

In the summer of 1892, the Library Association, the Board of Trade, and the Elks Club entered into an agreement to combine in the erection of a suitable building adequate for the needs of the three organizations and on December 24, 1892, they were incorporated as the Union Building Association. In the arrangement the Library Association was to sell its interest in the property at Adams and Laura Streets and purchase the site for the new building called the "Union" building. This they did, buying the half lot at the northeast corner of Adams and Main Streets. Here the Union building was built at a cost of \$17,000; it was completed and occupied in the winter of 1894-5. As is usually the case in combinations of this kind it soon developed that the arrangement was not a satisfactory one. The secretary of the Board of Trade assumed the duties of librarian of the Public Library and the latter seemed to lose its separate identity to a certain extent. The widespread interest in the library while it owned its own building and had its own librarian had waned decidedly by 1901, when the fire of May 3d brought the history of the old institution to a close.

In less than a year after the fire steps were taken to procure a donation from the Andrew Carnegie fund for the purpose of building a library here. In February, 1902, Mr. Carnegie notified the local association that he would give \$50,000 for a building if the city would provide a site and appropriate not less than \$5,000 annually for the support of the library. Upon receipt of this offer, the library association held a meeting and unanimously advocated the acceptance of the offer, and agreed to buy the site for the building and give it to the city, if the city would meet the appropriation for maintenance. This offer was made to the city council and a special city primary was called for the public to express its desires in the matter; the primary was held November 4, 1902, and resulted 640 for and 625 against acceptance. The council then passed the resolution, accepting Mr. Carnegie's offer, all voting for it excepting one councilman. Fulfilling its promise, the Library Association sold its interest in the lot at corner of Main and Adams Streets and together with the insurance money collected from the fire bought the lot 80x85 feet at the northeast corner of Ocean and Adams Streets and donated it to the city as a site for the library. On January 6, 1903, the council created a Public Library Board composed