

The Library Story:

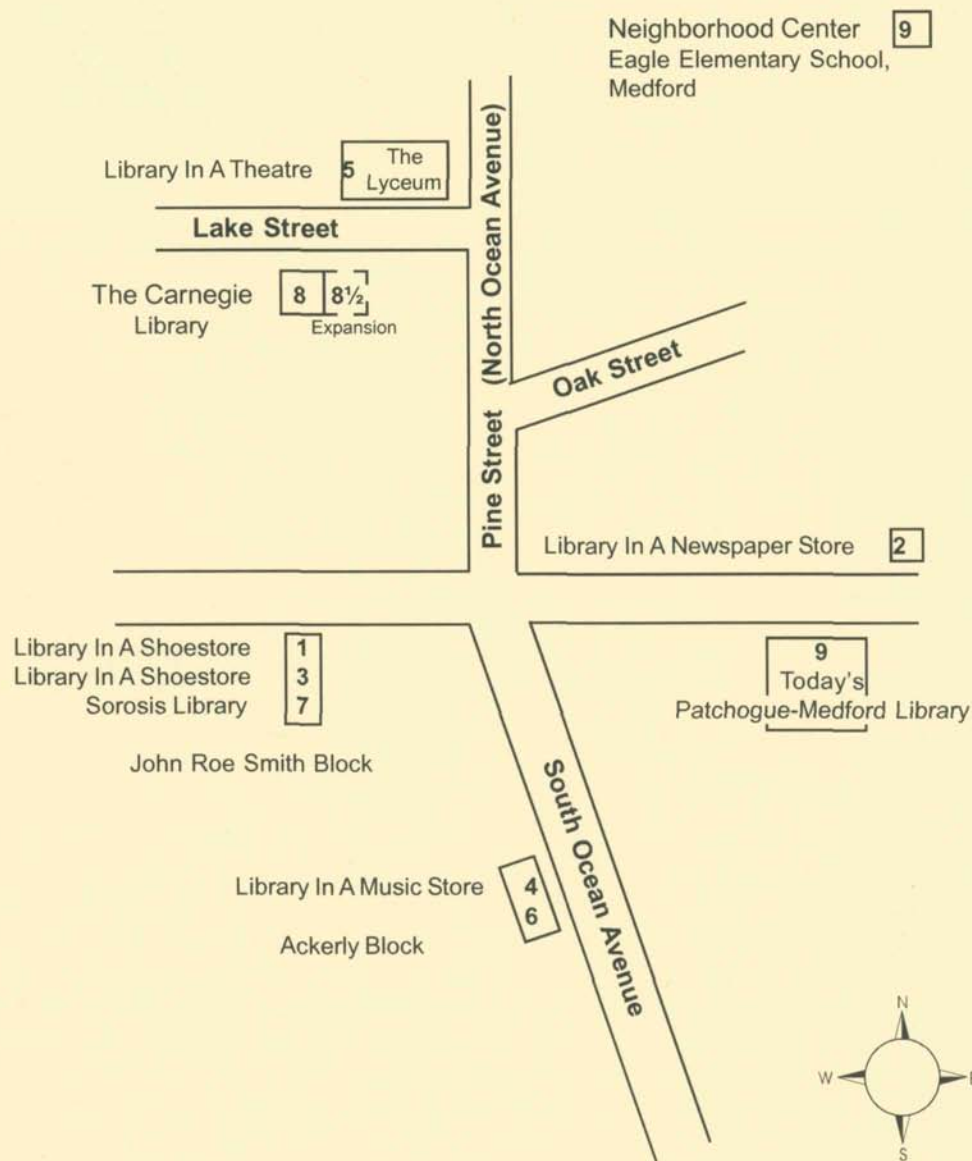
A History of the Patchogue-Medford Library

for children and parents



by Mark Rothenberg

The Library Moves... Again and Again and Again



That's where it went in 117 years...

Part I:
How the Library Came to Be

Once, a very long time ago,

There was no public library.

Not in Patchogue.

Not in Medford.



Patchogue, Looking Toward Medford, About 1890.

Pine Street (today's North Ocean Avenue) is to the right, Jennings Avenue on the left. Lake Street runs left to right in front of the white post fence & the Old Congregational Church, the white steepled building, which became part of the New Lyceum.

(Photo courtesy PML Local History Room)

...Oh, people had books.

(and they read magazines,
and they read newspapers.)

A few people had a lot of books.

A lot of people had just a few.

But no one seemed
to want to share them.

No. Not very much at all.

There were no Computers.

There were no Televisions.

No Videotapes, no Video Games, no DVDs.

There was nothing you could download.

So, just about everyone in town liked to

Read and Read and Read.

And they *wanted more* to read.

They wondered *where* to get more,
and *how* to get more to read.



Then, all of a sudden, somebody said,

You know, what we need is a Library!

And we're going to have one, dag-nabbit!

And if everyone gives a little,

we can have more books together

than we could EVER have alone.

And then, we can all take our turn,

and share them nicely — together.

A lot of people thought,

Hmmm.

That's a good idea!

And so they did it.



And that was the first library in 1883.



Central Hotel

John Roe Smith Block

[First, Third, & Seventh locations of the Library Room]

Library-in-a-Shoe Store

Sorosis Library, & Public Library Room John Roe Smith Block,
West Main Street, Patchogue: second building, right of Central Hotel.

(Reprinted courtesy of Hans Henke)

But the library didn't *really* have a home of its own.

It was sent from place to place around town...

...put in back rooms,
and side rooms,
and spare rooms,
of store after store after store.

It went from Main Street

...to (South) Ocean Avenue...



Patchogue Public Library, 1902-08 Old Association Library, 1891-96
[Seventh library room/Second public library room] [Fourth library room location]

The Library-in-a-Music-Store

(George M. Ackerly Block, South Ocean Ave., Patchogue)

(Photo courtesy Hans Henke & Long Island Advance from A Souvenir of Patchogue, 1896)

...to Lake Street



The Library Room was here, in the left front room.

Library-in-a-Theater

(New Lyceum) an 1890's "Entertainment Center", Lake Street, Patchogue, where an apartment building is today, next to Reese's 1900.

(It also had a fire house, gymnasium, courtroom, and promenade.

The back had been the Old Congregational Church.)

(Photo courtesy, Long Island Advance.)

Soon people got tired of their good idea,
and just didn't help the Library out, any more...
even though it was there
just to help them.

And all the banjos, musical concerts,
singers, dancers, special talks, and shows in town
...couldn't help it, either.

The books grew older,
and some began to fall apart,
and fewer people came,
and the library grew lonely.

Then, in 1897,
some *ladies* of Patchogue started a club,
which they called *Sorosis*.

*Parents' note: Sorosis only sounds like a liver or heart ailment (cirrhosis or arterial sclerosis). It uses the same root as **sorority**, and was an all-purpose social, cultural, educational, political...) national women's organization. Its Patchogue chapter was founded in 1897, and played a critical role in getting the public library started.*

They liked to talk about ...

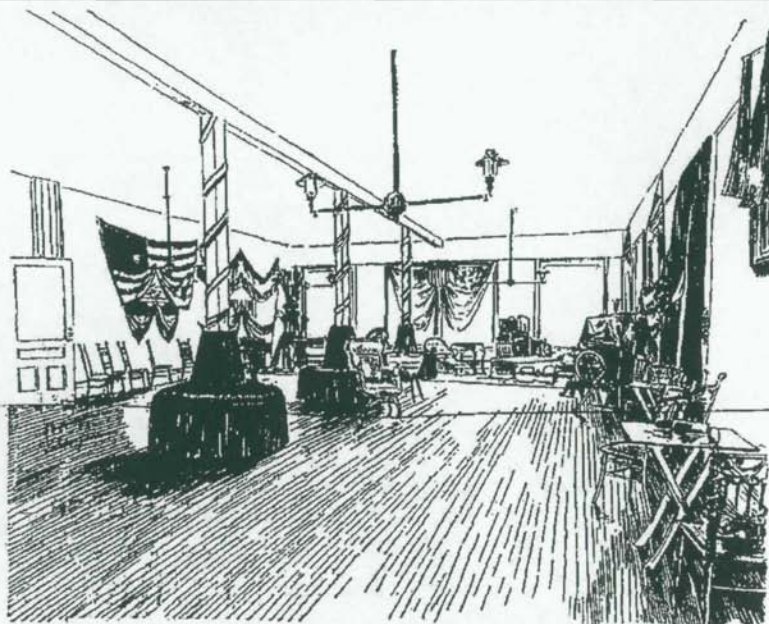
new things, new ideas, new events, new shows,
and **new books**.

They had games, dances, concerts
and shows.



Soon, a lot of *men*
got interested in what they were doing,
and they came too, as guests, on Monday nights.

Then, *one* Monday night, in December 1898
the women of Patchogue's Sorosis
got together in their Club Room, with the men,



PATCHOGUE SOROSIS CLUB ROOM

Here's where Mrs. Craigie spoke and said
Patchogue should have a *public library*.

(Drawing, courtesy Long Island Advance, from the Patchogue Advance, June 30, 1899: p. 10)

and Mary Craigie* got up and said:

[*Managing Director, Brooklyn Public Library]

You should start a public library here.

If six women could start one for Brooklyn,

You should be able to do it for Patchogue.

And the head of Patchogue Sorosis,
asked the people there,

What do you think about that?

The head of the Head of Sorosis

(From Argus, around 1900, reprinted courtesy of the Long Island Advance.)



**Elizabeth Mott Smith, President,
Sorosis & First President of Patchogue Library,
1900-1906.**

Parents' note: Elizabeth Mott Smith had undisputed organizational, musical and literary talents. She was the wife of Judge Wilmot M. Smith, second & last president of the old Patchogue Library Association, 1899.

And they said

they thought it was a good idea:

We NEED a good library,

Just a different kind.

*...Let's make it a **PUBLIC LIBRARY!***

So everyone

May come and use it.



Soon the old library's owners

said that Sorosis could keep the Library for one year,

and try to turn it into a *public library*

(which *means a library for everyone here*).

And if they did that,

it could *stay* that way.

So, Sorosis found a room for the library.

They cleaned it up.

They fixed it up.

They held shows to raise funds for the library.

They talked to people in the Community.

They talked to the School District.

They talked to the State Library.

They got a *real librarian* to help,

the *first one* the library had ever had.

And her name was **Marion Brundage**.

Yes. That's right. -- Marion, the Librarian.

And she DID help.

She set things up right,

and she made it easier

for people to find books

and other things they needed.

... Then, in August 1900,



People voted to have a public library.

A lot of people said ***YES.***

And a few people said ***NO.***

YES won.

Five men & women were chosen by the people...

...Five people who were *trusted*

To take care good care of the library.

So they were called "*Trustees*".

Sorosis gave the library back to everyone,

and turned it over to the five "Trustees".

Very soon, the Trustees got the library a

State Charter.

THAT made it ***Official...***

Patchogue had a Public Library.

And what about Medford?

Ah -- that's in the next part.



Part II: The Library Grows Up

In August 1900,
Patchogue got a Public Library,
and 5 Trustees,
a State Charter,
a Librarian,
and Books.

...And 8 years later, in 1908
it finally got *its own library building*... on Lake Street.
Edwin Bailey, Senior, donated the land.
Andrew Carnegie paid for the building,
and the people helped out.

On March 4th, 1908:

Speeches were made.

Keys were passed.

Doors were opened.

People came in,

and books went out...



... to home after home after home.

And the *Carnegie Library Building*,

when it was still brand new,

looked like this.



The Carnegie Library, March, 1908 – January 1981

Eighth location, First permanent home of the Library.

The “PATCHOGVE LIBRARY” sign (the “V” for a “U”, following Roman sculptural use). A companion sign now hangs over our Local History Room.

(Photo courtesy PML Local History Room)

The library helped people growing up here,
getting old here,
going to work here,
and living here
...find, read and do
many, many things,
year after year after year.

It also *started* a learning group,
for librarians all over the county,
called *Suffolk County Library Association*.
And, that group is still around today.

It helped out soldiers,
on Long Island and all over the globe,
in two world wars.
It helped people find jobs, and find hope,
in a time when jobs and hope
were sometimes *very hard* to find,
just as it does today.

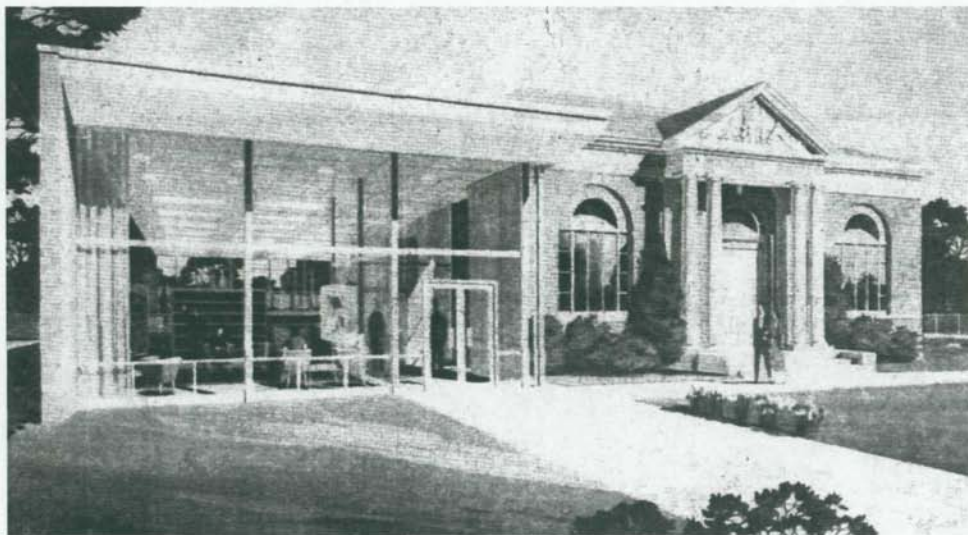
It started, *not just* its *own* catalog,
which helps you find things in a library,
but the *very first* catalog showing what
other libraries in Suffolk County owned, too.

That started in 1941,
and is called a *union catalog*.

And 10 years after that, in 1951,
the library started helping people in **MEDFORD**, too:
providing people there with books and services.

And 7 years later, in 1958, with **lots more people to help**,
the community voted to make the library larger,
so it would have enough room, not only
for all the books and other things it owned,
but also for the *new* things...
that people wanted.

This is what the library looked like when the building was made bigger.



Carnegie Library, with 1958 Addition on left

(Photo courtesy of PML Local History Room)

In 1963, **Suffolk Cooperative Library System**

which helps all the public libraries in the county,

started at the Patchogue Library.

... 3 years after *that*

the Library became **one of New York State's**

two main public libraries for the whole county.

(The other one was Huntington Public Library.)

...Fifteen years later in 1973

the Library changed its name,

and it *officially* became today's...

PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD LIBRARY.

But things *didn't* stop there.

...Six years later

the Library went on to become New York State's

one & only main public library

for the whole county

which we call a "*Central Library*".

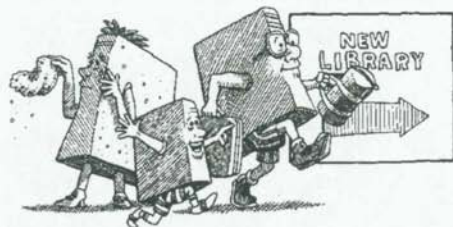
...Two years after that, in 1981

it moved back to Main Street,

into what had been the W.T. Grant's store,

which is where it is **NOW**.

It looks like this...





**Today's Patchogue-Medford Library Building
54-60 East Main Street, Patchogue**

The library's ninth location & second permanent home. (Courtesy, PML Local History Room)

But, there's **still more to tell**, because,
starting four years later -- *and ever since 1985*

-- *Computers* began to be used in the library...

More and MORE and MORE...

and they made **better ways to find things...**

better ways to look at things...

and **better ways to do things.**

Way back, when the library began in 1900,
it only had a small space in a small room,
with most of the library just for adults.

Only a very tiny part of it was for children.
... But that changed -- *fast*.

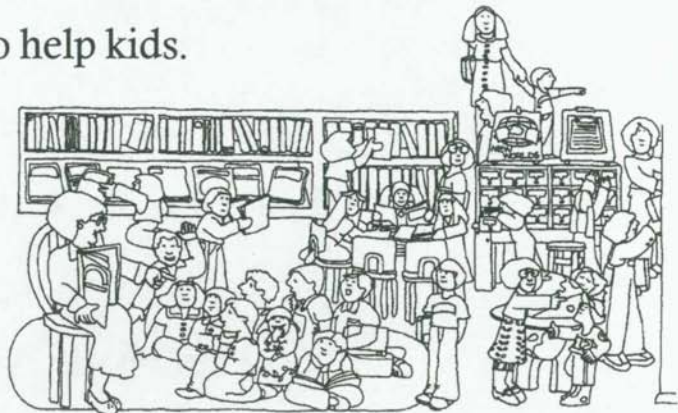
Over time, as the number of things for children
to read, to see and to do

Grew, and GREW and GREW,

The children got first their own *room* and
then their own *floor* in the Library.

There was plenty of space for new things.

And very soon there was a *Children's Librarian*,
just to help kids.



Soon librarians began talking about
helping teenagers, too,
and created a Young Adult section.

They tried it out.

People liked it.

They kept it going.

The different things the Library did for people

Grew and GREW and GREW.

Like how-to-do-it programs, book talks, puppet
plays, shows and music, homework help,
crafts, trips, and much, much more.

And because it did *more*,

it needed more help to do

all the things that people wanted it to do *for them*.

So, soon special departments were created...

to organize the work that people wanted done.

In addition to a **Reference and Adult Services**,
Children's and Parents' Services and
Young Adult/Audiovisual Department, the library has...

An Administration Department,
(to oversee the workings of the library and staff).

A Circulation Department,
(to help people take out and return books and
other things).

A Technical Services (Cataloging) Department
(to order and catalog books and other things,
to make it easy to find them in the library).

A Technical Support (Computer) Department
(to help people connect to the Internet, to data-
bases, to social networks, and to run the
Library's computer too).

And to help the people even more, there is...

A Meeting Room
(for lectures, concerts, movies, crafts, also a place
where community groups meet).

A Local History Room
(to collect things about who lived here and what
happened here over hundreds of years. It has
things people wrote, maps, photos and more).

Over time, it got many more special collections of books.

As it helped people, more and more people came,
to find the things they wanted.

A Literacy and Language Center (where you can find
materials to learn Spanish, Italian, French and German).

A Genealogy Collection
(so you can be the detective of your family history).

When people found they could find things,
they wanted more,

expected more...

...More... and More and MORE,

which is very good;

because *learning* is good.

It can be fun, too,

but, sometimes hard to keep up with.

Today, the Library has *lots* of wonderful things

to *See*, *Do*, and *Take Home*, and to *Do From Your Home*,
even in your pajamas.

It's a good place to come for a treasure hunt,
because there are *lots* of great things here...
things that you can keep in your thoughts...
for a few days, *or even for a lifetime.*

All over the Library,
there are scattered wonders...
wonders that can take you



to any time,
any place,
any one,
or any thing...

...helping you learn,
...helping you play,
...helping you grow,
...helping you help someone you love or care about.

*So, what kinds of things has the library collected,
over 100 years? That's Part III.*

Part III

What's Been in the Library?

Over 100 Years,

the Library collected many, many more **books**.

It kept **maps** and little books, called **pamphlets**

in folders called **vertical files**

(sorted by what they're about,
so people could find and use them).

And when people wanted *phonograph records*,
Records were bought.

When they wanted *audio tapes* to hear,
Tapes were collected.

When they wanted *films*,
They got films.

When they wanted *videos* instead,
They got videos.

And they also got *microfilmed magazines* and *newspapers*...
until they wanted them electronically.

Today people want more *electronic information*,
and they're getting that, too...



...Like the *Electronic Library Catalog* (called PALS)

And *Database Searching*,

And *CD's*,

And *DVD's*,

And the *Internet*,

And *Electronic Books* (called *E-Books*)

And *Digitized Material*.

And *Training* for all of it!

And who knows?

Whatever comes next!



And on Main Street,

not far from where the library started,

and where the library has been since 1981...

We are here still helping people

in our community

(and throughout the whole County)...

People are Texting,

And social networking,

and twittering

Inside the Library And Out.

Loading Free Songs,

And Videos and Books,

Into Their Macs, Cell Phones, and Nooks.

Nothing stays just the same,

Even the Carnegie Library has Gotten Up and Moved,

Again to be, Part of the Library,

Both the Oldest,

And the Newest.

Helping everyone

Read and Learn...

...What *They WANT* to Read.

...What *They WANT* to Learn.

Ask a Question

***Try* to find **Answers**,**

About anything and everything,

Any time the Library is open,

And even over the Internet, when it's closed.

The best way to celebrate a library, any library,

but *especially Your Own*, is to ***USE IT!***

Keep on Using It,

READING, LEARNING, SHARING.

...And while you're there:

Tell a librarian about **what *You* like to read.**
Ask a librarian about **what *You'd* like to learn.**

We're Here to Help You Help Yourself to Knowledge!

And the world spins round and round

And the Library spins to its sound.

And as it spins again,

It helps Children Grow Their Minds,

Into Better Women, and Better Men.

So it has been,

So it is still,

For over a century, ever after.

THE END
(and many happy new beginnings)



DIRECTORS:

1901-1903	Marion Brundage (Dodge)
1903-1910	Edith Terry (Mills)
1910-1914	Claire Sumner
1914-1945	Alma Custead
1946-1952	Muriel Wiggins
1952-1984	Elaine B. Phipps
1984 -1990	Sarah Courant
1991-2008	Judith R. Gibbard
2008-	Dina McNeece Chrils

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