

A Really Brief History of the Patchogue, then Patchogue-Medford Library, 1883-Present

Patchogue Library (Association) was created on June 12, 1883. Its first President was John J. Craven (in 1865, Jefferson Davis' prison doctor). Due to funding shortfalls, the 1 to 2 room Library moved to 7 locations, prior to its going public on August 7, 1900, and receiving its state charter on December 20, 1900. 1903-1908 saw negotiations with Andrew Carnegie, to help fund a more permanent building. On March 4, 1908, Patchogue's Carnegie Library (then at 10 Lake Street), was dedicated, where the library served its community until 1981. In the 1920's and 1930's Alma Custead's dynamic leadership proved crucial to the establishment of a Suffolk County Library Association, which is still active today (and part of New York Library Association). The first countywide (union) catalog was housed at the Library, in 1947. In 1951, services were extended, by contract, to Medford residents. The Library building was expanded in 1958. In 1963, Suffolk Cooperative Library System has its origin at Patchogue Library. In 1966, Patchogue Library became one of two State-designated Central Libraries for Suffolk County, NY. In 1973, when the local school district changed its name to Patchogue-Medford, the Library followed suit, by charter amendment, and Medford residents officially became part of the library district. Later in the 1970's PML became sole State-designated Central Library for Suffolk County, N.Y. On January 1981, a converted W.T. Grant store at 54-60 Main Street, was dedicated, as the new Library building, and the old building passed to Briarcliffe College. The Library celebrated its charter centennial 2000, and in 2011 received the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the nation's highest honor, and has annually, since then, received designation as a Star Library, by the American Library Association. In 2012, the Carnegie Library building, having been vacated for some years, was awarded, by the Village of Patchogue, to Patchogue-Medford Library, and moved to west Main Street. The Carnegie Library's main level presently houses PML's Young Adult Department, and the basement is home to the collections of the Greater Patchogue Historical Society. Following an earlier dedication, the Carnegie Building opened to the public, today, October 17, 2016. Both Libraries serve the greater Patchogue

Mark Rothenberg, Local History Liaison