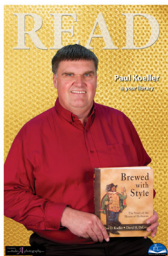




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# Libraries Change Lives



## Using the library for historical research

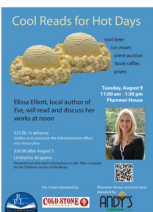
by Paul Koeller

“Seldom does a week go by that I’m not at the library checking out several books.” [more](#)



## The Library: It’s not just about books anymore

We’ve come a long way since the library started. [more](#)



## Ice Cream Social fund-raising event [more](#)



## Beer Tasting fund-raising event [more](#)



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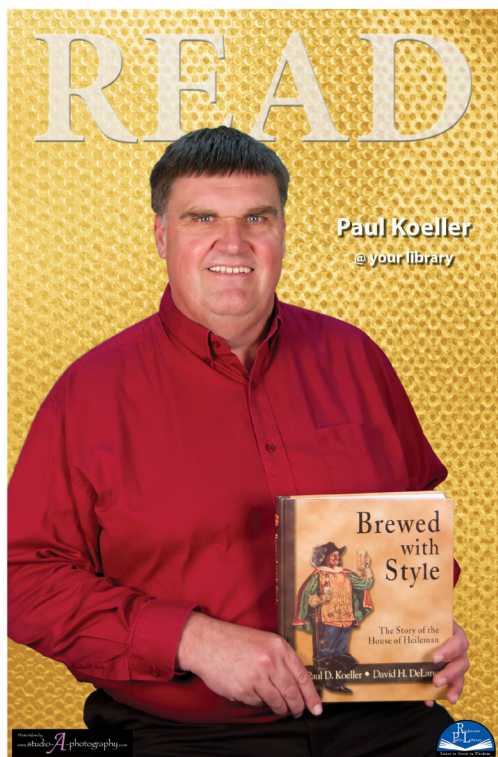


Library Blog



Check out our August events calendar for the World Music Series schedule.!

# Libraries Change Lives



## Using the library for historical research

by Paul Koeller

Everyone knows that libraries are a great place to check out books to read. However, you might not know that they are also a great archive for historical data and contain a wealth of resources for researching history and genealogy.

I was fortunate to grow up in a house where reading was strongly encouraged. I've always been a morning person and some of my earliest memories are getting up early and reading before school. I also remember reading many of the "We Were There" histories and lots of biographies in grade school. When summer came, we always signed up for the summer reading program at the public library in La Crosse, Wisconsin where I grew up. Each summer there would be a theme and we'd get a theme related stamp from the librarian for each verbal book report we'd complete. By the end of the summer I'd always have collected all of the stamps.

I've continued my love of reading as an adult. Seldom does a week go by that I'm not at the library checking out several books. When our daughter Mara was born, we'd read to her every night. I'm happy to see that as an adult she now has that same love of reading. Back in 2000 Mara graduated from Century High School and went off to college at the University of Wisconsin. With an "empty nest" I started looking for something to fill my time. With my life-long interest in history, I ended up deciding to research and write a book on the history of the G. Heileman Brewery in La Crosse where my father had worked for more than forty years.

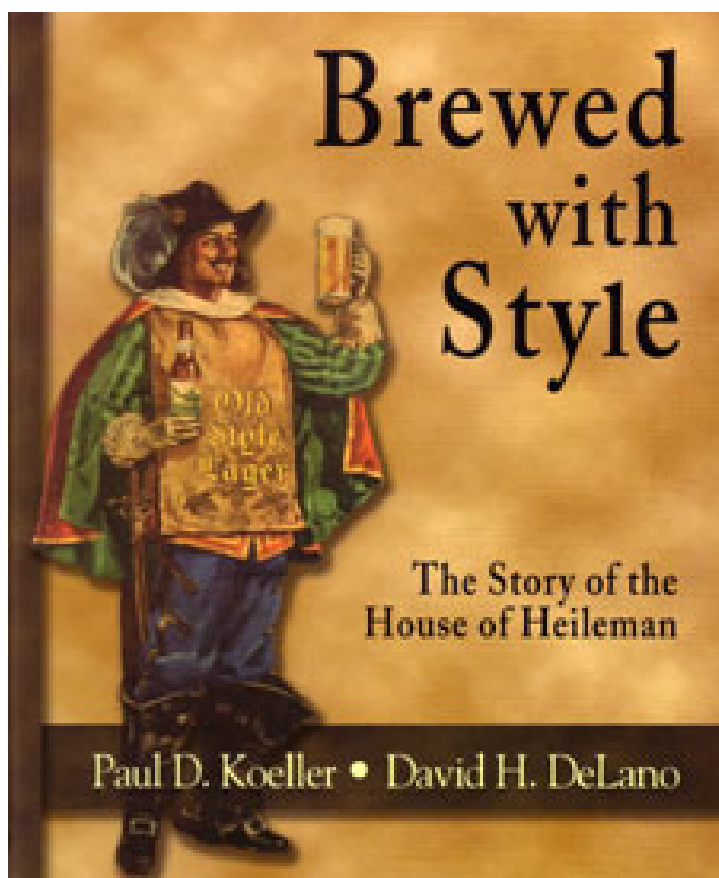
I quickly discovered a new use for libraries. I spent many hours researching the brewery in the historical archives at the La Crosse Public Library and The Murphy Library at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse. I discovered that the library had all of the old La Crosse newspapers on microfilm. In the case of Heileman, the articles had even been organized and indexed into separate files making it much easier to access. I was also able to find census records, biographies, personal histories, and obituaries for all of the key Heileman personnel including Gottlieb Heileman the brewery founder. At The Murphy Library I found hundreds of old photos that I was able to incorporate into my book. In 2004, that research resulted in the publishing of the book *Brewed With Style - The Story of the House of Heileman* that I co-authored.

After writing the book, I decided to do additional historical research on a variety of topics related to Rochester and Olmsted County. You'll often find me on the second floor at the Rochester Public Library researching and reading microfilms of old Rochester newspapers. One of

the really nice machines that is available allows me to not only view microfilm, but also to scan the images and save them to a flash drive. I make use of that machine to include actual newspaper headlines or photos in my Power Point presentations. I also make use of the special collections kept on the second floor of historical documents, maps, and local records. The materials are often one-of-a-kind documents that don't circulate but can be viewed in the library. The library staff at the research desk on the second floor are always happy to help with these materials.

When I'm not at the Public Library I'm often at the library at the Olmsted County History Center using their archives and their extensive collection of historical materials and photos. The result being numerous history presentations that I've given at the Rochester Public Library, The Olmsted History Center, Mayo Clinic, Charter House, The Rochester Senior Center, and most recently at the University of Minnesota - Rochester.

I've come a long way from those early days in grade school reading the old "We Were There" histories. I've published my own history book and filled my retirement with historical research and an active life giving history presentations. Libraries have given me the information I've needed, hours of enjoyment, and have definitely changed my life.



# Libraries Change Lives



*Miss Edna was a librarian in the Rochester Library. This photo was taken in the 2nd-floor reading room of the first Rochester City Hall about 1890.*

## **The library: it's not just about books anymore**

We've come a long way since the library started.

In Miss Edna's day, paper books were all the library had available for check out.

But now...

Now we have more than just paper books; we have electronic books; books on CD and cassette and even books that you can download from the Internet. Books! Books! Books!

## **But wait, there's more!**

### **The library: it's not just about books anymore.**

*In our library catalog:*

- DVDs and VHS videos: documentaries, feature films, exercise videos, do-it-yourself topics, music concerts, Bollywood, independent and international films, etc.
- Music on CD, cassette and even downloadable. We also have musical scores.
- MP3 players are available to check out. The library has a download station for use with these or your personal MP3 players or ebook readers to download electronic material.
- CD-ROMs including games for children that are both entertaining and educational, house and landscape design, keyboarding skills, do-it-yourself, etc.
- Storytime Kits do contain books but they also are full of thematic toys, games, puzzles, puppets, flannel board stories, etc.
- Wii and Play Station games have become quite popular items to check out.
- Hand-held engravers to put your name on personal tools or other belongings.
- Electric meters to find out how much electricity appliances in your household use. You can calculate your electrical expenses by the day, week, month, even an entire year. You can also check the quality of your power by monitoring voltage, line frequency

and power factor. Now you'll know if it's time for a new refrigerator or if that old air conditioner is still saving you money.

*On our website we have access to lots of electronic resources:*

- Auto repair information,
- Learn Spanish, German, etc.
- Take practice tests
- Get company profiles
- Search your family history
- Job searching links
- Homework Help
- etc.

*In the library building:*

- Events for all ages. There are storytimes, music concerts, author visits, game nights, book groups, movies, classes, etc. scheduled throughout the year.
- Microfilm readers to research old newspapers. Digital scanners make it possible to send the information you find on the microfilm to your email address.
- Multiple Internet stations are located in three areas of the library.
- Word processing computers that have Microsoft Office installed for paper writing or presentation creation, spreadsheets, etc. One of these word processing computers is connected to a scanner and has Adobe Photoshop Elements 5.0 installed for photo editing.
- The adaptive workstation enables patrons who are blind or have low vision to access the internet.
- Meeting rooms area available for rent.
- Quiet study rooms for one to two people to use at a time. There is also a larger Quiet study area on second floor, right next to the stairs.
- A variety of magazines and newspapers, both in print and online, are available to read both in and out of the library.

So, the next time you think that a library is just about books, think again.

## Cool Reads for Hot Days



root beer  
ice cream  
silent auction  
book raffles  
prizes

**Tuesday, August 9**  
**11:00 am - 1:30 pm**  
**Plummer House**

Elissa Elliott, local author of *Eve*, will read and discuss her works at noon

\$25.00 in advance  
(online or in person in the Administration office)  
<http://bit.ly/rplbac>

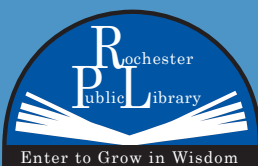
\$30.00 after August 5

Limited to 40 guests

Proceeds from this event will purchase a Little Tikes computer for the Children's section of the library



Ice Cream donated by:



Plummer House and root beer donated by:



# Libraries Change Lives



## Clues and Brews

A Fund-raiser for the Rochester Public Library



Sample 50+ beers and talk with representatives from four different breweries.

Tuesday, August 9  
6:00 - 9:00 pm  
Plummer House



Paul Koeller, local author of *Brewed with Style*, will read and discuss beer

silent auction  
book raffles  
prizes



\$30.00 in advance  
(online or in person in the library)

<http://bit.ly/rplbac> • 507-328-2343



\$40.00 after August 5

Limited to 75 guests (ages 21+)



Cheeses donated by:  
**JUST RITE FOODS.com**

Plummer House donated by:  
**ANDY'S LIQUOR.COM**

Your support will provide much-needed AV equipment.