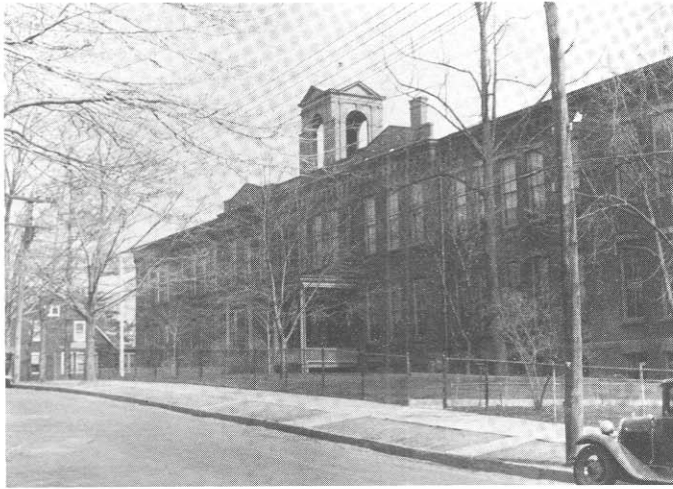


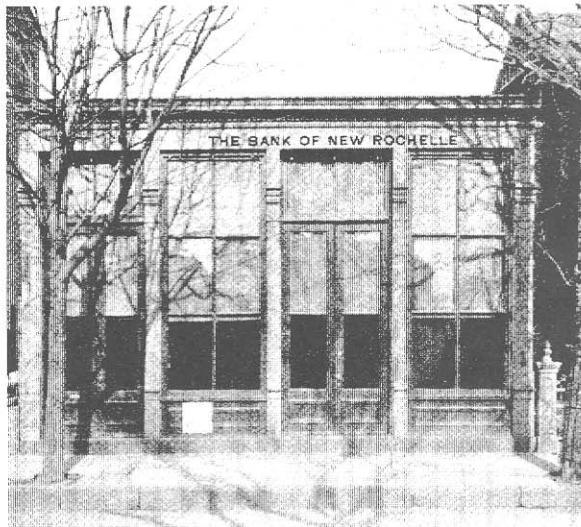
HISTORY OF THE NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC LIBRARY



The Beginnings

The New Rochelle Public Library opened its doors for the first time on November 10, 1893 on the third floor of the Trinity Place School. Starting with a collection of 1,857 volumes, the new library was created after the enactment of the New York State University Law in 1892, which provided for the separation of public and school libraries. The first library board met for organization on July 12, 1893, and with an appropriation of only \$200, achieved a Public Library for New Rochelle, which opened four months later. It was such an immediate success that it outgrew its quarters in just three months.

Early in 1894, the Library moved to 40 Centre Avenue, the first building of the New Rochelle Trust Company. *(In later years, that building subsequently housed Ferguson's Feed Store, a shoe store, Campion's Newspapers, Dillon's Paper Store and a shoe repair shop. The building was finally demolished to create more parking space for the downtown area.)* On July 5, 1894, the official Library charter was issued by the New York State Board of Regents. Growth in the Library's new quarters was rapid, with circulation quintupling in just seven years. The building became so cramped that only part of the books could be kept on the shelves, the considerable remainder having to be consigned to storage.



Selected Bestsellers

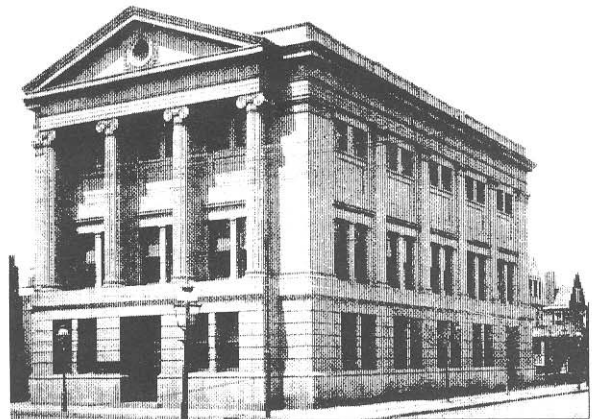
1893 - *A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE* - Oscar Wilde
1894 - *THE JUNGLE BOOK* - Rudyard Kipling
1895 - *THE PRISONER OF ZENDA* - Anthony Hope
1896 - *THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE* - Stephen Crane
1897 - *QUO VADIS* - Henryk Sienkiewicz
1898 - *THE DAY'S WORK* - Rudyard Kipling
1899 - *DAVID HARUM* - Edward Noyes Westcott
1900 - *TO HAVE AND TO HOLD* - Mary Johnson

In 1901, the Library Trustees leased two floors in the new Masonic Building on Main Street. In addition to the general library, space was now available for a large reading room, a reference room and a special space for a children's library. The trustees were convinced that this would solve the Library's space problems for the foreseeable future. But when library circulation again tripled in 10 years, city officials began to think about a new location for the Library.



Selected Bestsellers

1901 - *THE CRISIS* - Winston Churchill
 1902 - *THE VIRGINIAN* - Owen Wister
 1903 - *THE PIT* - Frank Norris
 1904 - *REBECCA OF SUNNYBROOK FARM* - K. D. Wiggin
 1905 - *THE CLANSMAN* - Thomas Dixon, Jr.
 1906 - *THE JUNGLE* - Upton Sinclair
 1907 - *THE YOUNGER SET* - Robert W. Chambers
 1908 - *THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE* - John Fox, Jr.
 1909 - *THE MAN IN LOWER TEN* - Mary Roberts Rinehart
 1910 - *THE ROSARY* - Florence Barclay
 1911 - *THE BROAD HIGHWAY* - Jeffrey Farnol
 1912 - *THE HARVESTER* - Gene Stratton Porter
 1913 - *THE WOMAN THOU GAVEST ME* - Hall Caine

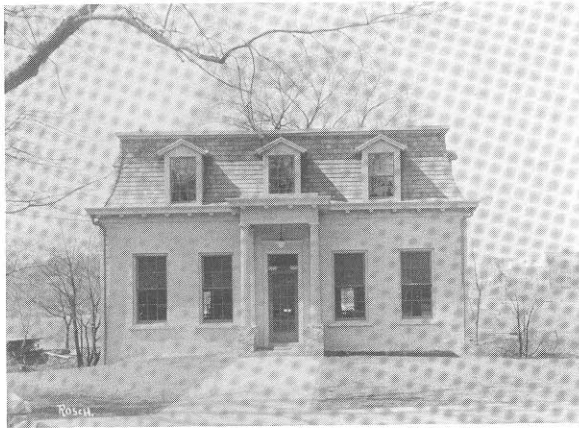


In 1910, Alderman Edward Davidson brought to the attention of Mayor Harry E. Colwell a possible source for funding the construction of a new building. As reported by the Mayor:

"Mr. Davidson suggested that we ought to try and get a library from Mr. Carnegie, who was then giving away libraries and pipe organs for churches. He said he knew Mr. Carnegie's secretary and had a very pleasant conversation with him. He said he thought Mr. Carnegie might be interested in giving New Rochelle a public library and that he would send us a blank for some statistics for me to fill out as Mayor and return to him. A few days later I received an application blank for an organ in a church."



The request eventually got untangled and New Rochelle received \$60,000 from Andrew Carnegie to build a new library. The building opened May 11, 1914 at Pintard Avenue and Main Street, and remained at that site, with the addition of a multi-level extension in 1928, for 65 years.



Library Branches

With the growth of the northern end of the city by the 1920s, the need became evident for library facilities at that end of town. The Library Board of Trustees bought the old Mahlstedt homestead in Huguenot Park and, after remodeling, opened the building as a branch library on March 28, 1926. This branch absorbed the small library stations that had been previously placed in Mayflower, Roosevelt and Lincoln Schools.

By 1945, the Library trustees were expressing their concern over the inadequacy of the Huguenot Park Branch to continue to serve the northern half of the city. Efforts to obtain a new building proved futile, and in 1963, when circulation had reached more than 100,000, browsing facilities were reduced to only one table and six chairs. The branch continued to struggle with its cramped facilities for nearly three more decades, until budget cutbacks necessitated closing its doors on January 1, 1992.



As the outgrowth of a request received from the PTA and the residents of West New Rochelle, a library station was established in Columbus School in 1929. Its use soon became much greater than the space and collection could handle, so in 1931, the city remodeled a house in Feeney Park, to be used as the Columbus Branch Library. On opening day, December 28, 1931, about 200 children rushed in for books. The branch was remodeled in 1961 and remained in service until March 1980 when it was moved into the newly constructed August E. Mascaro Boys' Club. Two years later, staffing limitations necessitated curtailing that service.

Selected Bestsellers

1914 - *PENROD* - Booth Tarkington
 1915 - *THE LONE STAR RANGER* - Zane Grey
 1916 - *SEVENTEEN* - Booth Tarkington
 1917 - *MR. BRITLING SEES IT THROUGH* - H.G. Wells
 1918 - *THE U.P. TRAIL* - Zane Grey
 1919 - *THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE* - V. Blasco Ibanez
 1920 - *THE MAN OF THE FOREST* - Zane Grey
 1921 - *MAIN STREET* - Sinclair Lewis
 1922 - *IF WINTER COMES* - A.S.M. Hutchinson
 1923 - *BABBITT* - Sinclair Lewis
 1924 - *SO BIG* - Edna Ferber
 1925 - *ARROWSMITH* - Sinclair Lewis
 1926 - *GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES* - Anita Loos

Selected Bestsellers

1927 - *ELMER GANTRY* - Sinclair Lewis
 1928 - *THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY* - Thornton Wilder
 1929 - *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT* - Erich Maria Remarque
 1930 - *CIMMARON* - Edna Ferber
 1931 - *THE GOOD EARTH* - Pearl Buck
 1932 - *MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION* - Lloyd C. Douglas
 1933 - *ANTHONY ADVERSE* - Hervey Allen
 1934 - *GOOD-BYE MR. CHIPS* - James Hilton
 1935 - *LOST HORIZON* - James Hilton
 1936 - *GONE WITH THE WIND* - Margaret Mitchell
 1937 - *NORTHWEST PASSAGE* - Kenneth Roberts
 1938 - *THE YEARLING* - Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings
 1939 - *THE GRAPES OF WRATH* - John Steinbeck

Summer branches of the Library began to sprout up in the 1930s. In 1936, the Beach Library opened at Hudson Park with gaily painted pushcarts offering mothers and children an opportunity to browse and read while they relaxed in the sun. In 1937, weekly library service was provided for the children at the city's seven playgrounds, and in 1938, an outdoor reading room was established under a bright umbrella at Huguenot Park.



As the city expanded and citizens moved to considerable distances from the Library, it became evident that a Bookmobile was needed to serve the outlying areas. The vehicle was requested by the Library in 1939, but with the intervention of the war, was not purchased until 1948. This first Bookmobile was a trailer fitted with shelves which was towed by the Library's delivery truck. Because it was unheated, it could not be used in winter. A popular stop was at the railroad station, where commuters dashed for reading material in the morning, or spent a more leisurely visit in the evening.

selected bestsellers

1940 - *HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY* - Richard Llewellyn
 1941 - *THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM* - A.J. Cronin
 1942 - *THE SONG OF BERNADETTE* - Franz Werfel
 1943 - *THE ROBE* - Lloyd C. Douglas
 1944 - *A TREE GROWS IN BROOKLYN* - Betty Smith
 1945 - *FOREVER AMBER* - Kathleen Winsor
 1946 - *THE KING'S GENERAL* - Daphne du Maurier
 1947 - *THE MIRACLE OF THE BELLS* - Russell Jamney
 1948 - *THE NAKED AND THE DEAD* - Norman Mailer
 1949 - *THE BIG FISHERMAN* - Lloyd C. Douglas

selected bestsellers

1950 - *THE CARDINAL* - Henry Morton Robinson
 1951 - *FROM HERE TO ETERNITY* - James Jones
 1952 - *THE CAINE MUTINY* - Herman Wouk
 1953 - *THE ROBE* - Lloyd C. Douglas
 1954 - *NOT AS A STRANGER* - Morton Thompson
 1955 - *MARJORIE MORNINGSTAR* - Herman Wouk
 1956 - *PEYTON PLACE* - Grace Metalious
 1957 - *COMPULSION* - Meyer Levin
 1958 - *DOCTOR ZHIVAGO* - Boris Pasternack
 1959 - *EXODUS* - Leon Uris

In February 1957, a new Bookmobile which could carry 3,000 books was purchased to replace the old van. It began its career inauspiciously, however, with a small fire breaking out shortly after its dedication. The Bookmobile soon became an institution in New Rochelle as it rolled through the city providing library service to the most inaccessible areas. The heaviest users were children, who loved to crowd inside the vehicle searching for their favorite books. This vehicle was replaced by a new air-conditioned model in 1970, but mounting repair costs and staff cutbacks necessitated retiring the Bookmobile from service in 1980.





CHILDREN'S BOOKS POPULAR IN THE FIRST LIBRARY AND STILL POPULAR NOW

ROBINSON CRUSOE - Daniel Defoe (pub. 1719)
COMPLETE BOOK OF NONSENSE - Edward Lear (pub. 1846)
ALICE IN WONDERLAND - Lewis Carroll (pub. 1865)
LITTLE WOMEN - Louisa May Alcott (pub. 1868)
TOM SAWYER - Mark Twain (pub. 1876)
HEIDI - Johanna Spyri (pub. 1880)
TREASURE ISLAND - Robert Louis Stevenson (pub. 1883)
HUCKLEBERRY FINN - Mark Twain (pub. 1884)
A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES - Robert Louis Stevenson (pub. 1885)



The first story hour for children was offered in 1910, limited to a group of 25, the largest number the first Children's Room could accommodate. Story hours continued to be popular over the years, with seven programs a week offered currently in the Children's Room.

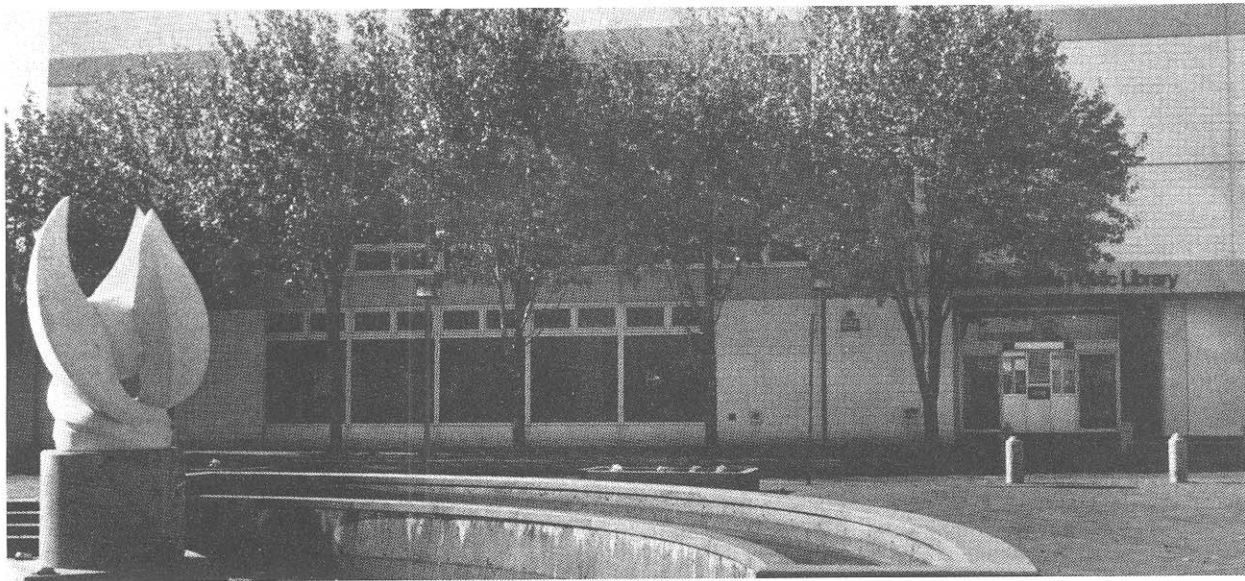
Children's Services

Although children's libraries before the year 1900 were considered very rare, the New Rochelle Public Library was decidedly progressive in providing a selection of books for children when it started in 1893. In 1901, when the Library moved to the Masonic Temple Building, it had its first Children's Room and its first children's librarian, Miss Jessie Brainard.



The Children's Room in the Main & Pintard building offered a large selection of books and pictures for children, along with reading lists for all ages. Seasonal exhibits highlighted book collections, and the children's librarians provided story hours, school class visits and book talks. Children had access to the room through their own entrance, making it unnecessary for them to pass through the main part of the building.



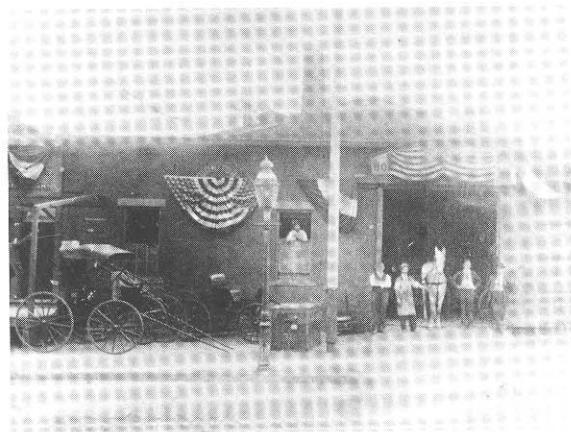


The Library Today

The current Library, constructed in the center of the downtown business area as part of a major neighborhood revitalization project, opened to the public on September 17, 1979. Designed by architects Pomeroy, Lebduska Associates of New York and Fred W. Lyon Associated Architects of New Rochelle, the building provides service on three sprawling floors utilizing a total of 67,000 square feet. The main section of the building (60% of the total structure) was refurbished from a former parking garage, with the resulting low ceiling heights offset with the creation of a wide, central skylit area.

This innovative design resulted in an Award of Excellence for Library Architecture from the American Institute of Architects and the American Library Association in 1980. In selecting the New Rochelle Public Library for this award, the jury said: "The library brilliantly satisfies a complex set of requirements by tying in existing structures with new construction. This superb piece of urban design acts as a community facility that provides exhibits, theater, meeting areas and a 250,000-volume library. This facility, in turn, stimulates the New Rochelle downtown district."

In the 1880s, this site was the home of Morgan's Livery Stables.





THE LIBRARY TODAY

- 38,000 registered borrowers
- Annual circulation between 380,000 and 410,000 items
- 80,000 reference questions a year
- 60,000 periodicals requested/used
- Film Series
- Music, Wine and Cheese Concert Series
- Art exhibits - incl. children's art, area artists, N.R. Art Association
- English as a Second Language programs
- Pre-School Story Hours 8 weeks/week
- Homework Clinics 20-30 children every day
- Summer Reading Programs . . . 500+ children every summer
- Children's School Vacation programs . . up to 450 children per program
- Library Volunteers Drop-In Center
- Westchester County Career Counseling

LIBRARY DIRECTORS 1893-1993

Mary E. Huntington	1893-1901
Elizabeth Stevens	1901-1910
Katherine Tappert	1910-1912
Jessie F. Brainerd	1912-1916
Mary E. Huntington	1917-1934
Aubry Lee (Hill) Graham	1934-1941
Francess C. Little (acting)	1941-1943
Josephine H. Edwards	1943-1954
Ruth M. Phillips	1954-1973
Eugene L. Mittelgluck	1973-1985
Frederick S. Giordano (acting)	1985-1986
Patricia Anderson	1986-

With funding from the City Council, the New Rochelle Public Library was one of the first communities in the county to automate its library. The system went online with the Westchester Library System in 1989, and now has a computerized catalog of library holdings throughout the county for public use. Just as the first Library faced the challenge of a new century, so does the Library today. On this eve of the 21st century, the present Library trustees are taking steps to keep advancing with technology in order to meet the demands of the next 100 years.

*Photos on this page by Lynn Kalot
History text and layout by Billie Tucker*

Looking Toward the Future

In some ways, the New Rochelle Public Library is not so different from its beginnings 100 years ago. People still like to sit and read, students still do schoolwork – but the materials themselves and how they can be found are vastly different. Now, patrons use computers instead of card catalogs, and borrow videocassettes, books on tape and CDs as well as traditional books.



Selected Bestsellers

- 1979 - *REDNECK CHOICE* - William Styron
- 1980 - *THE COVENANT* - James Michener
- 1981 - *NOBLE HOUSE* - James Cleavel
- 1982 - *L.I.: THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL STORYBOOK* - William Wotzwick
- 1983 - *THE RETURN OF THE JEDI STORYBOOK* - Jean Vinge
- 1984 - *THE TALISMAN* - Stephen King
- 1985 - *THE MAMMOTH HUNTERS* - Jean Auel
- 1986 - *IT* - Stephen King
- 1987 - *THE TOMMYKNOCKERS* - Stephen King
- 1988 - *THE CARDINAL OF THE KREMLIN* - Tom Clancy
- 1989 - *THE JOY LUCK CLUB* - Amy Tan
- 1990 - *OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO* - Dr. Seuss
- 1991 - *THE FIRM* - John Grisham
- 1992 - *WAITING TO EXHALE* - Terry McMillan
- 1993 - *BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY* - Robert Waller

CITY COUNCIL 1994

Timothy C. Idoni, Mayor

Council Members:

Katharine W. Conroy

Alexander R. Fodice

Joseph P. Fosina

Ruth Kitchen

Rhoda Quash

M. Christina Selin