



A Walking Tour of Library History



The Patchogue-Medford Library Celia M. Hastings Local History Room Compiled & edited by Mark Rothenberg, June 2017



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Patchogue-Medford Library. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room

Proceed out the front (Main St.) door of Patchogue-Medford Library, and make a left. Continue along the sidewalk until you are across the street from ❶ Rhum, site of *George Ackerly's stationery store*, Then, look (across the street) slightly to the left, to ❷ O'Neill's, at the corner of N. Ocean and E. Main St., site of *Nelson McBride's Drug Store* (and soda fountain).

❶ **Rhum** (Caribbean-style Bar & Restaurant, 13 East Main Street)



Source: Mark H. Rothenberg

Ackerly vs. Overton: A Library Rental Bidding War?

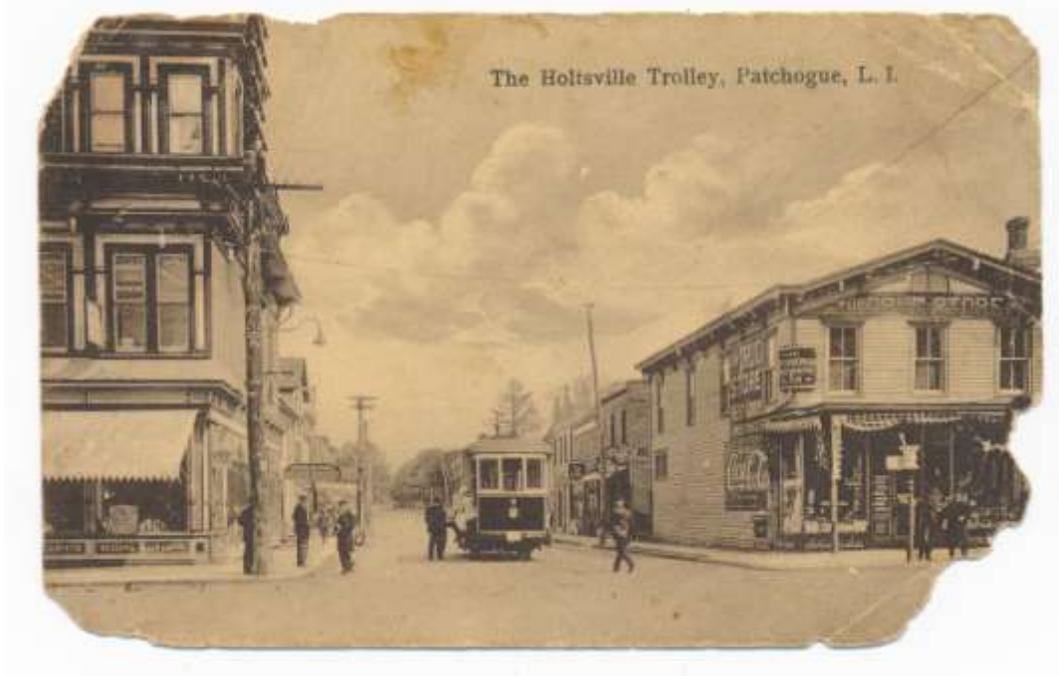
In 1883, when **Patchogue Library Association** was created and first looking for a room in which to open a library, **Floyd A. Overton** and **George M. Ackerly** were among the foremost bidders. (A rental agreement ensured a steady income stream to the renter. A brand new library association seemed a reliable bet, and having the Library as an extra draw could bring new customers to their business.) *Floyd Overton's* offer was the one accepted. When Mr. Overton's wife, *Lida*, died in 1884, and the Library was ordered out of his shoe store, it was Mr. Ackerly's renewed offer that was taken up. **This building** was the site, in 1884-1885, of **George M. Ackerly's stationery store**. During those years, the **association library occupied a rented room rented room**, its **second home** in the village. Meanwhile, back at the **John Roe Smith Block** (the Library's previous home), with *Floyd Overton*, having his hands full as CEO of the new village bank, the shoe store was turned over to relative, **James L. Overton**, who added haberdashery (menswear accessories) to the shoe store inventory. James offered the library 2 rooms,

at a price that was apparently attractive to the Library Board. So, in **1885**, the Library moved back to its original location (32 West Main St.), remaining there until **1891**, when it would again move back into **Ackerly hands**, on (South) Ocean Avenue, until **1896**. But it returned once again to *George Ackerly*, **1902-1908**, for the last time.

② **William J. O'Neill Sales Exchange Co., Inc.**



Earlier, this building, was **Nelson McBride's Drug Store** (& soda fountain), pictured (below), on the right



Looking north from the **Four Corners**, up North Ocean Avenue (formerly Pine St.) about **1915**.
Photo source: Digital PML. Postcard Collection and PML. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room.

Nelson McBride became Treasurer of Patchogue Library Association, in **1884**, following **E.S. Peck's** disgrace and resignation, after Peck's bank (the sole one in the village) failed.

Continue to the corner of Main St. and S. Ocean Ave. Behind you are the **3 Village Idiot Pub** (8 E. Main St.) and **Budget Buy and Sell** (2 E. Main St.). These were part of a number of buildings once owned by **Hammond & Mills**, a large and very popular general store.



Budget Buy & Sell and Village Idiot Pub [Today]. (Location of part of the Hammond Mills Building)
Photo Source: Mark Rothenberg



Hammond Mills & Co. – **Jesse C. Mills** was the **owner**. His prior partner **Fremont Hammond** and Jesse’s son ran the company. Hammond now being senior partner, his name preceded that of Mills’ son. **Jesse Mills** and **Fremont Hammond** were **Library Board members**. **Jesse Mills** was particularly active, playing crucial roles in the development of the association and public libraries, and in the growth of the village. **Photo Source: Picturesque Patchogue. The Argus, 1896.**

While at the corner of Main St. & South Ocean Ave., look diagonally across the street at the ④ New Village Tower. In 1890, the **Fishel Tower** stood here, and a photo (that you will see later) was taken from its other (or northern) side, showing several important locations, associated with Library history.

④ New Village Tower (N.W. junction of Main St. & Ocean Ave.)



Former site of Fishel’s Tower (Tower Hall, and Swezey & Newins’ Tower)
Photo source: Mark Rothenberg

It was from the rear (north-facing) upper story of **Fishel's Tower** (later Swezey's Tower) where, around 1890, this photo, showing the Congregational Church of Patchogue and the site of the Carnegie Library, was taken. Photo credit: Patchogue-Medford Library. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room.



The Ackerly Block and Its Evolution

Make a left, proceeding down the sidewalk along South Ocean Ave., until you see the ⑤ Evolution Barber Shop, across the street from you. Note that it is part of the building extending to its right, formerly known as the **Ackerly Block**, where the **Association Library** was located from **1891-1896**, and **Public Library** from **1902-1908** (the latter years, at what is now **Evolution**).

⑤ Evolution (46 South Ocean Avenue)



The building's **roof line** follows the base of the first floor roof, in its earlier, two-story version (below). – **Photo Source:** Mark Rothenberg

Ackerly Block. *Souvenir of Patchogue*, 1896. It was also known as the “twin building.” Note the wings on either side of the central arched section. The block had been moved, by G.G. Roe, from the east side of S. Ocean Ave.

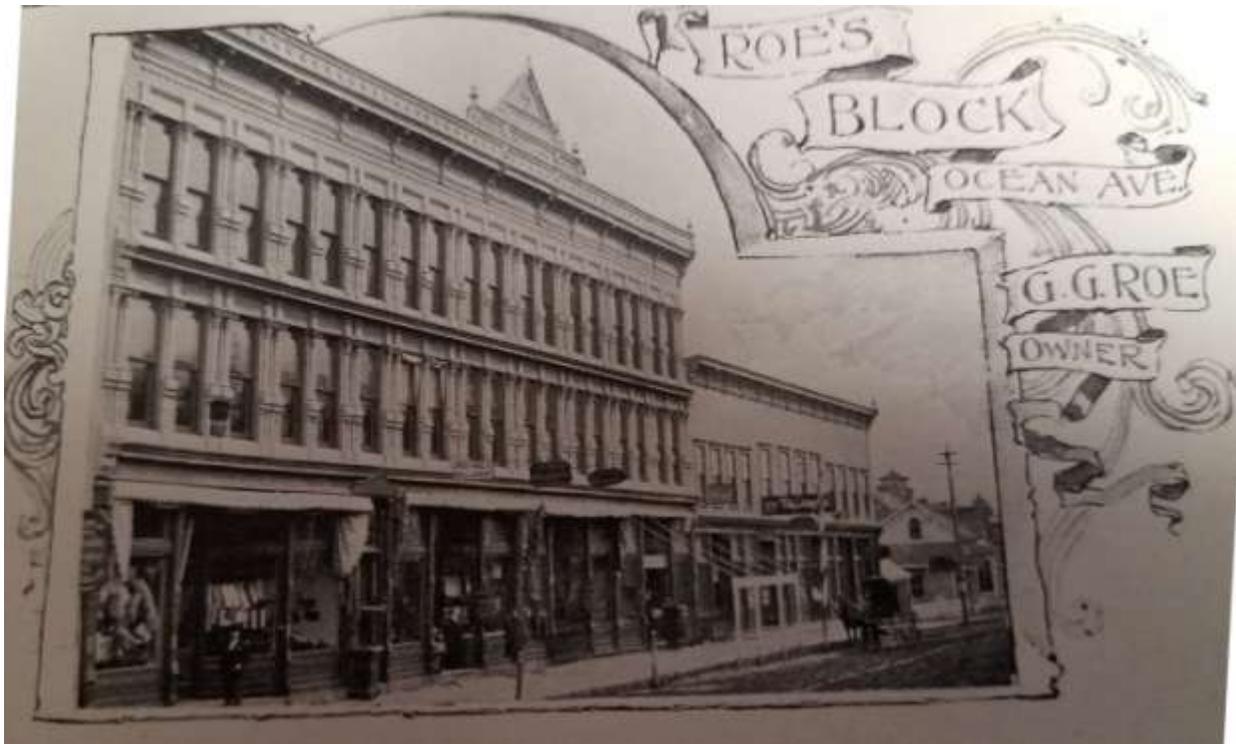


From **1891-1896**, **Patchogue Library** may have occupied the street-level room, **second from the right**. The Long Island News Co. section (extending on the right) was then still a barber shop (not yet attached to the twin building). The Library would next migrate to the **New Lyceum, 1896-1899** (on Lake St.), followed by the **John Roe Smith Block, 1899-1902** (W. Main St., at first under *Sorosis*, 1899-1900, then as a **public Library**, 1900-1902). From **1902-1908**, the **public Library** returned, to occupy the **street-level room on the left front side** of the **Ackerly Block** (renting from *George M. Ackerly's Music Store*, with his **Music Hall** above). It must have made reading or studying quite a challenge, whenever music lessons, band practice, concerts were slated, or whenever customers tried out musical instruments. It was then located at 23 *Ocean Avenue*. By 1910, street numbering on what had now become *South Ocean Avenue* had been changed, so that # 23 became # 46, which is **today** the location of **Evolution Barber Shop**. The Library moved from this location, in **early 1908**, to the **Carnegie Library** (10 Lake St.).

Continue a little further south, and cross the street at the marked crosswalk (being very careful of oncoming traffic), then proceed back up the street (north) along the sidewalk, pausing to look across the street at the ⑥ Hot Bagels Plus and Patchogue's former Family Dollar store. These were formerly the location of the ⑥ **Old Lyceum**, which was part of the **Gelston G. Roe Block**.



Hot Bagels Plus (57 S. Ocean Ave.) and **Dollar General** (location of the former **Family Dollar**) store (59 South Ocean Avenue), represent the location of the **Old Lyceum**. **Photo Source:** Mark Rothenberg



Gelston G. Roe Block (S. Ocean Ave., east side), consisted of these **2 buildings**. The one **on the right** housed the **Old Lyceum** (apparently on the 2nd floor). Both buildings were torn down in

1928, replaced by a long 1-story structure mainly housing national chain stores (including W.T. Grant, which later moved to Main St.). **Photo Source:** *A Souvenir of Patchogue*, 1896.

The Old Lyceum originally was the **Clinton Rink, 1885-1888**, during the heyday of the roller skating craze that swept the region. The Rink started out perpendicular to the road. Later, when people lost interest in the skating fad, it was turned into a theater, the **Old Lyceum**. In **1891**, it was turned 90 degrees, to face the street, with stores on the first floor, the Lyceum on the second. Lectures, concerts, plays, minstrel shows, public events, and other forms of entertainment were held here, including library and church fundraisers, meeting with varied success. **The Theater** may have been phased out, in favor of a dance hall. As the Old Lyceum went into decline, a **New Lyceum** (on Lake Street) took its place, in **1895**, as Patchogue's premier entertainment center, and it had even stronger Library connections.

Head north toward the New Village Tower. Carefully cross to the north side of Main St. (Be alert to oncoming traffic, as too many drivers love to go fast, run lights, speed around corners, and not pay particular attention to presence of pedestrians, until the last moment). Continue straight ahead on the sidewalk along North Ocean Ave., to Lake Street, then, opposite Reese's 1900, make a left, continuing along Lake Street, until you are opposite the ⑦ Lake Street Apartments.

⑦ Lake Street Apartments (No. 5 is the gray bldg. & No. 3 is the yellow bldg.)



The **left front room, at street-level, in the gray building on the left** (5 Lake St.), approximates where the **Association Library** was located **in the Lyceum, 1896-1899**. Photo Source: Mark Rothenberg

In **1883**, the land on which the apartments now stand was the location of the ***Congregational Church of Patchogue*** (founded in 1793), which also owned land all the way to Pine St. (i.e., N. Ocean Ave.). It had been at this particular site since **1854**. The Church moved to its current location (95 E. Main St.), in **1892**. That year, part of the former church building was incorporated into the **New Lyceum**, which opened in **1895**, and became **the main village showplace**.

Between 1909 and 1913, control of the Lyceum passed through several hands, and ownership was in legal doubt. Finally, in **1913**, **Southold Savings Bank** had had enough, and **foreclosed** on its \$4,200 mortgage. After World War II two apartment buildings rose in its place, which have recently undergone another renovation.

Congregational Church of Patchogue, ca. 1890 (white building with steeple, center right below)



Source: PML. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room

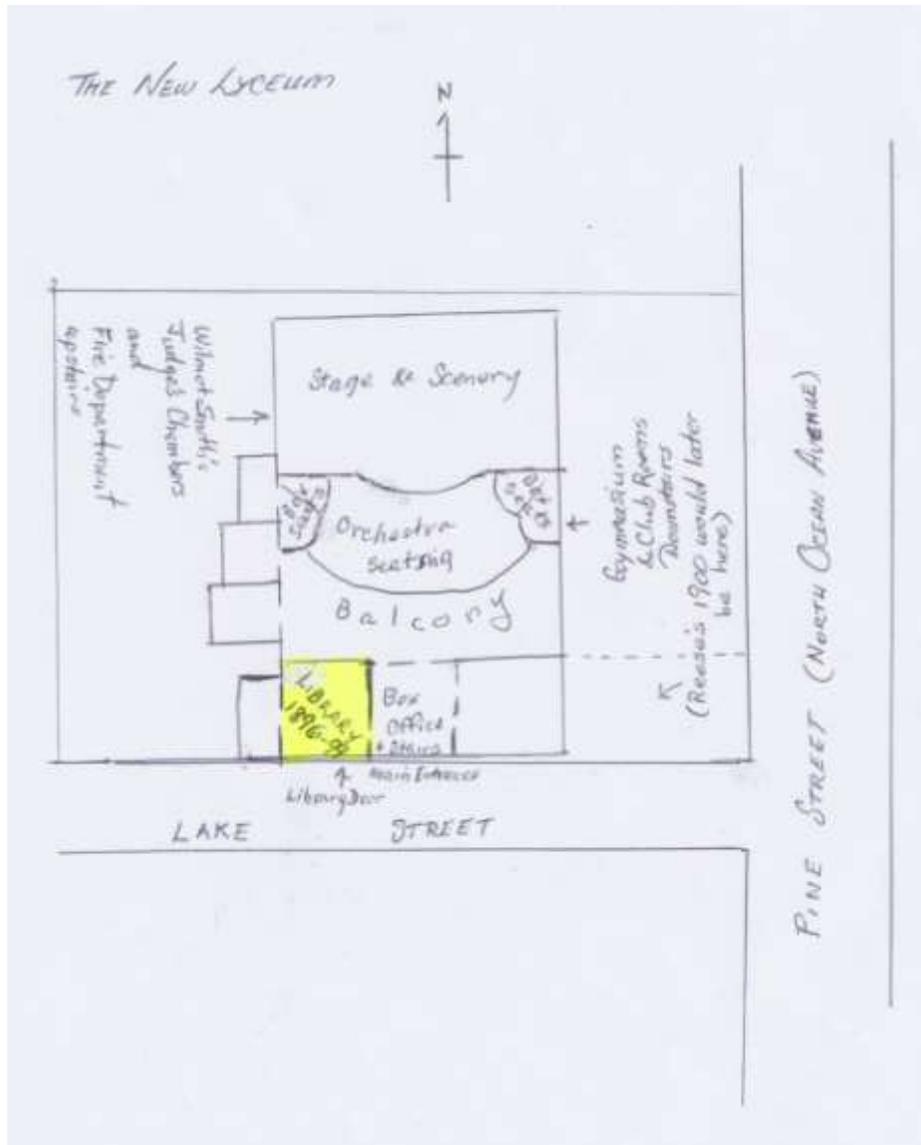
On **May 19, 1883**, the article, *“Mental and Social Culture”* appeared in the *Patchogue Advance*, by **Rev. S. Fielder Palmer**, of this Church. It was the **first known call for a library in Patchogue, open to the general public**. (It doubtless helped that Rev. Palmer was on the *Advance’s* editorial board, at the time.) Book and monetary donations toward creation of a library were solicited. The books were initially collected at the **Congregational Church**, which stood near the **corner of Lake and Pine Streets**. In the photo, **Lake St.** runs horizontally (left-right), in front of the church’s fence. **Pine St.** (later renamed North Ocean Ave.) is the wide boulevard running vertically, on the right side of the photo. The **photo was taken about 1890**, from the **Fishel Tower** (location of today’s **New Village Tower**, northwest corner of W. Main St. & N. Ocean Ave.). The open-air bell tower in the right foreground was shared by the three companies of Patchogue’s Fire Department. In **1884**, the **open space in the center of the photo** was **Edwin Bailey, Sr.’s lumber yard and carpentry shop, with piled lumber, and sheds along the periphery**. (With so large a fire hazard, one can appreciate why the lumber yard was close to the fire station and why Edwin Bailey, Sr. had a vested interest in becoming Patchogue’s first fire chief.) In **1904**, Mr. Bailey generously donated a large part of this land to the Library Board, as property on which a **Carnegie Library** would be built, in **1907-08**. Sadly, he died two months short of its dedication.



New Lyceum: The **room in the lower left corner** was **Patchogue Library, 1896-1899**. The **Lyceum** incorporated part of the former Church, evident in the steeple, behind the center of the new building. The three central double-doorways provided entry to box office, theater, and stairs. – **Source:** PML. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room

Completed in **1895**, this building included a *500 seat auditorium*, where band and orchestral concerts, oratorios, minstrel and vaudeville shows, silent films, plays, lectures, civic and patriotic events, variety shows, and other forms of entertainment, including library and church fundraisers, were held. It also featured a *gymnasium downstairs*, a *fire department headquarters*, and Wilmot M. Smith's *NYS judge's chambers* upstairs, and from **1896-1899**, a rented room housing the **Patchogue Library**. *Jesse C. Mills*, founder of the Patchogue Lyceum Co., and member of the Library Association Board, was able to offer a reduced rate to bring another attraction to his late 19th century entertainment center. The Library, having fallen on hard financial times, willingly accepted the offer. One can only imagine how noisy it got when there was a concert. But the Library was only open for a couple of hours, two days a week. This sad state of affairs soon received the enthusiastic attention of the **Patchogue Sorosis**, a newly formed very active chapter of a multi-purpose women's organization, bent on equality, suffrage, and education. (Note: **Sorosis** has the same root as **sorority**; not the medical conditions, cirrhosis of the liver or arterial sclerosis.)

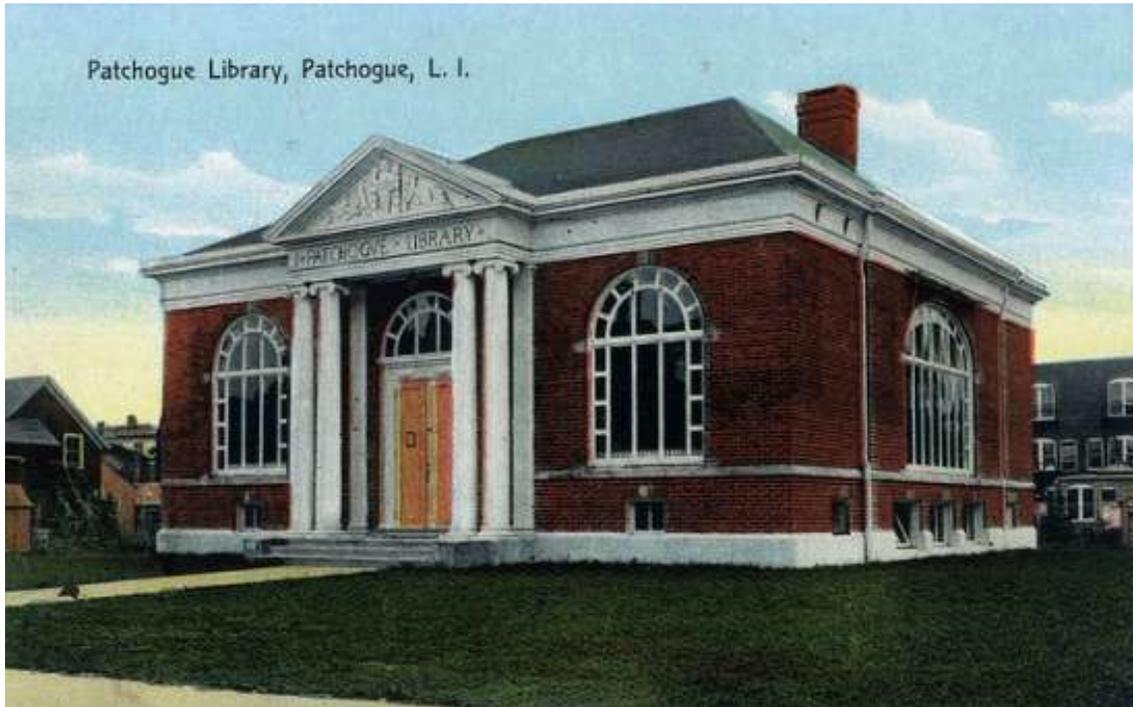
New Lyceum Interior



The **Carnegie Library** would later be built, diagonally across the street, to the left (west) of the **New Lyceum**, set back several yards from the road. Today the former site of the Carnegie Library is completely obscured by the outer wall of the New Village complex on the south side of Lake Street. However, the Carnegie Library was saved and may be visited at its new West Avenue & West Main Street location, where it was moved, restored, and renovated, and where it again plays an important part in the life of the community and of Patchogue-Medford Library, and is once more open to the public.

Behind you and diagonally to your left past the wall and parking lot entrance (set back from the sidewalk), is the former location of the ⑧ Carnegie Library . (It is now on the corner of West Avenue and West Main St. Parking is on West Avenue.)

⑧ The Carnegie Library (10 Lake Street) – The Old Location



The Carnegie Library, around the time of its first dedication, on **March 4, 1908**

Source: Patchogue-Medford Library. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room

Today, there is not much to see at its former location, other than the Lake Street siding of the New Village complex. The **Carnegie Library** was set back from the street, and interestingly, was **the only building constructed specifically as a public library, in the Patchogue Library / Patchogue-Medford Library's long history (1883-Present)**. It was also the **first permanent residence of the Library**, as up to this point it had always rented one or two rooms in other people's buildings, and was forever changing locations, presumably as the rent went up, or better offers came along. *More about the history of the Carnegie Library will be presented when you reach the Carnegie Library itself, where there's more to see than here.*

Retrace your steps along Lake Street to North Ocean Avenue, make a right, and proceed to the 4 Corners, making another right at Main St. Continue along the sidewalk, until you reach Hoshi Hibachi (on your right). Face left, to look across the street at the building containing the ⑨ Hofbrauhaus Munich Bierhaus and Flight Restaurants.

9 **Hofbrauhaus Munich Bierhaus & Flight Restaurants** (32-38 West Main St.)



Photo Source: Mark Rothenberg

While Hofbrauhaus Munchen and Flo's restaurants presently occupy the **John Roe Smith Block**, J & R Steakhouse and Casa di Mario Shoes previously occupied the building. Casa di Mario Shoes was succeeded by Flight, then Flo's restaurant). Prior to that, the Colony Shop occupied most of the block. Much earlier, **Patchogue Library rented space in this block (1883-1902)**. Patchogue Village Historian Hans Henke, in *Patchogue, The Early Years* (2003), dates the building to the 1870's. Carrie Locke, in *Patchogue, New York, Downtown Walking Tour* (2017), notes that it is in the French Second Empire Style, with mansard roof, distinctive decorative flower roof tiles, dormers, grillwork on the second floor, with cornices above and below. It originally sported a tower atop the left (east) side, and storefronts lined the main floor at street-level. **Note:** The building adjoining to the right (or it's left third) was once a narrow, 3-story brick structure housing **Patchogue & Suffolk County Bank**, later replaced by **Patchogue Bank**, and in that hangs quite a tale.



John Roe Smith Block **Patchogue Bank**
 Photo Source: PML. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room

John Roe Smith Block

Patchogue Library was located four times in the building on the left: (a) The **Association Library** occupied a rented room in somewhere in this building in **1883-84** (in *Floyd Atwood Overton's* shoe store), and (b) two rooms in *James L. Overton's* Haberdashery and Shoe Store, **1885-1891**. (c) Between **late 1899-August 1900**, the left-most room at street-level, under the shade of the tree, served as the **Sorosis demonstration public library**. (d) From **1900-02**, the room served as the **first (rented) home of the public library**, after December 1900, under state charter. *Elizabeth Mott Smith*, president of Patchogue's Sorosis, served as the first president of the public library Board of Trustees



Floyd Atwood Overton
 1st "Librarian", association library
 Cashier, Patchogue Bank
 Source: *Souvenir of Patchogue*



Nelson McBride
 2nd Treasurer, Library Assn
 Source: Picturesque
 Patchogue, *Argus*, 1898



Elizabeth Mott Smith,
 1st President, Patchogue Sorosis
 1st President, Patchogue [public] Library
 Source: *Argus*, 1898

Floyd Overton, Cashier, had been the earliest Librarian. *Edwin Bailey* and *Arrington Carman* were benefactors and eventual board members. *John Havens* (also an eventual board member) sold *J.J. Craven* the house in which Patchogue Library Association was formed. He also owned a general store that is now the **Brickhouse Brewery** (formerly Shand's), at Havens Ave. & W. Main St. *Jesse Mills* jump-started both the association and public libraries and served on both boards. *Fremont Hammond*, and insurance partners, *John Potter* and *John Price*, served on the Board. *George Gerard* was the Library's first vice president. *E.T. Moore* opposed a public library, on the grounds that the next thing they'd ask for was a building. *Milton Wiggins* became father-in-law of *Muriel Wiggins*, a library director of the late 1940's. **Photo source:** *Souvenir of Patchogue*, 1896: p. 39.

Continue west to the next crosswalk, turn left and very carefully cross Main St. to the south side of the street (being careful to avoid any oncoming traffic). Continue to your right (west) along the sidewalk until you reach the recently restored ⑩ Carnegie Library, in its new location near the corner of West Avenue and Main Street. A very general history of the Carnegie Library follows. You might want to have a seat and rest while you read it, before walking back to the Main Library on East Main Street.

⑩ **The Carnegie Library** (19-39 West Avenue [& Corner of W. Main St.]) – The new location

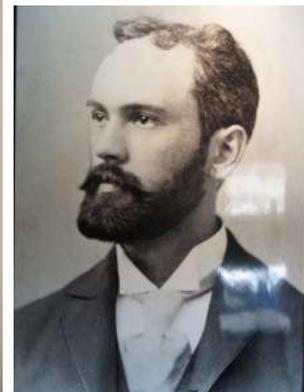


The Carnegie Library, Re-dedication, 2016.

Photo Source: Patchogue-Medford Library. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room

Early History – The Carnegie Correspondence, 1902-08

Industrialist Andrew Carnegie was funding libraries across the U.S., and internationally. Correspondence with him, to fund construction of a library in Patchogue began in **1902-03**, conducted almost exclusively through **James Bertram**, Carnegie's Private Secretary. It ran into an immediate snag, as **E. Agate Foster** (on behalf of the Village Board) and **Wilmot M. Smith** (on behalf of the Library Board) both applied for the grant, which threw Mr. Bertram into a rage, demanding they settle among themselves who was actually applying, and then get back to him. Mr. Foster, had filled out the form that Bertram had sent him, only to have it returned, with the request that he surrender it to the Library Board. But, for a time, Foster would not release it. After some back and forth, involving all parties, the somewhat sullen village official yielded the form, and the initiative passed to the Library, clearing that roadblock. But there was another. The Board lacked any land on which to build, and Bertram would not deal with them until that provision was made. Negotiations stalled, until **Edwin Bailey, Sr.** came to the rescue, in **1904**, donating his land at **10 Lake Street** to the Library Board (site of his original lumber yard). Next came the search for an architect. The design of **John Vredenburg Van Pelt**, of Manhattan, (later of Patchogue) stood out. Construction began in **1907**, but ran into serious cost overages. Appeals were made to Bertram and to Carnegie to help fund the difference. Eventually, a further matching grant was approved, but not before Van Pelt received several dressings-down by Bertram. It was all part of the grant process. The building was dedicated on **March 4, 1908**.



James Bertram and Andrew Carnegie

Judge Wilmot M. Smith
last President, Patchogue
Library Association, 1899;

Wife, **Elizabeth Mott Smith**,
was 1st President of public library

E. Agate Foster
later President,
Patchogue Village



Edwin Bailey, Sr.

Lumber baron of Long Island's South Shore

Member, Patchogue Library Association Board, 1899.

Provided land on which the Carnegie Library would be built, 1904.

Contributed lumber, shelving, cabinetry, and expensive bound book sets, 1907-08.

His memory was movingly invoked by his son, at the Carnegie Library dedication, March 4, 1908.

Source: *Souvenir of Patchogue*, 1896



LIBRARY, PATCHOGUE, L. I., N. Y.

Carnegie Library, 1920's, Note the street lamp. A copy now graces the walkway to the front door.
Source: PML. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room

Library Architecture and Some Practical Notes

The Carnegie Library was built in the Neoclassical style, with a steeply pitched Chateausque hipped roof, pedimented (including a library-related sculptural relief on the tympanum, funded by Ruth Litt) with a full-height entry porch, over the portico, flanked by Ionic double columns, a particularly striking and unusual arched window design, with brick crowns and keystones, and an arched window above the doorway. Larger windows on the sides of the building are designed to be both aesthetically pleasing and to admit plenty of natural sunlight during daylight hours. The second floor included a small director's office, with a screen that overlooked the main floor, so she could keep an eye on things. The basement was originally designed intended mainly for storage and the physical plant, featuring above-ground windows to admit light and permit ventilation.

1908-1981

The Library's 73 years at that location took it from gas to electric lighting, coal to oil heat, from the Age of Dewey to the stirrings and whirrings of library automation, along with occasional repairs, reconfigurations of rooms, services, and adjusting the collection to match public needs and requests, local and national concerns, and new trends in library services. Under **Alma Custead (1914-1945)**, Patchogue Library became the fulcrum and center of the Suffolk County, N.Y., library world, helping community and county through life in **WW I, the Jazz Age, the Great Depression, and WW II**. A model reference collection was established. Adult, children's, and teen services steadily developed and expanded. Programs and resources were keyed to the times, as were newspaper announcements. *Alma Custead* became the force behind creation of **Suffolk County Library Association (1939-Present)**, serving as its first President. The **first countywide library catalog** was consolidated at Patchogue Library, in **1942**.



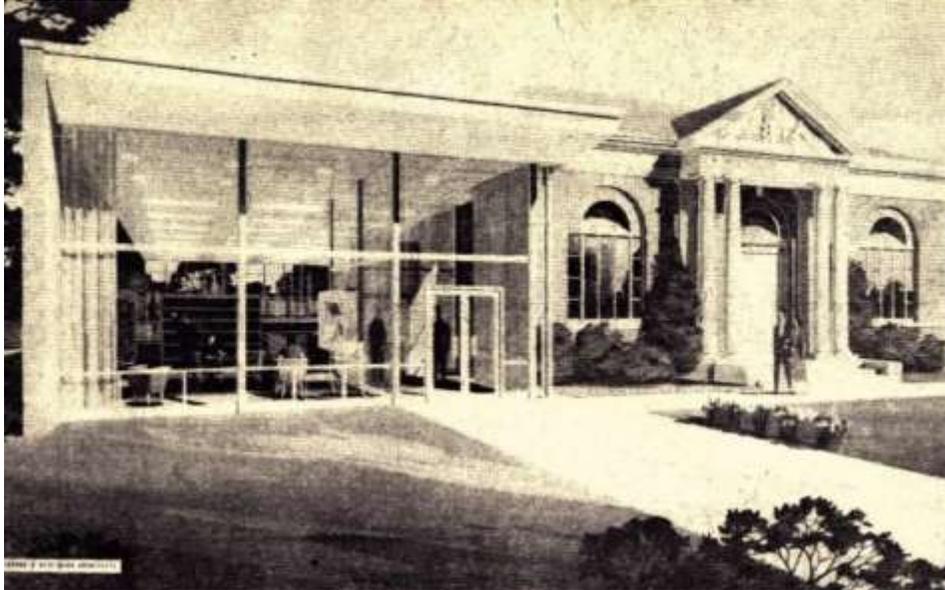
Alma Custead, 1914-1945, on left, and her Staff. – Source: PML. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room.

Miss Custead led book drives for American troops in WW I, and coordinated them countywide in WWII. Sponsoring regional and state meetings and conferences, she made Patchogue a focus of library activity in Suffolk County and in New York State.



1937 – Children’s Room Holiday Display. Photo Source: PML. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room

Under her successor, **Muriel Wiggins, 1946-1952**, the Library celebrated its 50th Anniversary, and saw the extension of access, by contract, to **Medford** residents. It also saw the introduction of microfiche and microfilm, and the phonograph record collection expanded. Under **Elaine Phipps**, with postwar baby and suburbanization booms, the public approved a **Library Addition** in **1958**, reflecting the expanded population and service area.



The Library Addition of 1958 was architecturally strikingly different from the earlier part of the building, but very much in the style in current favor in its time, as was the Carnegie building.
Photo Source: PML. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room



Library Card Catalog, a thing of bygone days, **about 1967**: Authors, Titles, Subjects had their own sets of drawers, as did files by Accession Numbers (the order in which things were acquired). It was organized, but sometimes slow going, esp. by today's standards, but things could usually be found. **Computerized catalogs** did not really arrive until a couple of decades later, and then came in waves, as new and improved versions, each requiring intensive debugging, succeeded each other, only to become outmoded and replaced by the competing systems. Ultimately, far more could be searched much faster than was ever possible in the days when this photo was taken. The countywide catalog was also developing at the same time along similar lines, speeding access to resources in public libraries around Suffolk County. – **Photo source:** PML. Celia M. Hastings Local History Room

In **1963**, **Suffolk Cooperative Library System** began service in the Patchogue Library basement, before moving to the Nabisco building on W. Main St., then to its present North Bellport location. Following the school district's lead, in **1973**, the Library was **renamed** (by charter amendment), **The Patchogue-**

Medford Library, extending full service to Medford residents. In **1979**, Patchogue-Medford became the sole **Central Library** for Suffolk County. In **January 1981**, **Patchogue-Medford Library**, moved to its present location at, **54-60 E. Main Street**.

Briarcliffe College's administrative offices occupied the old Carnegie Building for a number of years, then **moved** to Swezey's lace mill style building (after Swezey's Department Store closed its doors, permanently). There was to be a period of doubt as to the fate of the Carnegie Library building.

Carnegie Library Saved and Revived

After the Carnegie Library was vacated by Briarcliffe College, it passed to Village control, and whether to demolish or repurpose it remained a contentious public issue. When **Tritech** was awarded a contract to build on land on which it stood, the risk of its destruction seemed imminent, and generated a grassroots movement, **Friends of the Carnegie Library (2012)** to save it, and have it moved to safety. But where? Ultimately, the building was awarded to its original owner, **Patchogue-Medford Library**. The **1958 Addition** was demolished and the **original building** was shored up. With Tritech's help, it was moved to within 100 feet of its present location, on land belonging to the Suffolk County Supreme Court. Arrangements were made to transfer the land rights from County to Town to Village to the Library, which took time. A foundation was laid and the building was moved to it, and its careful restoration and bringing up to code could take place. Dedicated in **2016**, the **Library's Teen Center** opened to the public in early **2017**. **Greater Patchogue Historical Society** collections and displays occupy the basement.



Carnegie Library, on wheels, moving to W. Main St., 2012



Restored Carnegie Library Reopens, 2017

Leaving the Carnegie Library, from the Main Street entrance, make a right and proceed (east) along the sidewalk down Main Street to, and past the Four Corners, to the ①①Main Library (54-60 East Main Street), again being very careful of traffic at street crossings.

①① Patchogue-Medford Library (The Main Library), 54-60 East Main Street



Photo courtesy of Patchogue-Medford Library

Source: PML website www.pmlib.org

In **January 1981** the Library moved from the Carnegie Building to this location, a renovated **former W.T. Grant store**. **Computer and Internet revolutions** changed the way the library functions, views and presents things. Manual card catalogs were replaced by several generations of online catalogs. Phonograph records were replaced by CDs. 16 mm. filmstrips became an outmoded technology, and were replaced by VHSs, then DVDs, and then become available in other electronic forms. Microfiche and Microfilm was increasingly replaced by electronic versions. Massive multivolume indexes were generally replaced by online database services capable of rapidly searching many years of multiple indexes. Compact shelving was introduced in 1988, but was decrepit and gone by 2017. Library community wall murals, initially regarded as graffiti, received national praise (*New York Times*) and American Library Association recognition. The Fishing tackle loaner program was introduced and is popular to this day. In the year **2000**, the Library celebrated the centennial of its state charter, with a series of events and publications. PML participated in the Suffolk Historic Newspapers project, resulting in a large segment of the *Patchogue Advance* being digitized and accessible online. PML developed several generations of its website, and its departments and specialized areas follow suit, with web pages of their own, local history eventually having its own linked website. PML developed a presence on a variety of social media. Periodicals have increasingly become available online, via subscription. Public computer stations have become more numerous, connected to subscription databases, organized by topic. **E-books** were introduced, and PML participates in **LiveBrary**, which allows a variety of books and other types of media to be downloaded and borrowed electronically through the county library system (audiobooks, movies, etc.). Museum passes and discount tickets were introduced. A charging station has proven popular for recharging hand-held devices. In recent years, summertime kits of outdoor games have been introduced circulation. This is in addition to meeting space, always in high demand, programs, lectures, movies, crafts, children's and adult reading clubs, exhibits, computer training, exercise sessions, and much more. In **2008**, the Library contributed mightily to taking the edge off

community tensions running high, in the aftermath of the murder of Marcelo Lucero. In **2010**, the Library received the **National Medal for Museum and Library Service** presented by First Lady, Michele Obama, at the White House, **the nation's highest honor to libraries**. From **2011-Present**, PML has received annual recognition, from the **American Library Association**, as **one of the United States' star libraries**. Many reference works are now online, which is why the physical reference collection has shrunk, meanwhile genealogical resources have expanded. The **Learning Center** was introduced when, in **2016**, the **Carnegie Library** was **rededicated** at its new on West Avenue & W. Main Street, site, where **Young Adult** services are now available, and the **Greater Patchogue Historical Society** has collection and exhibit space. PML is pioneering **New Adult Services**, in tandem with other libraries in the county, and is always looking into new, exciting, emerging forms of service, that benefit the communities and individuals that it serves, and respond to current needs. PML has also served as fertile training ground for generations of influential librarians and library administrators, both locally and around the County. The Library has always been a center of shared community, a great place to meet people, but also a place to relax and unwind, to learn, to find answers to problems, and useful leads and connections.



1985 –The first automated check-out. Three library directors are pictured in this photo: *Elaine Phipps*, 1952-1984 (2nd from left), *Sara Courant*, 1984-1990 (4th from right, white hair, then Head of the Reference Department), *Judith Gibbard*, 1991-2000 (3rd from left, dark sweater, then Head of the Cataloging Department).



Library Entrance, Holiday Season, 2016-17

Optionally, if you're still feeling energetic and are in good shape, you can take a walk down East Main Street (out the front door and to the right), to a point just before Medford Avenue (Route 112), where you can safely see TD Bank, across the street, set back from the road (to the left of the gas station). It marks the *former site* of the **John Joseph Craven House**. It all began here, on **June 12, 1883**, when the *Patchogue Library Association* was created, on that now forgotten spot.

① ② **TD Bank** (251 E. Main St. nearly at Medford Avenue – Note: It's set back from the street.)



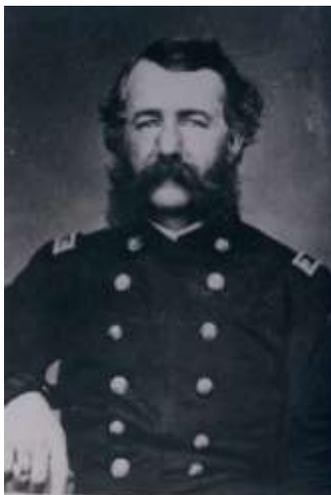
Previously site of **Commerce Bank**, and earlier, site of the...

John Joseph Craven House



Source: 1916 Patchogue BPOE Fair brochure

On **June 12th, 1883**, **Patchogue Library Association** was organized, its rules established, officers and committees elected here, John Joseph Craven becoming its first president, a position that he held until his death, 10 years later. This building, which stood at this site until **demolished in 2001**, had been antebellum home to the **Edwards or Tiger family**, then passed to **John S. Havens** (Brookhaven's Town Supervisor during much of the Civil War), before it went to **J.J. Craven**. Later, it was home to the **Canfield-Tuthill family** (of newspaper publishing fame). It would serve as **Patchogue's World War II U.S.O.**, and became home to the **Patchogue Elks**, until sold to **TD Bank**, and demolished. Interestingly, the Craven property extended to Medford Avenue (the Coram Road), and nearly to Oak Street to the north. When transferred to the Canfield-Tuthill family, it included land that the **Patchogue Advance**, today's **Long Island Advance**, now occupies. The house is in the Greek Revival style, with what may originally have been a pedimented full-height entry porch. The upper floor may have been a later addition, as may two (or more) additions in the rear of the building.



Source: MOLIS & U.S. Army. Military History Institute

Lt. Col. J.J. Craven, 1863

John Joseph Craven, originally from New Jersey, joined **Samuel F.B. Morse**, inventing a coating for telegraph wires passing through rivers. But, failing to obtain a patent, in 1849, he sailed for the California goldfields, and was back in 1852, taking up the study of medicine. A successful doctor, when Civil War broke out, he secured an audience with Abraham Lincoln, who sent him to take a civil service test. He became surgeon to William T. Sherman's brigade, in time for the battle of First Bull Run (1st Manassas). Over the course of the war, he became commander of a succession of Federal medical departments, each usually comprising two Confederate states. In 1865, as senior official of the medical Dept. of Virginia and North Carolina, he became Jefferson Davis' doctor, after the latter was captured and imprisoned and mistreated in Fort Monroe, Virginia. He took careful notes of his conversations with Davis, and later converted it to an international bestselling book, *The Prison Life of Jefferson Davis*. The book won Davis sympathy and had a lot to do with his release and the contributed to the myth of the Lost Cause. Davis, however, hated the book, denied and excoriated nearly everything in it, in his own copy's marginal notes. But, he kept quiet publicly, as it worked so well to his advantage. Believed to be too chummy with Davis, obtaining better living conditions for Davis, by going over his superiors' heads directly to President Johnson, Craven was released from duty early. President Andrew Johnson made him postmaster of his hometown, Passaic, where Craven found time to pen his book. He resumed his life as a physician, also as an inventor, winning several patents, retiring comfortably to Patchogue, NY, where he purchased the house formerly at this site. He arrived, famous and influential, continued to practice medicine and dabble in inventions, but also joined in the civic life of the village, and was persuaded to hold the organizational meeting of Patchogue Library Association, on June 12, 1883, in his house. He would go on to help save the life of a failed banker first from a lynch mob, then from a suicide attempt. When he died in 1893, the year the village was incorporated, he was greatly missed.

This ends the tour. Thank you for talking a walk through the Library's past and hope you enjoy your time in both buildings in the present.

For further information: See <http://history.pmlib.org/libraryhistory> and/or Visit the Celia M. Hastings Local History Room at Patchogue-Medford Library.
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