In 1901 the early library was open two afternoons and evenings a week – one day at the Park Memorial Baptist Church and the other at the Faith Congregational Church. Books were transferred from one church to the other by a boy on a bicycle!
In May of 1898, using fifty books borrowed from the Central Library, Rev. Willard E. Waterbury arranged to have a weekly “Book Night” at the Belmont Avenue Baptist Chapel, located at the corner of Belmont and Euclid Avenues. (Two ladies drove their horse and buggy to the Central Library weekly to pick up a new selection of books.) In 1901 the early library was open two afternoons and evenings a week – one day at the Park Memorial Baptist Church and the other at the Faith Congregational Church. Books were transferred from one church to the other by a boy on a bicycle! In 1905 a room was permanently made available at the Baptist Church for use as a library two days a week.

City Librarian Hiller C. Wellman noted in his 1908 Annual Report the generous gift of Mr. Andrew Carnegie for construction of a branch library in Forest Park. Contributions from 581 residents of the district bought land for the new library. Originally about half the size of the current building, it was erected for a cost of $17,500. In 1908 the cornerstone was laid and the Forest Park Branch Library officially opened on February 17, 1909. By 1924 it was so overcrowded that neighborhood residents, led by Henry R. Johnson and Col. B.A. Franklin, raised almost $45,000 for expansion, resulting in additional stack and work areas plus a Children’s Room. In 1966 neighborhood resident Miss Frances Plimpton Keyes died at age 99, leaving a significant amount of money to the Springfield Libraries. Miss Keyes loved both books and children so it was decided to use her gift to completely remodel and refurbish the Children’s Room at the Forest Park Branch.

In the fall of 1909, eager readers could take a ride on Springfield’s electric trolley line to the corner of Belmont Avenue and Oakland Street in the “planned suburban residential community” of Forest Park to the new Forest Park Branch Library. Built during the golden age of the American public library, it was, like most Carnegie libraries, a hub for social activities. East coast steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie gave $260,000 to the city of Springfield Massachusetts to build a central library and three branch libraries, the Forest Park Branch included. Over one hundred years later, a drive to this very intersection leads you to the same beautiful Beaux Arts style library, still a neighborhood center for activities, both educational and social.