

## FEATURED EXHIBITION

In addition to the permanent historical exhibits, temporary Featured Exhibitions in the Aurora History Museum highlight unique aspects of our community's history with artifacts and documents from the archives of the Aurora Town Historian's Office and Aurora Historical Society.

This Featured Exhibition will be on view through October 11.

# Celebrating 60 Years of Our Library Building



On April 20, 1964, the doors to the current Aurora Town Public Library building opened to the public. The library had outgrown its previous home, a house that had stood on the site since the 1830s, and the Aurora Town Board agreed that a new, more modern building was necessary.

In commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our community's library building, join us in taking a look back at its history.

*Photographs and newspaper clippings  
from the archives of the Aurora Town Historian's Office*



1930s



1960s

**In 1922**, two years after it was organized as a one-room facility in the Board of Trade building at Main and Paine Streets, the East Aurora library moved to the circa 1835 house on the northwest corner of Main Street and Whaley Avenue. Evelyn Riley Griggs bought the house and donated it to the library. However, by the early 1960s, the library had outgrown it.



**OLD LANDMARK TO GO**—The building at Main and Whaley, home of East Aurora Free Library since 1922, will become history when the new Town of Aurora Public Library construction starts next year. The two-story frame building was built in 1835. The new one-story brick structure will occupy the same site.

## New Library Building to Replace Structure Erected by Pratt in 1835

An old landmark, the dwelling occupied by the East Aurora Free Library, built in 1835, will next year be replaced by a one-story modern structure. Plans are now under way for the removal of the building by the Town of Aurora Board.

It was in early 1920 that a small group of women composed of members of the College Club and other organizations, realizing the need of a library, placed the proposition before citizens of the village. A committee made a house-to-house canvass for charter members. The canvass was a success.

It was April 19, 1920, that about 200 citizens attended a meeting at the Board of Trade Building, now site of East Aurora Village Hall, and the library was a reality. There were 700 books catalogued on the shelves of a room in the Board of Trade.

One of the speakers, James W. Persons, said that the library has a fine start, but only a start. Everyone must continue working for the ultimate success of the library and the united effort will accomplish wonders, he added.

At the end of the first year reports showed 8,000 circulation and 3,960 books on the shelves. The state charter had been received and the library was registered with the University of the State of New York.

*East Aurora Advertiser, November 8, 1962*

**In 1962**, the Town Board announced plans to replace the library building with a more modern facility. The town also planned an addition to the library in West Falls.



## East Aurora Library to Relocate Until New Building Is Completed

Because of the necessity of vacating the East Aurora Free Library building at Main and Whaley due to construction of a new library by the Town of Aurora, the library will be closed from Jan. 14 to Jan. 19.

The library will reopen in its new temporary quarters Monday, Jan. 16, at 663 Main St. Miss Thelma L. Harrington, librarian, says the library will

remain open in this location the usual hours until the new building is completed.

Temporarily, books will have to be returned when the library is open because there will be no outside book drop. Miss Harrington says that no fines or overtime charges will be made for books due the week that the library is closed.

Preparation is under way for asking for bids on the new library at the Main-Whaley site. The township has been deeded 30 feet of land adjoining the east line of the library property which will provide ample off-street parking.

The one-story new library will face Main St. and will replace the building now in use which was erected in 1834. The building where the temporary library will be located at 663 Main is owned by the East Aurora Hardware Store.

*East Aurora Advertiser,  
January 10, 1963*

In January 1963, in preparation for the new building, library operations temporarily moved to 663 Main Street, a building owned by the East Aurora Hardware Store.



In **March 1963**, the circa 1835 house that was home to the library since 1922 was demolished to make way for the new, modern library at Main Street and Whaley Avenue.



**Throughout 1963**, construction of the new library building took place. Facing several setbacks, the project was delayed a few months. Note in the bottom photograph the fireplace and chimney that still exist in the library today.



**On April 20, 1964**, the doors of the new library building opened. The bottom photograph was taken a few years later, in 1968. Noticeably absent are the computers of 2024!

Architectural rendering of the  
“proposed” new library, 1962.