

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 125,000 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. 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.

Keeper of the Books

Marion Brundage	1900-1902
Edith Terry	1902-1910
Claire Summer	1910-1914

Librarians

Alma Custead	1914-1945
Muriel Wiggins	1945-1952
Elaine Phipps	1952-

Childrens Librarians

Lois Conklin	1923-1928
Katherine W. Smith	1928-1930
Mrs. Woolfred	1930-1937
Muriel Stewart	1937-1940
Rita Kelly	1940-1946
Alma I. Jones	1946-1950
Lenetta Klein	1950-1972
Olga Mary Wilder	1972-
Helen Schreyer	1973-1975
Michele Bader	1975-

TRUSTEES

Elizabeth Mott Smith
Walter H. Jaycox
Willington E. Gordon
Frank Overton

James A. Canfield
H. A. Tennay
Willis A. Reeve
Miss Rosetta Terry
James Young
Robert Cruger
Frank Johnson
Frank Shaw
Leslie Mac Robbie
Roy B. Robbins
L. Terrell
Leslie Weiss
Lincoln G. Schmidt
Paul Bassett
Ernest Guttridge
William H. Hart

Harold L. Bates

Charles E. Alexander
Joseph Lifschitz
William Matsunaye, Jr.
Charles W. Taylor
Mrs. Harold Bates
Norman Lechtrecker
Milton Coe
Harold Hayden
John W. Stakes
Melvyn L. Jacoby
Joseph C. Valentine
Mrs. Julius Hastings
Miss Catherine Olinger
G. Howard Hatfield, Jr.
Charles Darcy

Kathryn Walsh

Printing Donated by -

Bankers Trust of Suffolk
Island State Bank
Swezey & Newins Department Store

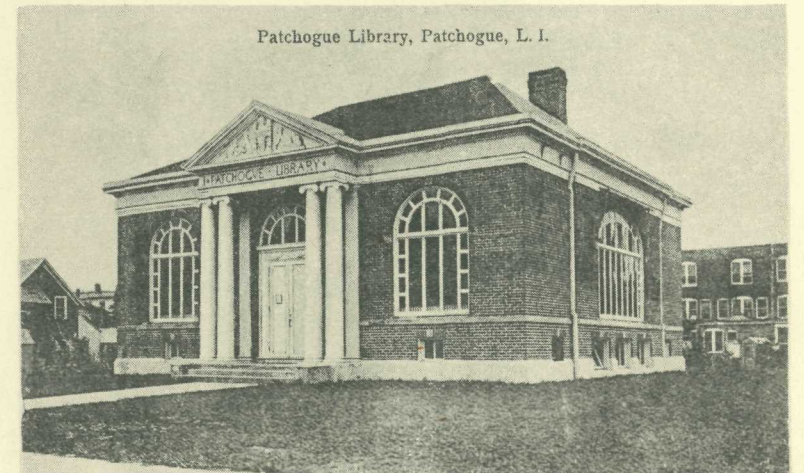
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LI-Patchogue-Medford Library History-1976

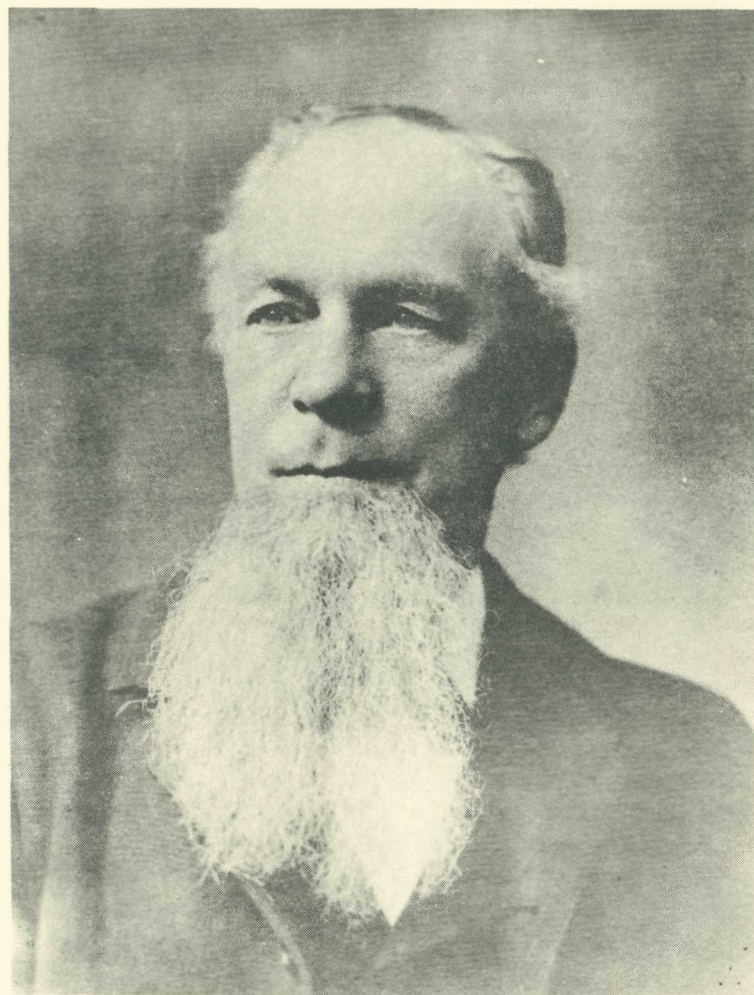
Patchogue

Medford

Library



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.



Honorable Edwin Bailey

"With simple but appropriate ceremony Patchogue's handsome new library building on Lake Street was formally dedicated on Wednesday evening. The doors were opened to the public during the afternoon and many availed themselves of the opportunity to inspect the new building which has been in course of construction during the past eight months." This quotation from the March 6, 1908 ARGUS marked the opening of the original building of the Patchogue Library.

There had been a long effort by many devoted people to bring this building to fruition and there have been ongoing efforts for 75 years to expand the facilities and keep the collection up-to-date for the use of a growing and prosperous community.

Patchogue has had a public library since June 1883, when a meeting of subscribers was held at the home of Dr. J. Craven. From contributions received, a few books were purchased and a committee evolved to solicit money and accept gifts of books from those who desired to contribute. In August of the same year a formal organizational meeting was held in the library room which was then located in a part of the Overton Shoe Store in the John Roe Smith Building (near the present Colony Shop) on West Main Street. At this time 645 volumes were available. It was also decided that a membership fee of five dollars and a subscription fee of one dollar be charged.

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. Wellington 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.



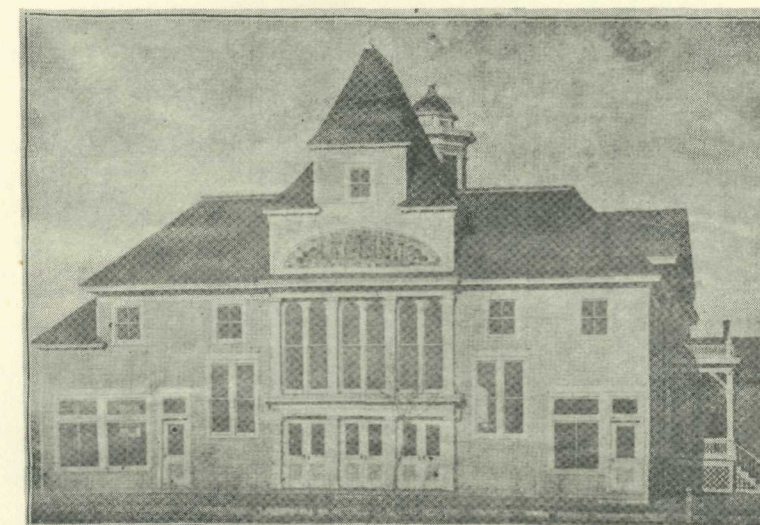
Original Site of Library - Center foreground - before building was erected. Street on Right - Pine Street - now called North Ocean Avenue (Year 1870)

The trustees soon realized that to be of permanent value to the community, the library needed its own building, but they lacked money to purchase a suitable site. Application was made to Andrew Carnegie for funds to construct a new library building. However, the proviso was that the local beneficiaries provide land and maintenance. Outstanding in a roster of public-spirited citizens concerned with the quality of life in Patchogue in the late 19th century was the Honorable Edwin Bailey,

owner of Bailey's Lumber Mill. In 1905 he deeded to the library trustees a lot on Lake Street, near the site of his original hardware and carpentry shop. With this and the voters' approval of \$1,000 a year for operational expenses, Patchogue received a \$10,000 Carnegie grant. Mr. John Van Pelt was selected as the architect and the Architectural Construction Company of New York was engaged for the construction at the cost of \$10,640. By March 1908 the building was completed but had exceeded cost estimates. Application was again made to Mr. Carnegie and another \$5,000 was granted on the condition that 10% be raised by local taxation. The library was formally opened on March 8, 1908 by James Canfield, then President of the Board of Trustees.

It was soon realized that the work of the librarian was a distinct profession and Alma Custead was employed. Mrs. Custead took up her duties in Patchogue July 1914. She continued as a senior student in the New York Library School through the following year, while giving part-time service as librarian of the Patchogue Library. During this year the library was reorganized, re-catalogued and shelf listed, and the circulation by June 1915 was increased by more than 4,000. By the end of 1916 the library ranked among the highest in the state for efficient service and circulation records in proportion to the population served.

For some years the large room in the basement was used as an assembly room for meetings of various clubs and organizations, such as the Women's Study Club, the Jewish Women's Association, the Boy Scouts of America. A private kindergarten was kept there mornings for several years by Mrs. Robert Valentine. For two or three years, when one of the schools was overcrowded, a primary grade was conducted there.



CHURCH, COMMUNITY HALL, THEATRE — In 1854 the Congregationalists of Patchogue built a large frame church facing on North Ocean Avenue a little above Lake Street. When the new building on East Main Street was erected in 1893 the old one was converted into the Lyceum, as a social and entertainment center. It developed eventually into a regular theatre, with a big stage on the north side and a gallery on the south side, which became the front on Lake Street as shown here. The old church gable and porch show on the right and the cupola up in the center. Some years ago the building was completely transformed into apartments.

In 1924 this large sunny room was fitted up as a separate room for the children, with built in bookcases, low tables and chairs, a few color prints and a great many new and beautiful books. In 1929 a trained librarian was engaged for this department. This room now holds a very crowded reference library while the children's room occupies the entire main floor of the original library. The children's story hour and summer reading club have long been traditions and the children's collection is considered the finest in Suffolk County.