

C h r o n o l o g y
Rehoboth Beach Public Library

DCN = Delaware Coast News (1928-46)
DCP = Delaware Coast Press (1946--)
DSLCC = DE State Library Commission biennial reports (1912-1968)
RSLC = Rehoboth Beach Library Commission minutes (1942-44, 85-92???)
RBTC = Rehoboth Beach Town Commission minutes (1912--)
VIA = Village Improvement Assn. minutes (1912-15, 22-24, 42-45)

1912

The VIA, organized in 1909, was a prime mover in 1912 in creation of the Rehoboth Beach Public Library. (A VIA history by Mrs. Wilbur Corkran in 1962 reported "The Club's First Project was a free library." Minutes of the Delaware State Federation of Women's Clubs' 15th annual meeting, May 20-21, 1913, in Dover, said new libraries had been established at Laurel, Delmar and Rehoboth. Also DSLC.)

At a July VIA meeting, a DSLC member from Dover delivered "an urgent appeal" that the club initiate a free library and state aid for it. Thereafter Mrs. Kates told of "Miss Lulu Hooper's objection to the town people using the Union church [Union Methodist, near Rehoboth and Lake Aves.] as a library." (VIA)

COULD VIA LADIES HAVE BEEN OPERATING A LIBRARY INFORMALLY AT THE CHURCH BEFORE 1912??? SEE 1965 STAMPLER QUOTE.

In September, VIA members voted to make up a "deficiency in the library fund" and each July thereafter voted at least \$25 for the "library fund." They also staged card parties and other library benefits.

In November, a "soliciting committee of the library" turned \$50 in to the VIA. Corresponding secretary Mary L. Powers was to give the \$50, plus a \$25 loan, to the Public School Board with request that it petition the State Librarian for "the State's appropriation for the Rehoboth Library." Later documents indicate that amount was \$37.50, which could be spent only for books approved by the state. (VIA, DSLC)

At a second November meeting, VIA agreed each club member should pledge to "secure three or more members of the Library Assn. at 60 cents each to replace the \$25 drawn from the VIA treasury and loaned to the Rehoboth Library funds." (VIA)

State Librarian I.V.Culbreth reported "The necessary amount required by the state has been raised, and with books given by the Library Association of that place, and those donated by summer visitors, and with the aid from time to time of a traveling library [DSLCC "book wagons" that went from door-to-door in rural areas] a most promising beginning has been made." Site of the library was not reported nor a librarian listed. (DSLCC)

WHAT WAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION AND HOW LONG DID IT LAST???

1913-1914

In July 1913, Mary Powers was elected VIA president, serving until July 1915. She was Rehoboth Free Library librarian 1913-1915. (VIA, DSLCC)

In August, Miss Anna Hazzard joined the VIA and in September the club

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voted to "donate \$25 each year for two years towards the expenses of the public library." (VIA)

One of three reporting in late 1914 to DSLC, the Rehoboth Free Library claimed 115 borrowers and 540 books and was open to the public on Thursday and Friday evenings 6:30 to 8. The children's library, kept in the public school, was open 3:30 to 4:30 Friday afternoons.

WHEN WERE ADULT AND CHILDREN'S LIBRARIES COMBINED? OR WERE THEY?
LONGTIME REHOBOTH RESIDENTS REMEMBER GETTING BOOKS AS CHILDREN AT VIA
MEMBER HOMES IN THE 1920s. OR WAS IT IN THE 1930s?

Librarian Powers also reported to DSLC: "During the summer of 1914 a masquerade dance was given for the benefit of the library and netted \$48.10; rental of books to summer visitors amounted to \$19.90; private contributions \$10.00; making net receipts \$78.00." (VIA, DSLC).

WERE SUMMER VISITORS CHARGED PER BOOK OR FOR LIBRARY MEMBERSHIPS,
AS NOW? HOW MUCH?

VIA met in 1914 and 1915 in "the library" or "the public library," site unnamed. In June 1915, members voted to send \$25 to J. Fred Hudson, "president of the Public Library which the Via agreed to pay for three years, this being the last year." Hudson, a local plumber, is shown in RBTC minutes as receiving school taxes. (VIA, RBTC)

1915-1916

By late 1916, the Rehoboth Free Library had 600 volumes, 233 borrowers. Librarian A. Mary H. Riggin kept daily summer hours of 6:30 to 8, in winter Fridays 7 to 8 p.m. She reported \$83 raised during the summer. (DSLCC) Although her mother, Clara Riggin, joined VIA the summer of 1912, Mary Riggin's first mention is June 1914, as a member of Miss Anna Hazzard's VIA "4th July Com. to make arrangements for the decorations & Etc." (VIA)

1917-1918

Librarian Mary Riggin reported Rehoboth Free Library had 300 borrowers, an estimated 700-800 books in late 1918. (DSLCC)

1919-1920

Miss Riggin reported the Rehoboth Free Library had added 100 volumes in two years, for a total of 900. Sussex County now had 12 traveling libraries, based in Seaford and lending collections to Rehoboth Free Library and granges and other public centers. (DSLCC)

1921-1922

The State Library Commission reported nothing from Rehoboth Beach.

1923-1924

A VIA card party netted \$75.25 for the library in summer 1923. A check for \$100.25 was sent to Mr. Fred Hudson and "the secretary, Miss Lida Lindale". (VIA)

Librarian Clara F. Hall Riggin told DSLC in late 1924 the library was open every evening June to September, one evening weekly in other months. Some 200 books had been added and "The demand for books by the summer people is most gratifying... [T]he families that live here all the year are fully persuaded that the Rehoboth Free Library is -- 'a joy forever'." (DSLCC)

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1925-1926

Nothing on Rehoboth in the State Library Commission report.

1927-1928

An April 1928 news report, written by a club member, credited VIA members that "the library was reopened, using the room in the school building we had used until our building was completed [in April 1926]. VIA gives \$25 each year toward the support of the Library." (DCN)

In mid-1928, State Librarian Ida Culbreth reported "The Rehoboth Free Library is again open to the public and is now comfortably housed in a large room in the Public School Building." (The biennial DSLC report, previously issued early in odd years, from 1928 on covered two years ending June 30.)

1929-1930

The state librarian, Mrs. Bernice Hammond, reported "The Rehoboth Free Library is open to the Public even though it is housed in the School Building. This library receives \$37.50 from the state each year, when \$75 is raised in the town." (DSLCL)

A new walk-in "Book Truck" that cost \$818.15 and carried 600 books now covered both Kent and Sussex counties. (DSLCL)

1931-1932

Repeat of previous report by DSLCL.

1933-1936

In September 1933, Rev. C. Irving Carpenter, Methodist minister identified as Rehoboth Library Commission chairman, asked the Rehoboth town commission to take over the library, at \$150 a year. The mayor was to ask the school board if shelving and cases could be moved from the school to the Fire Hall for a library there. No resolution was reported. (RBTC, DCN)

In October, consolidation of the libraries of grades 1-12 was announced by the school board, which had voted to use the old library space for a school library only. (RBTC, DCN)

The 1935-1936 DSLCL report had initial mention of the Lewes library (400 books, grown in two years to 925), Helen Ryland librarian. But no word on Rehoboth had appeared since the repeated 1931-1932 entry. Nothing would be reported on Rehoboth until 1942. (DSLCL)

1937

Rehoboth Free Library -- if there was one still -- became Rehoboth Beach Free (or Public) Library with the city's official name change. (DCP, CHECK RBTC)

1940

In January, the public school was moved to a new structure on Silver Lake and the old brick school opened (in November) as a municipal center with police quarters. Mention was made of allocating second floor space "for use as a public library," but there appeared to be no immediate follow-up. (DCN)

In April, three play-readings were given to benefit the "School

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Library." The chairman, Mrs. William S. Baer, also headed the book selection committee, which included Mrs. John L. Littell, the PTA president, School Supt. T. Roland Humphreys and Miss Helen E. Gaskill, acting school librarian. (DCN)

In October, state librarian Hammond met with a group of "citizens interested in the possibility of establishing a free library, receiving state aid." By state law, the school board had to ask the district judge to appoint a library commission. Those present: former mayor Fred Ross, Mrs. Littell, Mrs. John D. McCabe, Mrs. William Hamilton, Mrs. John Salin, Mr. John LeCato and Col. Edgar S. Strayer. (DCN)

1941

In October, the Herbert C. Crafts of Baltimore bought, to build an antique store for their daughter Naon, a lot on Rehoboth Ave. which Miss Craft gave to the library 45 years later and onto which the new library building will now expand. (DCN)

1942

The 1941-1942 DSLC report listed Miss Anna S. Hazzard as Rehoboth Librarian. Borrowers were down to 25, including 15 adults and 10 children, but \$400 had been raised locally plus \$200 from the state and \$84.75 spent on books. Volumes in the library: 1,450. (DSLCL)

In June, a five-member library commission was appointed by Judge Charles S. Richards. They included Richard C. Greene, who was elected president, Mrs. Harry T. Reed vice president, Ann Hazzard secretary and Mrs. Littell treasurer. Mrs. Baer was the fifth member. The Delaware Coast News commented: "The need for a public library has long been expressed by both the summer group and those who make their homes here throughout the year." (DCN)

DSLCL credited donation to the library of second floor City Hall quarters at \$240 and awaited \$160 more in local contributions before it could ante up \$200 -- half the local funding -- for book purchase. Commented the Coast News: "At this time when lack of transportation makes travel impossible, this long hoped for public library will fill an important need in the community. It is hoped therefore that the response from citizens will be prompt and generous." (DCN)

VIA members immediately planned a benefit, 50 cents a ticket and bring your own cards, pencils and scorecards. (VIA, DCN)

The Rehoboth Library opened on July 7 at City Hall, operating from 1 to 4:30 p.m. each Friday, Anna Hazzard "for the present" serving as librarian. By August, the library was open three days a week. In September a book donation plea was made and Saturday hours added. (DCN)

Fall and winter hours were 2-4:30 Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10-noon on Saturday, with Miss Hazzard, Mrs. Carl Henry Bischoff, Mrs. Willard Yarnell and Mrs. John Scott McLennan on duty. Mrs. Littell, who had advanced the library the needed \$160 in June, was repaid in September and resigned from the Library Commission. (DCN, VIA, RBLC)

1950

DSLCL listed Miss Hazzard as librarian for the last time. Mrs. John W. Roberts succeeded her, listed biennially until 1964. Borrowers were up to 788 and the state was providing \$300 per year for books. (DSLCL)

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1956

The library began a "Great Books Discussion Group," meeting weekly in the school library. (DCP)

1959

In March, a \$65,000 bond issue for a new library building on city-owned Martin's Lawn was defeated in a Rehoboth Special School District referendum. Library Commissioner Hazzard told the Coast Press "of the inception of a library for Rehoboth Beach when a small room was used in the former City Hall in the old Fire Hall Building. The project was started, she said, back in 1812 [sic -- no doubt a typo] when the VIA applied for permission to the school board. The first library quarters were set up in various private homes." She said DSLC contributed \$1,000 yearly for books but not operating expenses. (DCP) GREAT BAILEY QUOTE
DCP 2/12/59

THEN 81, HAD HAZZARD FORGOTTEN THE SIX YEARS OR SO THE LIBRARY WAS AT THE SCHOOL??? COULD THE ORIGINAL LIBRARY HAVE BEEN IN THE FIRST OLD FIRE HALL? OR WAS IS AT RIGGINS', FERRELLS' (he was tax collector/-justice of the peace 1919-1925) AND HAZZARD'S, THEN THE SCHOOL, THEN THE NEWER OLD FIRE HALL AND/OR MISS ISAAC'S 1933-42??? CITY MANAGER CAME IN 1937, MAY HAVE SQUEEZED LIBRARY OUT OF FIRE HALL WHEN FULLTIME CITY OFFICES WERE NEEDED.

1963

A town survey published by the Greater Rehoboth League of Women Voters reported the public library had 4,000-4,500 books, the local high school library 5,225. (LWV survey, DCP)

1964

In April, library books were moved to Epworth Methodist Church "old Sunday School" basement on Baltimore Ave. as new City Hall-Convention Center was to be built on site of old school. (DCP)

Mrs. Roberts, listed as librarian for the last time, to be succeeded by Mrs. Catherine M. (Louis B.) Zurburg. (DSLCL)

1965

Library reopened in new City Hall quarters designed for it by the architects. Mary Tylecki had "used her school library experience in placing the hundreds of books on the shelves." (DCP)

1966

Mayor Stampler urged all citizens to visit during National Library Week. "Rehoboth," he said, "has been especially fortunate, having highly dedicated residents to ensure continual library service to readers over the past 57 years."

DID LIBRARY SERVICE START IN 1909, WHEN VIA BEGAN???

Miss Hazzard was described as one of the first trustees and founders. Regular librarians were Mrs. Zurburg, Mrs. Edna B. Ricker and Mrs. Hazel Steinhardt. (DCP)

1967

City planning group declared library quarters adequate, holding 6,300 volumes with room for 8,000. (RBPL vertical file document)

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1968

RBLC announced appointment of a professional librarian, Mrs. Marjorie H. Muir, with extensive Western Shore experience, and that the library would be open daily, 1:30 to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, 7-9 p.m. Thursday and 10-noon Saturday. (DCP; last DSLC seen, 6/30/68)

1975???

RBLC opted to become an independent district library as opposed to county-run or connected to the school district. (source county librarian; NEED CLARIFICATION)

1982

At State direction, each public library began preparing a two-year library plan. Goal No. 3 of the Rehoboth Library Planning Committee was "To provide a more adequate building for the Rehoboth Beach Public Library." The group also hoped to increase public hours from 25 weekly (27 in the summer) to 30. (1982 library plan)

1985

Library moved to former telephone company building across Rehoboth Ave. from City Hall on 50-year lease from the city at \$1 a year. Capital campaign was run to renovate and furnish it. (RBLC)

1986

Lot east of the library was given to the library by Naon Juan Craft for a reading garden. (RBLC)

1988

Concerned about space, library board of trustees began planning new capital campaign for expansion on adjoining lots after buying the property east of the reading garden.

1991

Friends of the Rehoboth Beach Public Library was organized in September.

1992

City fathers deeded the library building and its lot to the library in perpetuity so long as used for library purposes.

1995

Library Commission kicks off \$1.27 million building expansion fund drive. FILL IN DETAILS, ALSO NUMBER OF BOOKS, BORROWERS, ETC., ETC

*200 - DEC Newday Renovated
open 45 hrs weekly
32 thousand volumes (doesn't include audio/video)*

ahd 15:56 Thu 7 Sep 95

Village Improvement Association
Cordially Invites you to join us in Celebrating
the unveiling of a Historic Marker honoring
the founding of the
Rehoboth Beach Public Library
by the VIA in 1912

Reception at Library in the Upstairs Meeting Room
226 Rehoboth Ave. Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971
Tuesday, September 26 at 1:00 pm

Unveiling to follow

RSVP: By September 21, 2017 to Valerie Evans, valeval@msn.com

Village Improvement Association

Unveiling of a Historic Marker honoring the founding of the
Rehoboth Beach Public Library by the VIA in 1912

Tuesday, September 26, 2017

Agenda

- 1:00* Reception in the Library Upstairs Meeting Room
- 1:15* Welcoming remarks by VIA President, Rose Marie Patin
- 1:25* Introduction of Delaware Speaker of the House, Peter Schwartzkopf
- 1:30* Introduction of Delaware State Senator Ernesto Lopez
- 1:35* Introduction of Delaware State Archives Archivist Stephen Marz
- 1:40* President Patin Acknowledges dignitaries attending
- 1:50* Exit meeting room for outside attendance at unveiling site
- 2:05* President Patin welcomes all and asks Archivist Marz to proceed with the unveiling-- *All hands on cover*
- Post unveiling* -- Wait and Pose for photographs

