Morris County Library Timeline

1921 Following passage the year before, by the NJ State Legislature, of a bill to permit establishment of county libraries in the state, the people of Morris County vote to establish a county library.

1922 The County Library Commission meets for the first time, officers elected & by-laws adopted.

The library opens its headquarters in Morristown in a building adjoining the county courthouse with Edith L. Smith as librarian and director. 10,087 books cataloged, 99 library stations established, book car purchased.

1925 New York Public Library School and Pratt Institute of Library Service spent a day visiting the libraries of Morris County

1927 First Professional children's librarian hired; year ended with every juvenile book out in circulation.

1928 MCL provided assistance to the State Hospital at Morris Plains [Greystone] in the initial cataloging of the medical library

1930 Old book car [bookmobile] was replaced by a converted delivery truck.

1932 Library received as a gift through Congressman Eaton volumes of the 15th census

1933 MCL relocated to the County Clerk's former office; 73 books were placed in the camp of the Civilian Conservation Corps; 212 books were sent to the county jail.

1934 10 workers under the statewide library project of the Emergency Relief Administration were assigned to MCL.

1936 MCL became a member of Morris County Social Planning Council

1937 13 educational films and 2 sets of lantern slides were borrowed from the NJ State Museum for use of Morris Junior College.

1939 WPA assistants were employed under the statewide library project administered through MCL.

1941 Anticipating public demand, MCL began collecting materials on US Defense.

1942 MCL becomes one of the 1200 War Information Centers making it a depository for federal government publications; the Library cooperates in the collection of books for the Victory Book Campaign.

1944 MCL distributes posters and information from the federal government & establishes a deposit account with the Superintendent of Documents.

1946 Audio-Visual Aids Department was created to handle the growth of demands in that area; by the end of the year MCL owned 723 recordings, 12 moving picture films, 8 filmstrips and 8 slides.

1948 50% of MCL's collection is children's materials; demand continues to outstrip supply.

1949 MCL begins promoting programs and services on a WMTR.

1955 MCL moves into temporary quarters at the County Services Building on West Hanover Ave. pending remodeling of the Courthouse.

1959 MCL's new bookmobile is exhibited at the Morris County Fair.

1961 MCL opens on Saturdays; bookmobile initiates night hours.

1962 Truck purchased to deliver books to local libraries.

1964 MCL hours expanded: Monday-Friday to 9AM-9PM and Saturday to 9AM-5PM.

1965 Reference Services provides information for 5.400 high school students and 1,200 college students.

1968 Morris County Library moves to its current location at 30 East Hanover Ave, Whippany, NJ; NJ State Library designates the Morris County Library as a New Jersey Documents Depository.

1969 Freeholders dedicate building to Matilda Frelinghuysen who donated the land on which the library was built.

1970 MCL prepares for state-of-the art automated book catalog and circulation system.

1972 24/7 Reference Service initiated, citizens invited to leave reference requests during off hours on voicemail; State Telefax Pilot Program initiated to transmit interlibrary photocopy requests.

1973 MCL awarded Project Live (Libraries in Video Education) state grant to record moments of local history.

1974 MCL designated Regional Film Center serving 6 counties in Northern NJ; audio cassettes now offered.

1976 Books-by-mail program funded by a grant under the Older American Act initiated; Original Arts Project initiated to collect and lend artwork created by Morris County artists.

1979 Vendor selected to automate MCL catalog; OCLC national cataloging services subscribed.

1980 Automated circulation launches; electronic book ordering system now used to order materials.

1982 M.A.I.N. (Morris Automated Information Network) automated circulation system expands to include municipal public libraries; videocassettes are now available.

1984 MCL designated Regional Service Center by the NJ Library for the Blind and Handicapped

1986 Compact discs are available at MCL.

1987 Bookmobile cut; library upgrades library's computerized catalog.

1988 Morris County freeholders back a plan to build a new library.

1989 MCL receives 1989 National Association of Counties Achievement Award for the entry "The Grand Connection" which traced the development of M.A.I.N.

1991 Architects unveil a plan for a new library.

1992 MCL designated the Deaf Resource Center for Morris, Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon & Somerset counties; TDD equipment installed permitting deaf people to call the library; job seeker seminars launched.

1993 MORENET project hosted Bellcore, NJ Bell and MAIN, Morris County residents are among the first with access to the Internet at home (dial-up); new library building plans iced.

1994 4,000 people have logged into MORENET, access doubled. Freeholders reconsider building new library.

1995 Morris County Library Foundation incorporated; Joan Bramhall president; MCL launches a Web site.

1997 E-mail Reference Service launched; MCL librarian creates book discussion group; Freeholders approve $11 million expansion & renovation.

1999 Groundbreaking ceremony for library construction; Library remains open during construction. Syracuse University Virtual Reference Desk project presents Morris County Library its exemplary service award, for remote reference.

2001 New building is dedicated by the Freeholders; first computer classes are offered in training lab; group study rooms and public meeting rooms in heavy demand; first children's poetry contest held.

2002 MCL Reference librarian was named New York Times Librarian of the Year (for helping people find jobs).

2003 Handicapped entrance with swipe card access installed. A second MCL Reference Librarian was recognized by the New York Times, librarian donates cash award to install ADA compliant computer station.

2004 MCL reassigned from County Dept. of Community Affairs to Human Services; cardholders can access their library account from home.

2005 Library focuses on community partnership: County Youth Shelter, Chinese-American Assn. Books for Kids, Literacy Volunteers; Westlaw (legal research) & Ancestry (genealogy) databases available for citizen research; Web counter confirms 122K "hits" in 6 month period; Computer classes expanded to include MS Office.

2006 MCL hosts Chinese New Year festival; partners with local schools by offering tours, exhibits at 4-H fair, begins hosting Friday afternoon film series, expands large print books to serve vision impaired citizens.

2007 County Library now reports to Information Services. MCL launches Writer's group and Open Mike Night; Morris Authors collection established; online events notification launched; proctoring and notary services in heavy demand, MCL Web marks 1 million visitors.

2008 Museum pass program established; MCL partners with County Aging Dept. to spread word on homebound services, MCL coordinates and hosts Veterans Information Day.

2009 EventKeeper software permitting online class/event registration. Open Sundays cut from 36 (12-5) to 28 days (1-5) per year.

2010 MCL wins state diversity grant and partners with County Office of Hispanic Affairs to host Feria de Latinoamericana; Joint Free Library of Morristown and Morris Twp closed 6 months, after underground explosion, MCL serves those patrons and assists colleagues.

2011 262,000 people visit; 521,000 items borrowed; 64,000 reference questions answered; 492,000 use MCL Web, 7,000 items loaned to homebound/nursing homes/schools; 7 public meeting rooms used by 26,500 citizens; computer classes upgrade to MS Office 2010; MCL offers 35 information/article databases.

2012 Local postcard collection scanned in conjunction with Library of Congress; Authors day celebrated Morris County writers, MCL hosts Volunteers of Morris County Senior Art Show; VITA free tax assistance offered.