During the 1920's library usage continued to expand, and experienced important growth. There were at that time 17,000 books. In the 1930's the depression hit the library: budgets were cut, salaries were reduced, but circulation rose as people found a great source of free entertainment. Rules had to be made. In 1933 a guard was hired to "control the annoyance of noisy and unruly boys." Anyone ejected was subject to 6 months's loss of privileges. Also during this period chickens, ducks and geese often lived on the front lawn and were a constant annoyance to some and amusement to others. However, the library continued to grow, and by 1938 circulation had risen to over 100,000. After due consideration plans were drawn for expanding the building in 1931 and 1938.

The war years intervened, the Carnegie grants were no longer available, building costs has risen, and therefore the building still remained at its original capacity. In the early 1950's Union Free School District No. 24 had been expanded to include the Medford area. Again through the efforts and hard work of many individuals, new plans were drawn and a major addition was opened in March 1958. The addition tripled the capacity of the original building and cost $315,000.

Today with membership of 22,000 and an annual circulation in excess of 260,000 the use of the building is again far beyond its capacity. It is now one of two co-central reference libraries in Suffolk County, and it contains 1,255,000 volumes. There are 5 professional librarians, 11 clerical employees, plus additional part-time help on the staff. The annual budget is now approximately $500,000 per year.

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Because of crowded conditions some books are by necessity kept in another location, but are available on short notice. New additions and facilities have been considered. The costs are now in the millions, a long way from $15,000 in 1908. In time these building problems will be resolved at the lease expense for the taxpayers, and the greatest benefit to the entire community.

Throughout the history of the library there have always been volunteers and interested persons who devote themselves to the betterment of the library. Special thanks should be given to the many generous patrons who over the years have donated books, phonograph records, exhibits, and objects of historical value to the library. With your help and the assistance of local groups and service clubs the library has thrived and grown. In 1973 a group was formed known as the "Friends of the Library". They have worked tirelessly to cooperate with the staff. Library programs have been broadened, movies, craft projects, and historical surveys have all become a natural part of the life of the library. After more than 75 years the library is strong and functional. With the support of all members of this community, for whom it was originally started, the library will continue to grow.

This booklet is not dedicated to an impersonal institution, but to you, the people, who have helped the Patchogue-Medford Library become a personal, vital and responsive part of your life during the past 75 years.
By 1887 J. L. Overton had been appointed librarian at a salary of $50 per year. Already the group was in debt and tried, in vain, to raise funds for the popular library. In 1889 the Overton store was sold, and a new librarian took over, but it became more difficult to keep interest up. In 1893 Dr. Craven died and interest in the whole project waned. Finally, in 1896 the library was moved to the New Lyceum Building on Lake Street and Judge Wilmot Smith was elected president. There followed a general depression, debts mounted and interest lagged. The collection was closed and put into storage. In 1899 the ladies of the Sorosis were firm in their conviction that a flourishing village like Patchogue should not be without a real public library. These women, led by Mrs. Wilmot Smith, worked and reactivated the collection. They raised money and the public's spirit and it was through their efforts that a school district library was organized and a State Charter was sought and granted in 1900.

The first trustees were Mrs. Wilmot Smith, President; Dr. Frank Overton, Secretary; the high school principal, Dr. Wollington E. Gordon, Treasurer; Mr. Walter H. Jaycox and Mrs. D. Gertrude Brundage.

The first official reports showed that the library contained 1,597 books and a circulation of 11,969. The librarian's salary was four dollars per week. The room in the Lyceum Building was not large enough and the library was again moved to rooms in the Smith Block at a cost of $200 per year including utilities. It was at this time the first magazines came into the library and there was a policy that no work of fiction would be purchased until it was at least one year old. This was done to prevent "the waste of limited funds on useless books". The entire book budget at that time was less than $200 compared to $85,000 today. Already the group was in debt and tried, in vain, to raise funds for the popular library. In 1889 the Overton store was sold, and a new librarian took over, but it became more difficult to keep interest up. In 1893 Dr. Craven died and interest in the whole project waned. Finally, in 1896 the library was moved to the New Lyceum Building on Lake Street and Judge Wilmot Smith was elected president. There followed a general depression, debts mounted and interest lagged. The collection was closed and put into storage. In 1899 the ladies of the Sorosis were firm in their conviction that a flourishing village like Patchogue should not be without a real public library. These women, led by Mrs. Wilmot Smith, worked and reactivated the collection. They raised money and the public's spirit and it was through their efforts that a school district library was organized and a State Charter was sought and granted in 1900.

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