37.50
		Walton	\$300.00

Wanmaker, Franklin Twp. School	\$18.75
Warren	No receipts
Warsaw	\$113,618.00
Westfield	\$600.00
Winamac	\$1,500.00
Theatre	\$2,625.00
Manuscript Auction	<u>\$27,500.00</u>
Total	\$2,059,926.05

1. Governor Henry F. Schricker to Ethel Cleland, January 6, 1942. Victory Book Campaign papers, Indiana State Library collection, Archives Division, Commission on Public Records. (Hereinafter referred to as the VBC papers.)

2. Louise M. Hubbard to Ethel Cleland, April 23, 1942. VBC papers.

3. Ethel Cleland "Report of the Director of the Indiana Victory Book Campaign" *Library Occurrent*, Jan. 1942, v.14 #1, p.14.

4. Harold F. Brigham Victory Book Report, 1943, VBC papers.

5. Louise Haworth Warner, "Victory Book Campaign, 1943" *Library Occurrent* April, 1943, v.14 #6, p.143.

6. Ethel Cleland to local directors, March 3, 1942. VBC papers.

7. Ethel Cleland to local directors, no date. VBC papers.

8. Report of Harold F. Brigham, April 12, 1943. VBC papers.

9. Harold Brigham to Esther Moore, September 25, 1943, War Service Records, Indiana State Library, Archives Division, Commission on Public Records. (Hereinafter referred to as War Service Records.)

10. "Book and Authors Bond Drive and Rally" *Library Occurrent*, October 1943, v.14 #8, p.212.

11. Harold F. Brigham to William Hepburn, September 27, 1943, War Service Records.

12. Friedman, Bernard *The Financial Role of Indiana During World War II*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954, p. 196.

13. "Book and Authors Bond Drive and Rally" *Library Occurrent*, October 1943, v.14 #8, p.212.

14. Louis Bailey served as Director of the Indiana State Library from 1925 to 1935; he was national coordinator of the Victory Book Campaign, 1943-44 and was a member of the national Book and Authors War Bond Committee, 1943-46.

15. Harold F. Brigham to Louis Bailey, January 11, 1945, War Service Records.

16. "Library War Bond Campaign" *Library Occurrent*, March 1945, v.15, #1, p. 346.

17. "Indiana Libraries Win Bond Promotion Awards" *Library Occurrent*, September, 1945, v.15#3, p. 406.

18. "Institute on War and Postwar Issues" *Library Occurrent*, October, 1942, v.14#4 p.100.

19. "Indiana Institutes on War Issues" *Library Occurrent*, April 1943, v.14 #6, p.138.

20. Wilbur I. Nagley, "Peace", *Library Occurrent*, September, 1945, v.15 #3, p.491.

# BOOK AND AUTHOR WAR BOND RALLY

**FRANKLIN P. ADAMS**  
*of Information Please*

**ILKA CHASE**  
*"Fast Imperfect"*

**CARL VAN DOREN**  
*Historian and Critic*

**CLEO DAWSON**  
*"She Came to the Valley"*

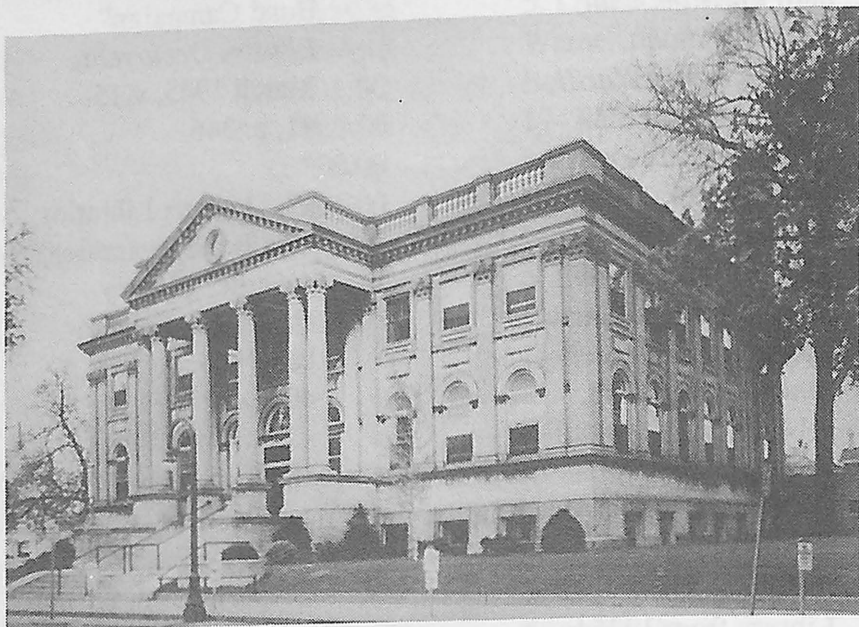
AND A GALAXY OF INDIANA AUTHORS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 8 P. M.

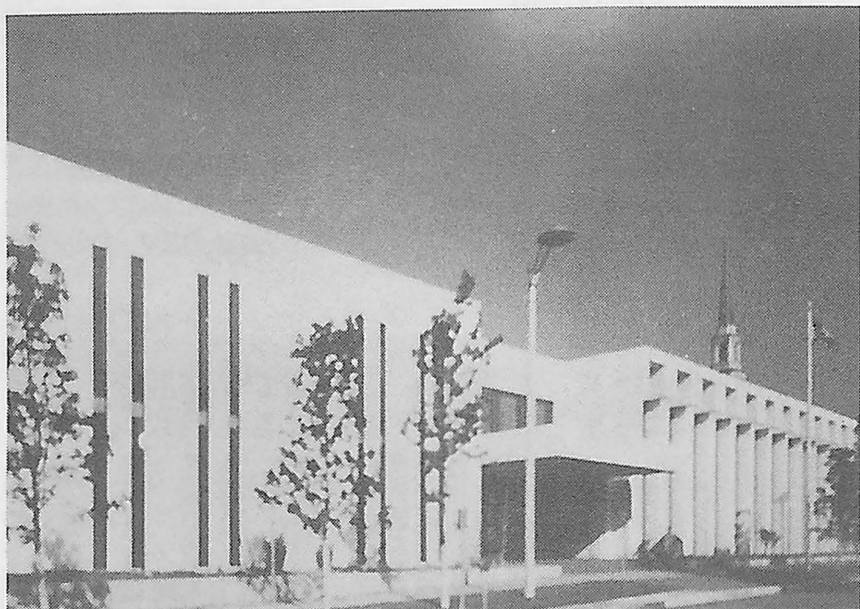
MURAT THEATER

TICKETS FREE

to Purchasers of War Bonds Credited to Libraries  
Ask your bond agent for a proof-of-purchase slip. Exchange it for a ticket at your library.



Andrew Carnegie's gift to the citizens of Fort Wayne was this handsome library building, 1904. Photo courtesy Newman Studio, Fort Wayne.



Main entrance, Fort Wayne Public Library, 900 Webster Street, 1970.  
Photo courtesy of Allen County Public Library.