

John Roe Smith Block

2nd building, right of the Central Hotel, location of today's Colony Shop, 32 West Main St., Patchogue



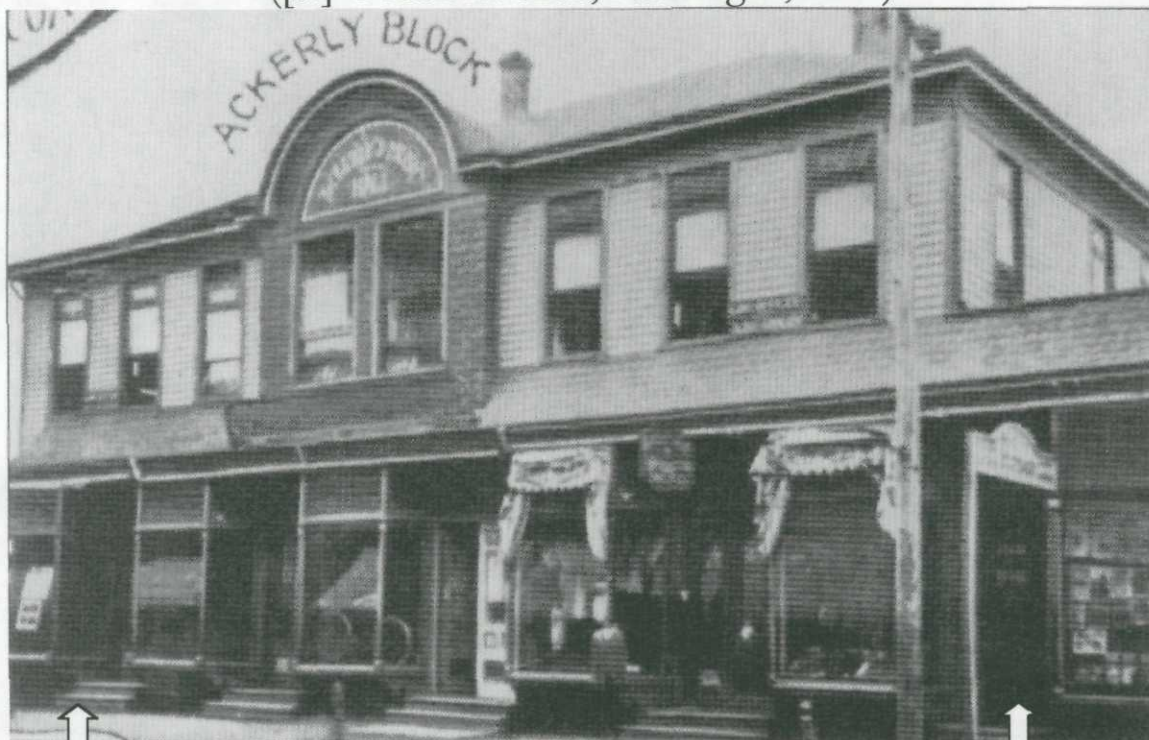
(Reprinted courtesy Hans Henke)

From Association to Public Library: The Transition Took Place Here

Rented room in Floyd A. Overton's shoe store <i>1st home of the library</i>	1883-1884
Rented room(s) in James L. Overton's shoe store <i>3rd home of the library</i>	1884/5-1890/1
Rented room: Sorosis' demonstration public library <i>6th home of the library</i>	1899-1900
Rented room: Patchogue Library <i>1st home of the public library, under State Charter</i>	1900-1903

[George M.] Ackerly Block

([S.] Ocean Avenue, Patchogue, N.Y.)



Patchogue Public Library, 1902-08

Old Association Library, 1891-96

George M. Ackerly (& Son) had a long association with the library:

- As “Librarian” of the *Patchogue Library Association*, which rented space in his *stationery store (1884/85)*, the 2nd home of the library (located somewhere on E. Main St., perhaps on the site of the present Ackerly Block, diagonally East of the current library building).
- As “Librarian” a second time, in his [South]Ocean Avenue *music store (1891-96)*, 4th home of the library. [Note: North Ocean Avenue was then known as Pine Street.
- As sponsor of a clerk, as “acting librarian,” one day a week at the *New Lyceum (1896-99)*
- As landlord, when the library returned to the other end of the Ackerly Block *music store (1902-08)*, 2nd home of the public library, and 7th rented home of the library, since 1883.

This photo dates to the end of the middle period (1891-96). The sign above the right-hand door, under magnification, reads “*Library*”.

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

The New Lyceum

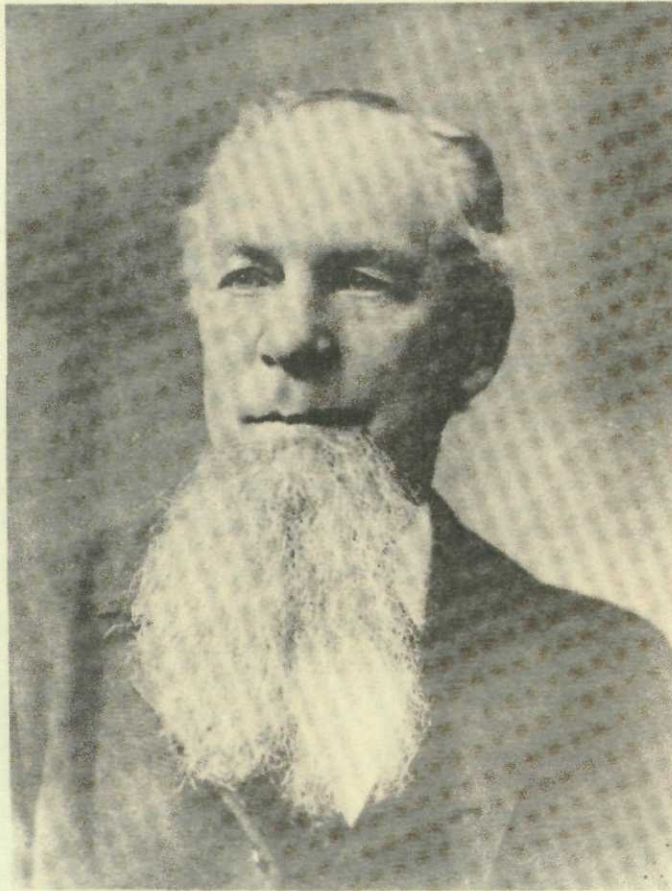
(Lake Street, Patchogue, N.Y.)



Patchogue Library, 1896-1899 (located in the West Front Room)

This building had once been the *(Old) Congregational Church*, which was incorporated into its structure. In **May 1883**, **Rev. S. Fielder Palmer**, pastor of the Church, issued the 1st call for a "public" (i.e., free association) library, in a *Patchogue Advance* article entitled, "**Mental and Social Culture**". The library's dedication (**Aug. 29, 1883**) and 2nd anniversary (**November 9, 1885**) were celebrated in the church. This building, sold by its congregation--who moved to their present Main Street location--was converted by **Jesse C. Mills'** Lyceum Construction Company, into the village showplace of its time (1891), renamed the *(New) Lyceum*, which replaced the *(Old) Lyceum*, on [S.] Ocean Avenue. (Note: The library held fundraising entertainments at both Lyceums. Mr. Mills and his business partner, **Fremont Hammond**, of *Hammond & Mills* department store [Southeast "4 Corners"], were both active library board members.) The *New Lyceum* included **a large theater, gymnasium, shops, a firehouse, a N.Y.S. Supreme Court Justice's office (Hon. Wilmot Smith), a surrounding promenade**, and the **library**, a relative latecomer. **Jesse C. Mills** proposed in 1896, to house the Library in the New Lyceum, offering \$50 toward annual rent; while **George M. Ackerly** offered use a clerk, free of charge, to serve as "acting librarian." These offers were accepted, and the **library moved to its 5th rented home**. In **October 1899**, it was **Jesse C. Mills** who made Patchogue Library Association's *final* resolution: that the library be turned over to **Sorosis**, to revert to the Association only if it did not succeed in going public within a year. In **November 1899**, the Library's care was assumed by Patchogue **Sorosis**, and it was moved to **John Roe Smith Block** (on W. Main Street). The *New Lyceum* was later sold, seems to have been separated into two buildings, and according to a 1902 map, was briefly an asbestos factory. **John V. Van Pelt**, architect of Patchogue's *Carnegie Library* (1907-08) diagonally across the street, redesigned the *Lyceum* as the *Lyceum Apartments*. On **August 7, 1900**, the vote came at the annual school board meeting of UFSD # 24. The public library was established, and now a fact.

(Photo courtesy of Hans Henke)



Honorable Edwin Bailey

Hon. Edwin Bailey, Sr., originally hailing from Manchester, England, was a self-made man. Following a youthful shipboard stint around Cape Horn, he became a carpenter by trade, and later owner of the *Bailey & Son* lumberyards, mills, and fleet. Highly active in civic affairs, he became *Brookhaven Town Supervisor*, *Patchogue Fire Chief*, a *Patchogue Library Association Trustee (1899)*, and *President of the Board of Education* (U.F.S.D. # 24). Holder of many offices and honors, he was a frequent contributor to the Patchogue Library Association, throughout its existence (1883-99). He just as heartily supported the public library, from its inception, until his death in 1906. In 1904, after negotiations with *Andrew Carnegie* (for library construction funds) had foundered on lack of land for a building, it was *Edwin Bailey, Sr.*, who generously donated the Lake Street property on which his original carpenter's shop had once stood. He rescued the Carnegie negotiations, which then proceeded to success in 1905-08; accompanied by a shower of fine leather-bound books (including entire series) for public use. On September 2, 1904, *Patchogue Advance* (p. 5) observed, "*Hon. Edwin Bailey, [Sr.]...is the great friend of the Patchogue Public Library*". In 1922, library trustee (and later President) *Willis A. Reeve* stated the Board's belief that had there been no such donation, it would have been many years more before the library had a permanent residence. Today, it is fitting at the Library's Centennial, that his grandson (*Edwin III's*) wife, *Rae Bailey* serves on the **Board of Trustees**.

Carnegie Library Building

(10 Lake Street, Patchogue)

Most of the library's 100-year history took place here

Patchogue Library, Patchogue, L. I.

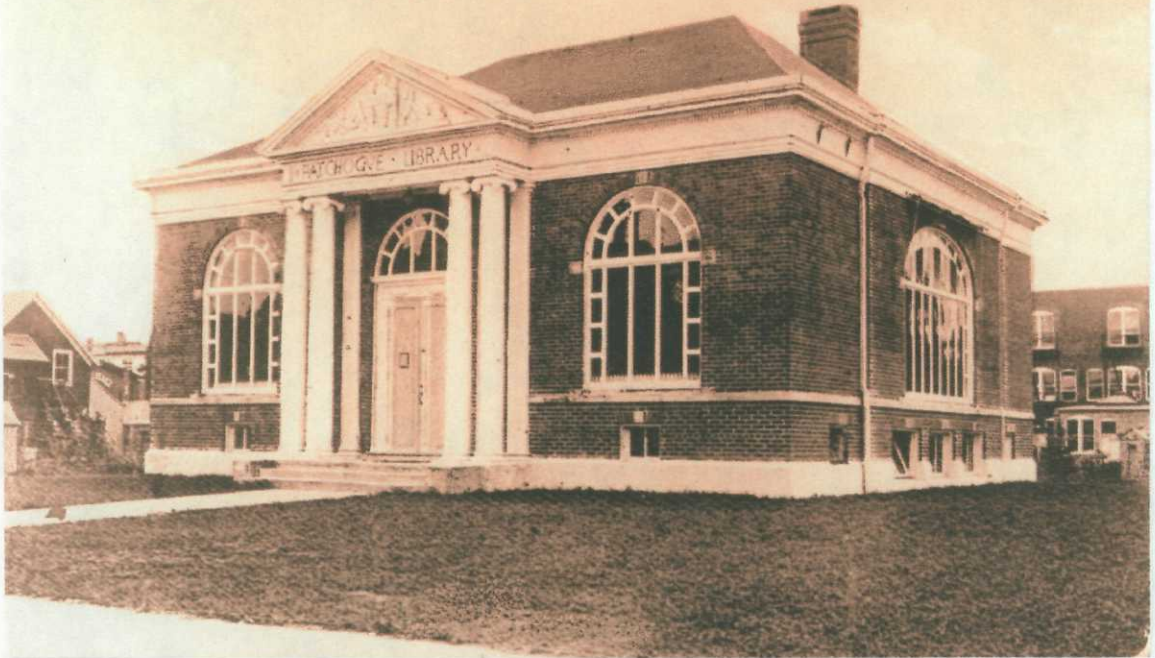


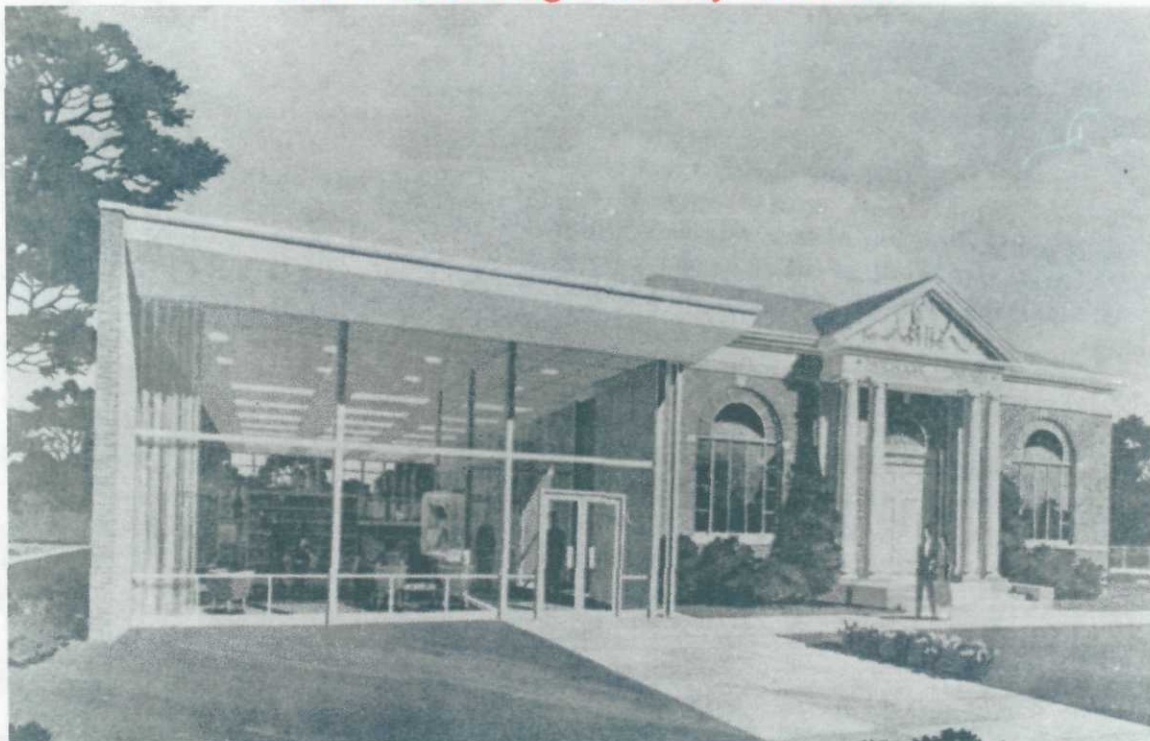
Photo taken around the time of the Library's dedication, March 4, 1908.

This was the library's first permanent address: *its 8th home since 1883, & its 3rd since State Chartering* (December 20, 1900). It served as its residence through January 1981, when the library moved to its current location at the former W.T. Grant store, 54-60 Main St. Patchogue, NY.

The Library arose through successful negotiations with Andrew Carnegie, 1905-08. It was later home to Alma D. Custead, founder and first President of the Suffolk County Library Association. In the 1920's & 1930's it won repeated state awards and recognition. In 1941 it launched the **first countywide library catalog, based here.** led book drives for U.S. troops at home and abroad, **community-wide in WW I, and county-wide in WW II.** The Library commenced telephone service to its residents in 1947, and in 1951, its **services were extended northward to the Medford community.** 1958 saw a resultant **Library Expansion.** In 1963, **Suffolk Cooperative Library System** commenced operations from its basement. In 1966, the library became a New York State-designated **Central Library** providing, along with Huntington Public Library, service to Suffolk County, N.Y. residents. In 1973, the library underwent a **name change by charter amendment, to The Patchogue-Medford Library.** In 1978, it became Suffolk County, New York's **sole Central Library.** Today it is home to **Briarcliffe College.** A smaller, wooden replica of the "PATCHOGUE LIBRARY" sign pictured here, above the library entrance (dating to 1908, and following the Roman carved lettering tradition), now hangs over the Patchogue-Medford Library's **Local History Room.**

[From a period postcard, Courtesy of the PML Local History Room]

The 1958 Carnegie Library Addition



The architecturally “modern” Addition (on the left), expanded the library to 12,500 sq. ft., which accommodated most of the collection and relieved congestion. But it provided virtually no room for growth, as a cost-saving measure. This occurred at a time when the library’s service area had expanded to include Medford (1951), when its population was growing, and along with library use and public demand for more materials in more varieties. There had been pleas from Librarians for an addition since the 1920’s. Prior to 1958, there had been repairs and reconfigurations. After 1958, the population and collection continued to grow, and within a decade the congestion was back, despite repeated careful weeding of the collection. Over the decades there was growing public demand for a greater variety of materials in a greater variety of forms: microforms, 16 mm. films, audiotapes. The collection outgrew the capacity of the Library, and by 1970, the congestion was serious, and there was a consensus to move to a larger facility, which occurred in 1981. The Carnegie Library of yore (1908) passed to Briar Cliffe College, its present occupant. The building, on Lake Street, Patchogue, appears from the outside today, largely as it did in 1958.



Present Home of the Library, Since January 1981
(Formerly a W.T. Grant Store and Warehouse)
at 54-60 East Main Street, Patchogue
(Main Street Entrance)