

World Awaits through Interlibrary Book Loans

Did you know that as a patron of the Bartholomew County Public Library system you have access to over 82 million items from over 57,000 libraries worldwide? All of that is in addition to the over 200,000 items housed within the Main Library, Hope Branch, and Bookmobile. This means that your freely available library card allows you to have access to almost any book ever written.

Say for example, that you are working on your family genealogy and you find a familial connection to a little known Indian tribe from North Carolina. However after checking the library's online catalog and calling the reference desk, you find out that the library does not own much information on the tribe as their collection focuses more on tribes that were located in Indiana. Thankfully, we have the resources of the above mentioned 57,000 libraries available to us through interlibrary loan.

There are two main ways of initiating an interlibrary loan request. You can do it yourself any hour of the day or night. You can make a request at any of our online catalog computers and internet terminals in the library or from your home, work, or school computer. Simply log on to our website: <http://www.barth.lib.in.us>. From there you can click on the link entitled "World Cat Interlibrary Loan." You will then see directions for initiating the request. If you need any help, please do not hesitate to ask or call us at the reference desk, 379-1266.

For more personalized service, you can call or come by the reference desk 379-1266 at the Main Library. From there we will search for the books that you are wanting, record your vital information (name, address, library card number, and possibly email address) and choose 5 different libraries that own the book. The request is sent to the first library and then they have a certain amount of time to accept or deny the request.

A library might deny the request for many reasons. The book could be checked out, lost, or non-circulating. Often libraries won't lend books that are less than 6 months old. Some libraries do not lend audiovisual materials. If a library does not accept your request, the request goes on the next library. The pattern is repeated until the list of 5 has been gone through or a library accepts. If the list is exhausted we will usually try again, assuming there are another 5 libraries that own the book.

If one of the libraries accepts, the book is sent to us. We will notify you either by email or by postcard that your item is in the library, and that you will have 10 days to pick the book up. You are able to check the book out for two weeks, and sometimes you are able to renew the book for another two weeks. Simply, ask at the circulation desk if you discover you need more time. The average time for this whole process is somewhere between 7 and 10 days.

The only restrictions and fees on placing interlibrary loan requests are those put in place by the loaning libraries. Also, some out-of-state university libraries will charge a fee for lending the book. We try to get it from a no charge library first, and will only try to get the book from a library that charges if you agree to pay the fee.

We hope that you will take advantage of this wonderful service that your library has to offer.

Jason Hatton is a reference librarian at Bartholomew County Public Library.