

Pilsen libraries

The first libraries in medieval Pilsen belonged to monasteries. First, there is the Franciscan monastery, now the home of the Diecévní museum (Diocesan Museum) and then the Dominican monastery, standing on the opposite side of the city at that time. Today, in its place, you will find the Regional Courthouse, near the current Faculty of Education of the University of West Bohemia. In the Middle Ages, it was possible to study books only in reading rooms, and the most valuable books were probably chained to a podium, so that nobody could steal them, as they were quite valuable.

Dominican nuns also had their own library. They lived in a Baroque convent in the space between the streets Bezručova, Bedřicha Smetany and Smetanovy sady. Today the building houses **The Education and Research Library of the Pilsener Region**, where you can find old manuscripts, ancient books and early printed books, as well as the large library of the former Franciscan monastery.

One of the first Czech public libraries and reading rooms was founded in 1841 by Josef František Smetana, a professor at a Pilsen grammar school and a great promoter of the Czech language. It was situated **in the building of the Lochotín spa**. Today, all that remains is the Hall of Friendship in the Lochotín pavilion across from the School of Medicine.

Another Pilsen reading room was situated near today's **Hotel Diplomat in the park Sady 5. května**. The building, well-preserved to the present-day, stands on a former defensive bastion that was a part of the Baroque fortification of the city. This people's reading room was established by the City of Pilsen in 1901.

Knihovna města Plzeň (Library of the City of Pilsen)

ulice Bedřicha Smetany no. 13, 305 94 Pilsen, telephone: 378 038 210,

website: <http://www.kmp.plzen-city.cz>

The Library of the City of Pilsen is one of the oldest cultural institutions in the city. It was founded in 1876, when Pilsen had about 30.000 inhabitants.

The early days of the library's activity were influenced by the Fellowship of Science and Czech Literature Friends in Pilsen. In 1916, the library was joined with the People's Reading Room of the City of Pilsen. Starting in 1919, the first branches of the suburban libraries of the Citizen's Association were opened. In 1921, a partnership was formed with the Hus Children's Library.

Today, the Library of the City of Pilsen comprises, in addition to the Central Library for Adults and Central Library for Children and Youth, 9 large libraries and 12 smaller branches throughout the city open 7 days a week.

In 2006, even the small branches were equipped with computers and internet access. So internet access is now available in the reading rooms of all the libraries.

The main library building is on the street ulice B. Smetany. A number of cultural events and conferences for children and adults regularly take place in the Polanova síň (hall). The library also assists with the organization of excursions for students.

Library of the West Bohemia Museum in Pilsen.

West Bohemia Museum in Pilsen, Kopeckého sady 2, Pilsen, telephone: 377329380

Website : <http://www.zcm.cz>

This library was established along with the museum in 1878.

The library deals with the following collections: a collection of ancient books, including manuscripts and first copies (books printed in the 15th century), ancient books (books printed from the 16th century to the 18th century) and a large collection of valuable books (bibliophile editions from the 19th and 20th centuries).

Here, we can find about ninety thousand volumes that include technical historical literature, art science, ethnographic and scientific literature. We can also find titles focused on the area of heraldry, coin collecting, library science, world and Czech history, art history, architecture and engineering, handcrafts, the history of clothing and fashion, antiquities, historical monuments and modern as well as folk art. There are also specialized periodicals dating back to the mid-19th century.

The library is located in the beautiful historic hall of the West Bohemia Museum and is open to the public. Books are intended to be used by researchers only for in-house borrowing in the reading room.

For package tours, it is possible to book a visit with a guide from WBM.

The Education and Research Library of the Pilsener Region

Smetanovy sady 2, 305 48 Pilsen, telephone: 377 306 911, 377 224 249,

Website: <http://www.Stkpl.cz>

The Education and Research Library of the Pilsener Region was established on the premises of a former Dominican convent. The building was built by West Bohemian Baroque architect Jakub Auguston and finished in 1714. It was bought by the City of Pilsen in 1782 after the Josef reforms. Over the course of time, a six-class grammar school was established and in the nineteenth century, the building also housed a two-year philosophical institute. The most distinguished teachers were **Josef Vojtěch Sedláček**, mathematician and classical philologist and **Josef František Smetana**, physicist, scientist and historian, both prominent

revivalists. They wrote their scientific works and textbooks in the Czech language here. In 1805, a Neo-classical south wing of the building was completed. It faces the present-day Smetanovy sady (park), where the main entrance to the library is found. The grammar school was housed in the building until 1924, after which the building fell into disrepair. Between the years 1953 and 1959, the area was modified to meet the needs of the Research Library. Since its restoration in 1994, the library building boasts an appearance that recalls the high cultural level of the city during the prosperous period of the early nineteenth century.

The original State Educational Library was founded in 1950. The basis of its collection was the former Library of the City History Museum that was founded in 1878. In the early 1950s the library became the administrator of the Library of the City History Museum's collection and shortly after that, it obtained confiscated collections from monastery libraries that were sorted and placed among common books. The library thus obtained significant historical collections. In the library's administration department, the entire library of the Franciscan convent in Pilsen, including 187 first copies and about 3500 valuable ancient books, has been preserved.

Since 2001 the library, with its noteworthy educational and training activities, now falls under the administration of the Pilsen Region and is called the Education and Research Library of the Pilsen Region. The library subsequently started to introduce special services. In 1978 **a music room** and the **Library for the Blind** were established. A year later **a special study room** providing bibliographical, research and special technical information. In 1995 **the Austrian Library** was opened. In 1998 it was renamed **the German Library of the Goethe Institute**. Early in 2002 **the English Library** also became part of the library. All the three foreign libraries are situated in the house on Republic Square together with Alliance Francais. This is why the house is called the European House.

The University Library of the The University of West Bohemia in Pilsen

Univerzitní 18, 306 14 Pilsen, telephone: 377637700,

website: <http://www.knihovna.zcu.cz>

Another important part of the Pilsen system of libraries is the University Library of the University of West Bohemia. The library has a collection that is focused especially on the needs of students and teachers of the University of West Bohemia. The library provides its services to the employees and students of the University, and also to the public.

The history of libraries of the The University of West Bohemia is linked with the history of Pilsen universities. Along with the rise of the Faculty of Education and the University of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, their specialized libraries developed from the

beginning of the 1950s. The library of the University was situated in the park sady Pětatřicátníků. Students of the Faculty of Education borrow books at Veleslavínova 42 and on Klatovská třída (avenue), where spaces were established with a study room and 25 readers' desks. Since 1952 the library of the University of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering was located in the park sady Pětatřicátníků at nos. 14 and 16.

After the so-called Velvet Revolution in 1991, The University of West Bohemia was established and subsequently other faculties were created: the Faculty of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Law. In 1995 the Faculty of Humanities was the last to be established, and has its own library on Americká třída (avenue). After 1995 the libraries were united through a common electronic database, so that the readers could use all the libraries of the The University of West Bohemia with one card. In 1998 a common University library was established on the University campus in Borská pole. All the existing libraries mentioned here have become a part of The University of West Bohemia Library System.