



YACOLT LIBRARY EXPRESS

10 years and counting!



OVERVIEW

As of August 2022, the Yacolt Library Express has served the Town of Yacolt for 10 years. The continuing high use of the facility and services are a testament to the love of reading and learning present in the Yacolt area. FVRLibraries continues to improve and modify services and staffing to help everyone have a good library experience. We look forward to many more years providing service to the Town of Yacolt and the surrounding community.

HISTORY - LIBRARY SERVICE

Bookmobile service began in rural Clark County in 1941, with service to many locations in the area including Yacolt. Bookmobiles continued to serve Yacolt and the surrounding area until 2012, when the Clark County Bookmobile was retired. At that time, the bookmobile had been visiting Yacolt Elementary School once per week, as well as Amboy, Green Mountain School, Yale Elementary, and several other stops in Vancouver.

YACOLT AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

The word “yacolt” is from the Klickitat word “Yalicolb,” which means “haunted place.” White settlers came to the area in 1873, and the population in Yacolt grew to about 50 by the turn of the century. In 1902, the Yacolt Burn—one of the worst fires in Washington history—swept through the area, killing 38 people and burning many homes and buildings. In 1903, the railroad extended to Yacolt from Battle Ground, which enabled the town to quickly grow to about 500 people, many working in the timber industry.¹

The most recent population estimate for 2022 for the Town of Yacolt was 2,004. However, the FVRLibraries service area includes all of Clark County (except for the city of Camas), the city of Woodland, and Skamania and Klickitat Counties, and everyone within the district has access to all libraries and services. In Yacolt, the Library Express provides services not just to the town, but to people in the area.

2022 estimates	Clark County	Within 5 miles of Yacolt Library Express	Within 3 miles of Yacolt Library Express	Within 1 mile of Yacolt Library Express
Total Population	500,319	10,973	5,265	2,308
Total Households	187,926	3,383	1,485	687
Median Age	38.6	34.4	29.6	27.7
Average Household Size	2.64	3.21	3.37	3.46

Source: DemographicsNow, a Gale Business database. dnow.gale.com

¹ <https://www.columbian.com/news/2011/oct/29/small-town-big-on-spirits-a-haunting-in-yacolt-spe/>

Considering both median age and average household size, the population in and around the Town of Yacolt has more large families with young children compared to Clark County as a whole. Families with young children find great value in their local library as a source of thousands of picture books and nonfiction for young learners.

HISTORY - THE BUILDING

The historic red brick building that now holds the library express has been home to many of the Town of Yacolt's services over the years, including the town hall and fire station, as well as a jail. Three jail cells, constructed with the building over 100 years ago, still line the passageway along the east side of the building.

THE LIBRARY EXPRESS

Early in 2012, FVRL staff and Yacolt community leaders began looking for ways to establish a more robust library service for the town to replace the bookmobile service. Initial ideas for service centered around establishing a small library that might be open several hours each week, similar to another FVRL library in North Bonneville. The town proposed the use of a building that formerly held the town hall.

Inspired by a library in King County that allowed patron use when staff were not present, using keycard access, an "unstaffed" model was proposed. "Unstaffed" was a new idea and there were a lot of questions and concerns. Working together with the town of Yacolt and a growing Friends of Yacolt Library Express (FOYLE) group, plans were made for services, hours, safety, and security options.

In September of 2012, the library had a grand opening ceremony, which included a chainsaw ribbon cutting by the mayor.

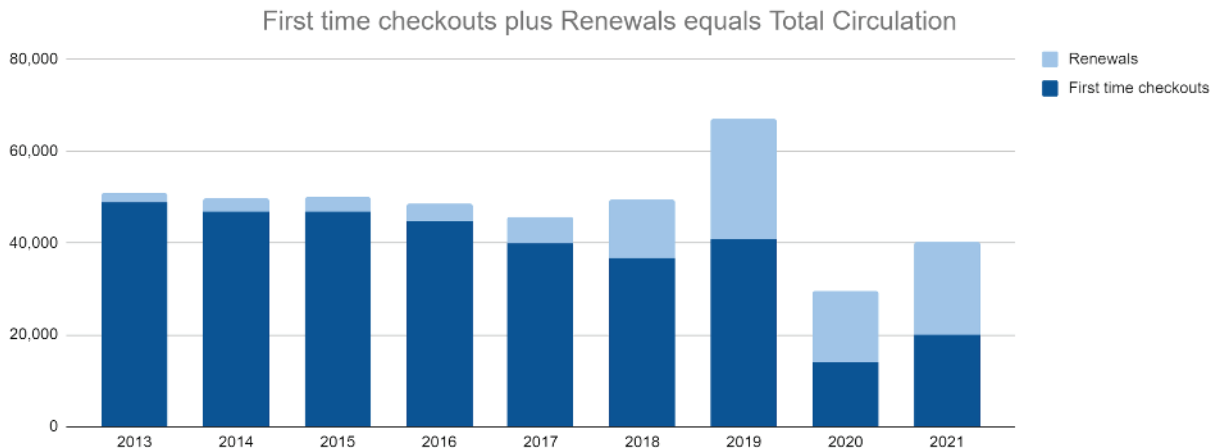
WHAT'S AVAILABLE

The library is currently open seven days a week, for a total of 63 hours. Free WiFi is available both inside the library and in the parking areas in front. The library is accessible using keycard access on the front door. Visitors use their FVRLibraries card and either scan their barcode or type in their number to unlock the door. Once inside, a lobby greets them, with comfortable chairs, a couch, a bulletin board, and a laptop bar with six barstools. The restroom is available down the hall past the iconic old jail cells. One of the jail cells now holds the Friends of the Yacolt Library (FOYLE) bookstore.

Inside the library area, there are two internet computers and a printer for public use, as well as enough shelf space for about three thousand books, DVDs, and audiobooks. There is a place for people to pick up requested items, and a “self-check” machine where people can check out and check in their items. At the self-check station there is a phone that can be used to contact library staff at another location. This phone can also be used as a PA system by staff at another library to make announcements to folks in the library, if needed. It has been used at times to let folks know that the library is closing.

LIBRARY USE

From the beginning, Yacolt Library Express exceeded all expectations for use. Folks can check out items and return them to the library. Many Yacolt area residents also make use of other FVRLibraries, in particular the Battle Ground library. Yacolt Library Express saves people a trip back to Battle Ground to return their books.



This chart shows nine full years of use, after an initial four months of use in 2012. The dark blue bars represent the number of items checked out from the library by visitors for that year. The chart shows a steady use of the materials over the first seven years, with a small decline consistent with other libraries, due in large part to a steady adoption of eBooks and eAudiobooks. The light blue represents renewals. When a person takes an item home from the library, they have it for three weeks. After that, they may renew their checkout up to five times, as long as another person hasn't requested it. The large number of renewals starting in 2018 is due to a change in our system in which every item is automatically renewed for users, as long as no one else has requested it. In 2020 and 2021, when many of our libraries were closed, or allowing curbside pickup only, Yacolt staff were able to continue helping people receive their items. In July 2021, people were allowed to enter the library again, and we've seen checkouts increase accordingly.

LIBRARY STAFF

Staffing at the library has changed over the past 10 years. Initially, staff from the Battle Ground Library would visit Yacolt five days per week, Monday through Friday, for about two-three hours per visit. There were scheduled staffed hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays, to provide local folks with predictable times when they could depend on staff being present. After several years of this model, the schedule was adjusted. Saturday was added, and one of the weekdays was omitted. Now, instead of visiting from Battle Ground, staff are assigned to the Yacolt Library Express, and are onsite 25 hours per week.

COSTS

The main costs to operate the Yacolt Library Express per year, as of 2022, are as follows:

Wages: \$52,200
Benefits: \$24,000
Total staff: \$76,200

Other:

Janitorial: \$9,000
Utilities: \$6,000
Supplies: \$1,750
Lease: \$2,400
Internet²: \$7,500

There are other additional costs associated with the operation of this library that are difficult to calculate for a single location. For example, our library system subscribes to a number of online resources to which all library cardholders have access. Staff from Battle Ground and other locations also provide programs in Yacolt, and have provided larger programs and events for Summer Reading.

IMPROVEMENTS

Since occupying the building in 2012, FVRLibraries—often with the support of FOYLE—has made steady improvements to the building interior, exterior, and parking areas, including:

- ☑ Outdoor bench
- ☑ Bike rack
- ☑ New laptop bar in lobby
- ☑ Installed new carpet
- ☑ Painted the exterior
- ☑ Painted the interior
- ☑ Painted the concrete floors
- ☑ Completely remodeled the bathroom
- ☑ Repointed the exterior brick
- ☑ Installed an awning
- ☑ Plumbing/septic system fix
- ☑ Exterior signs

² *Internet, though a high initial cost, is reduced through a program called E-Rate, which provides an 80% rebate on the total cost for internet in rural areas.

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

- New windows
- Improved heating/cooling system

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

It was a major change to switch from once-per-week bookmobile service to the everyday service provided by Yacolt Library Express, but folks have been enthusiastic users for ten years, with no signs of stopping. Even during the pandemic, Yacolt area residents were able to make use of library services, though it's obvious they missed being able to visit their little library.

What's next for this location? Over the past 10 years, a variety of ideas have been proposed by Yacolt area residents, most centered on the goal of having a larger library. Some of this goal has been met by making better use of the building's lobby as a seating area.

While there are no established plans at this time to move to or build a new building, our library district will be developing a new facilities plan in 2023, and will be including Yacolt and the surrounding area in that plan.

SPECIAL THANKS

Town of Yacolt

Friends of Yacolt Library Express

CONTACT: 360-906-5000 or visit *fvrl.org/question*

BOOKMOBILE SERVICE THROUGH THE YEARS



RIBBON-CUTTING AND SETUP



TOP TO BOTTOM

*Grand opening, Chainsaw ribbon cutting, 9/28/2012
Nancy Tessman, Bill Yee, Mayor Jeff Caruthers
(with the saw)*

Onlookers during grand opening speech

Setting up the collection, 8/30/2012

SIGNS



The first sign of the new library, circa 2012



FOYLE's Bigfoot Book Store sign

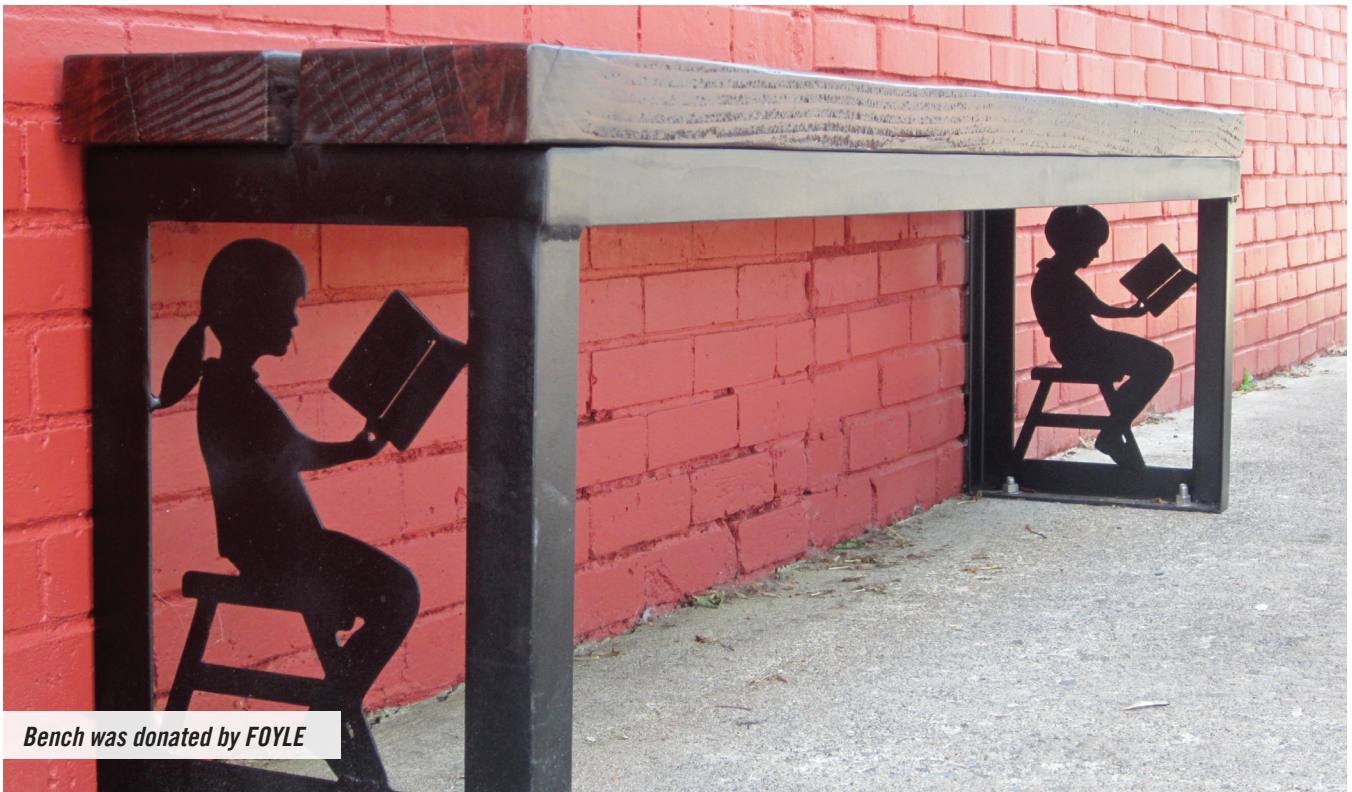


Library sign, Yacolt, 2018

THE BUILDING - OUTSIDE



View of Yacolt Library Express



Bench was donated by FOYLE

THE BUILDING - INSIDE



Lobby, circa 2018



Interior of the library, circa 2018



Inside FOYLE's Bigfoot Book Store

FEATURES AND AMENITIES



PROGRAMS AND PATRONS



Medieval Fair, 2019



June 2018, Yacolt park, "Creature Feature" event, part of Summer Reading.



Yacolt kids, 2018