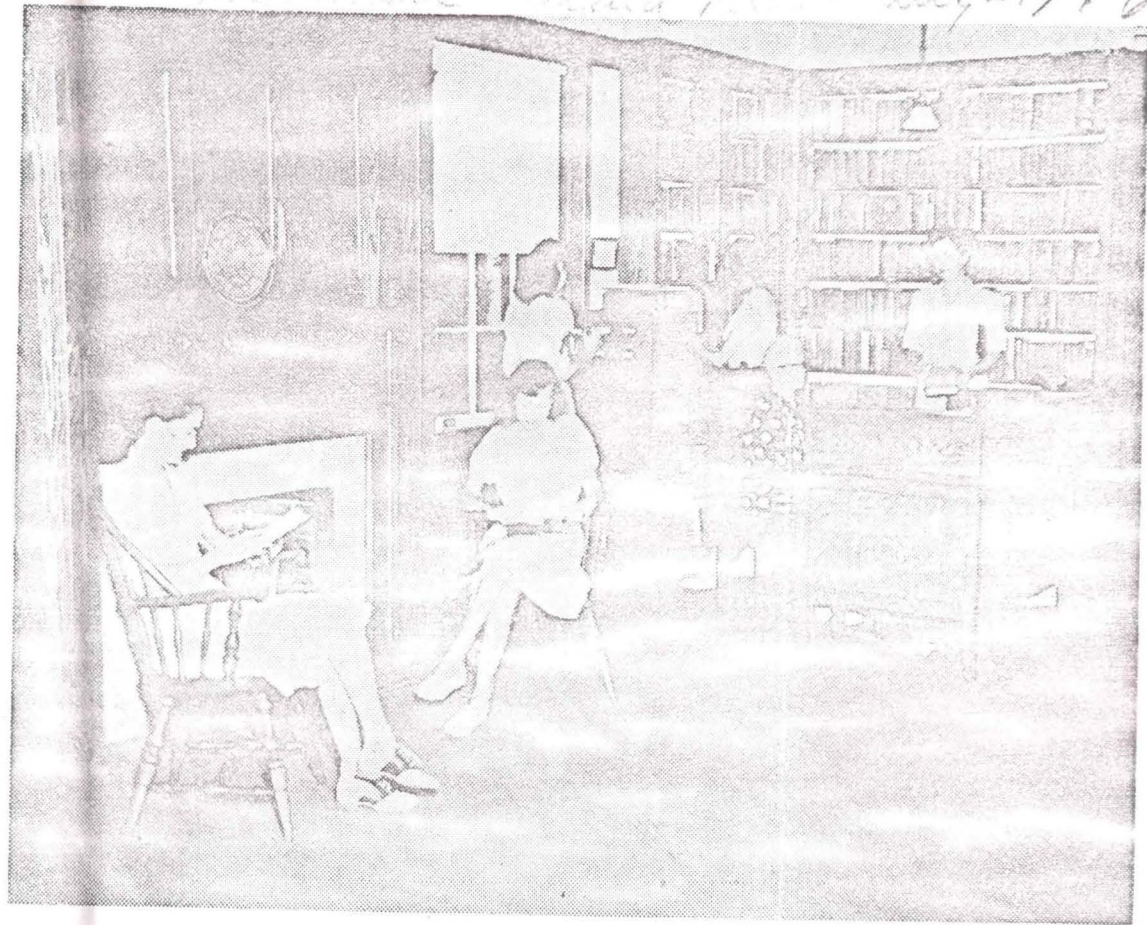
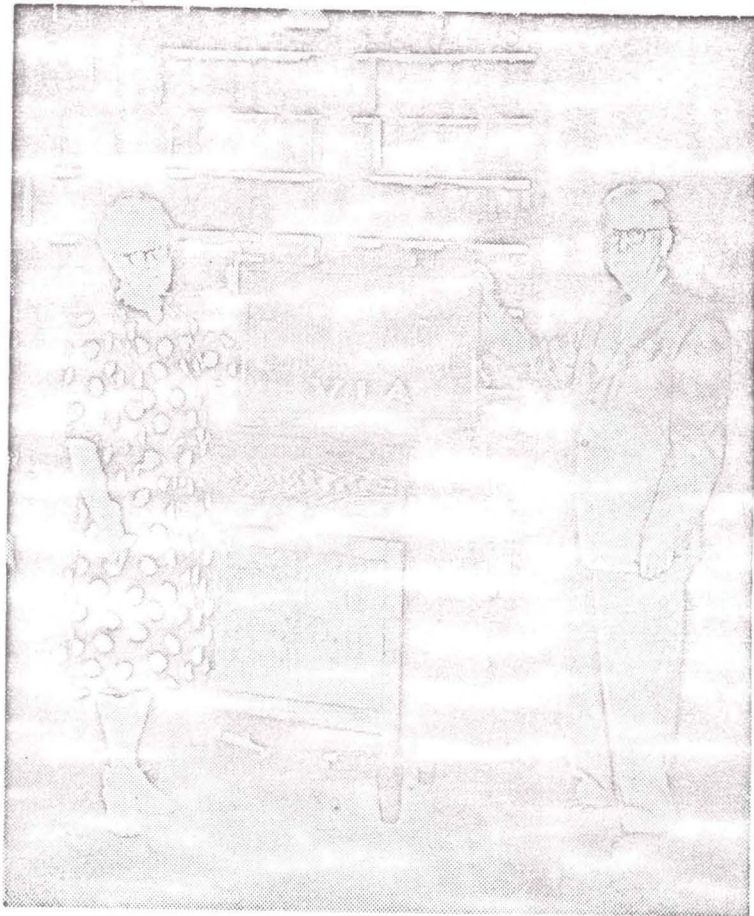


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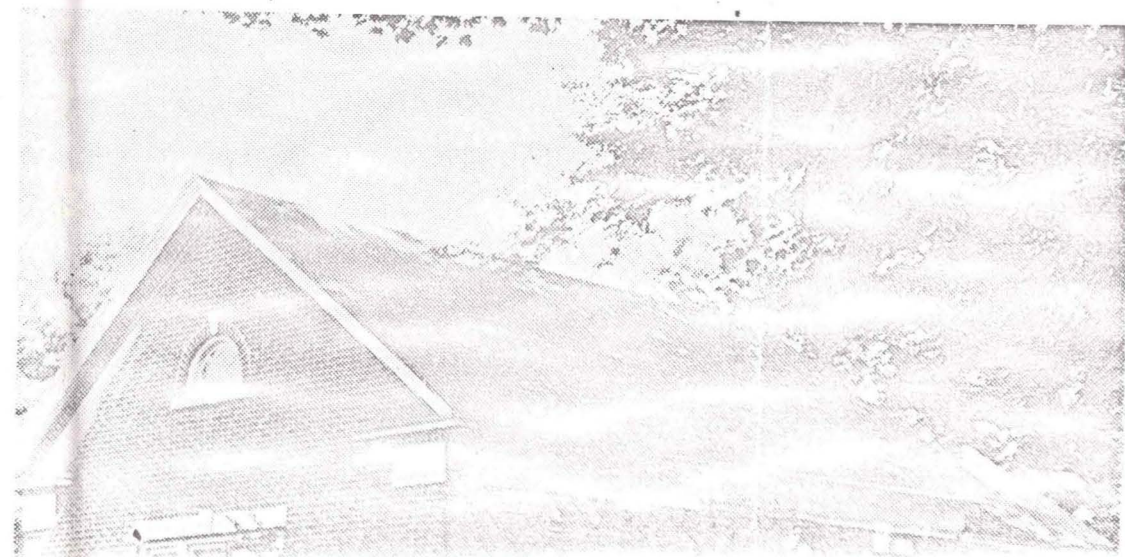
Library, Town Have Grown Together in Allendale

Turn of Century Found People Realizing Its Need—Today It Is Firmly Established

"I second the motion, Madame President! Allendale needs a public library. But do not let us forget that something must be done about our intolerable roads. Why! Only last week my carriage sank to the axle in a mudhole up the street."

Thus was a notion to give Allendale a public library bracketed with road improvements proposed at a meeting of the Village Improvement Association nearly a half century ago. Ladies of Allendale's V.I.A. in the horse and buggy days displayed practical ideas on community needs.

Building near the railroad station, where the weather beaten "Allendale Library, V.I.A." sign swung with the wind until 1926 when the library moved into its own building at the intersection of Franklin Turnpike



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In 1901 materialized the library that stemmed from the VIA meeting at the turn of the century. The sponsor was Mrs. Walter Spring. Her supporters were Mrs. Stephen Van Houten, Mrs. Frank Merrill, Mrs. Wallace Carver and Mrs. Frank Drummond.

Summer Boarders First Patrons
The first home of the Allendale Public Library, then as now a non-municipal operation, was in the frame structure on the east side of Franklin Turnpike that has served variously as borough hall, public school and American Legion Community Center.

It was a period when Allendale "four hours from the city by horse and carriage," was a popular summer resort. Summer boarders were the new library's principal patrons and the library was open only during June, July and August. "Ben Hur," "The Rosary," and "The Awakening of Helena Ritchie," were among the current best sellers.

Today, with "Britannia Mews," "The Snake Pit," and "This Side of Innocence," listed among fiction most likely to be sought by Allendale Library patrons young and old, the Village Improvement Association is but a dim memory. All but a few of its early members have passed on, but their spirit survives. The trim, one story, red brick colonial library building in the center of town is a living memorial to the pioneering women who militantly championed community improvements in the "gaslight" era when women, as well as children, were supposed "to be seen and not heard."

Turning Point in 1919
The library had a vicarious existence for nearly twenty years. Funds were limited. Quarters were cramped. Moves were numerous. The need for a school cloak room led to the library's first dispossession from the original Franklin Turnpike home. For two years it operated in a store rented to the library committee of the Village Improvement Association by community conscious John Ackerman. Then the library people packed their books and moved to Allendale's "flat iron" building, the old Braun

Building near the railroad station, where the weather beaten "Allendale Library, V.I.A." sign swung with the wind until 1926 when the library moved into its own building at the intersection of Franklin Turnpike and Allendale Avenue, a half block from its first home.

But the turning point in the destiny of the library occurred in 1919 when it was reorganized as the Allendale Library Association. The transition, recorded by Henrietta L. Talman, secretary pro tem, at the April 7, 1919, meeting of the Village Improvement Association, appears in the minutes as follows:

"We, the undersigned, constituting the library committee of the Allendale Library as successors of the Library Committee of the Village Improvement Association, do hereby constitute ourselves as the Allendale Library Association, and hereby agree to transfer to the trustees of the Allendale Library Association, as chosen and organized according to the attached constitution and bylaws, the property and plant of the Allendale Library as it now exists."

The epochal document was signed by Mrs. William C. Lee who is the present librarian, Mrs. W. E. Carver, Miss Edna L. Doty, Mrs. William Dewsnap, Henrietta L. Talman, Josephine Asten, Harriet L. Zabriskie, Amy B. Hurd, Eliza M. Borger and Kate L. Harris. For some reason not disclosed in the minutes, "Kate Harris" signed for Mrs. Dewsnap as well as herself.

Today, in 1946, Joe's barbershop occupies the premises cited in the 1919 transfer of the library's "property and plant" in the Braun Building.

The minutes showed a cash balance of \$61.69 and named the following trustees of the new library association: A. Tomalin, William C. Lee and Mrs. William Dewsnap, for three year terms; Mrs. S. Mason Pritchett, G. W. Potter, and Mrs. F. D. R. Pell of Saddle River, two year terms; and Mrs. W. Carver, Dr. C. Woodruff and Mrs. W. L. Wager of Saddle River, for one year.

Building Fund \$104.40
Library supporters had long dreamed of giving the town its own building. When the reorganization occurred in 1919 the sum of \$104.40 in the treasury of the VIA library committee ear-



The neon-lighted "Big City" may be the nation's nerve center, but typified, for example, by civic spirited little Allendale in which many time and energy in the interest of recreation and welfare. Notable part "valley for public good" by the Allendale Library Association which, above, by public subscription in 1926. It was designed by Allendale architect right was a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Wm. C. Lee in 1940. The building, Avenue, is a focal point of Allendale's residential charm. In the photo the weather-beaten "library" sign first hung by the Village Improvement but obliterated by sun, snow and rain of nearly a half century. At the scene with Mrs. Lee, librarian for 25 years, seated at her desk. Picture Bob Wehner.

marked "building fund" was transferred to the new association to be "reserved for the same purpose." The \$104.40 was the nucleus of funds that financed the erection of a handsome colonial library building seven years later.

In 1923 the Library Association incorporated. Signers to the certificate of incorporation included Edward G. Washburn, Albert L. Zabriskie, William C. Lee, W. G. Z. Critchley, Amy B. Hurd, Mary K. Lee, Henrietta L. Talman, Georgiana Van Houten, Catherine L. Harris and Fannie M. Carver. Mr. Arthur Tomalin became president, Mr. Washburn, vice president, Mr. Critchley, treasurer and Camille E. Watson, secretary. The Association moved to purchase the Franklin Turnpike site from William H. and John A. Mallinson for \$2,000. The Association was getting tired of "having rents raised and otherwise being shoved around by landlords," Mrs. Lee recalled this week.

The 1923 land acquisition ushered in a period of anguished activity centered on building construction. It was planned to designate the proposed building as the Allendale Memorial Library as a tribute to Allendale heroes of the war... world war I. The plans optimistically anticipated borough aid. Legal opinion, however, tabooed borough support. The Association was on its own in financing its new building. The late Dr. P. C. Fisher of Ridgewood was saddled with the chairmanship of a building fund-raising campaign.

Dr. Fisher Queried Residents

Dr. Fisher in a strong sales letter asking the support of residents in providing funds to give the town a library of its own, polled the townspeople on their sentiments towards making the proposed building a "war memorial." The minutes of the Association do not disclose the outcome of Dr. Fisher's inquiry. Sufficient to note that the "Memorial" idea was abandoned.

December 18, 1926 was "inspection night" of a library building that skeptics said "couldn't be built in a town like Allendale."

Architecturally the red brick building beneath towering maples at the cross roads of Allendale is a focal point of the bustling town's charm. "Show me your public buildings, your schools and I'll tell you your town's character," community-wise experts declare. "Something about the appearance of that delightful little library building induced us to settle here," many Allendale newcomers exclaim.

The gift of a north wing to the li-

association members hope and fondly believe will eventually materialize.

G. Is Want "How to do it" Books
"But never mind all this historical stuff, young lady," chirruped Mrs. Lee who has been the active library builder for nearly a quarter century. "I talk about what goes on in here."

The doughty little librarian, like the postman is undaunted by rain, snow, etc. etc. and who is known to have the library alight on nights when not even the hardiest lover will venture forth, was right. There is plenty to tell of what goes on in the Allendale Library: heartaches, heartaches and laughs in a mingle.

Generally speaking Allendale reading preferences parallel the nation's. Fiction and non-fiction in greatest demand closely follows one, two, three order of best sellers throughout the country. Right now non-fiction is getting a heavy push from former service men and women. "How to do it" volumes are in great demand by the former G. Is who concerned with home building, boning up on technical subjects related to their work.

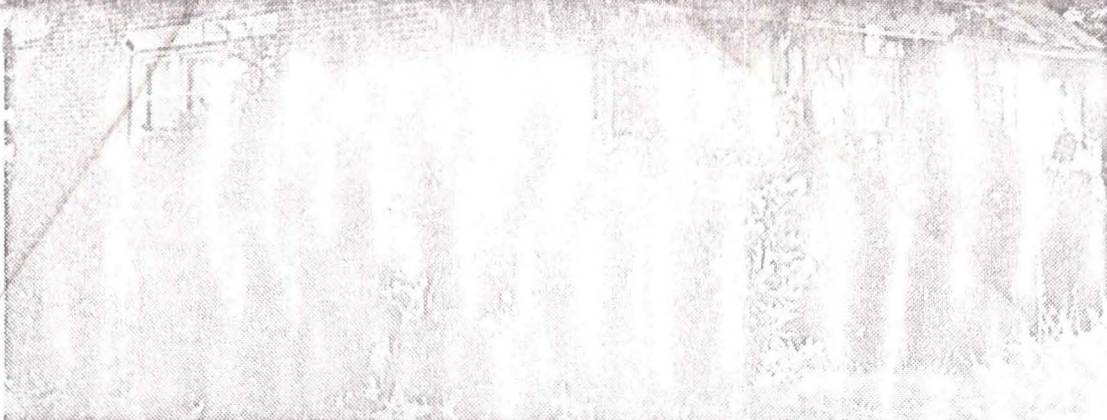
Many borrowers are members of the third generation of patrons. Their parents had borrowers cards. Their grandparents, too. Newcomers generally show up within the first couple of weeks of settling in town, to take out a card.

Finances a Sore Spot

"How about finances, Mrs. Lee?"
Hmm! Maybe that one should have been asked. It's somewhat of a sore spot. Finances haven't changed much in nearly fifty years. Income and outgo too nearly balanced. Tight squeeze from year to year, the Library is an entirely self supported institution, and is not a part of the borough government. The borough contributes \$300 annual membership dues of \$1 a year and nominal income from book rental makes up most of the receipts. Unlike New York State which matches community library expenses, dollar for dollar, the state of New Jersey provides no financial aid.

"However, . . . Mrs. Lee occasionally resorts to some of the tricks the (librarians) trade to obtain beyond means of the library's budget. Librarians, it appears, have their own "underground" and grapevine which they learn where "a good one of this" or that high price book may be required at a fraction of the retail price.

Lounging at one of the big walm tables in the spacious reading room browsing through one of the new best sellers, or some old-time favorite.



The neon-lighted "Big City" may be the nation's nerve center, but America's backbone is the small town typified, for example, by civic spirited little Allendale in which many community organizations give freely of time and energy in the interest of recreation and welfare. Notable project is the town library "operated privately for public good" by the Allendale Library Association which erected the charming building shown above, by public subscription in 1926. It was designed by Allendale architect William Dewsnap. The wing on the right was a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Wm. C. Lee in 1940. The building, at Franklin Turnpike and Allendale Avenue, is a focal point of Allendale's residential charm. In the photo at the top left Mr. and Mrs. Lee display the weather-beaten "library" sign first hung by the Village Improvement Association in 1901. Its legend is all but obliterated by sun, snow and rain of nearly a half century. At the top right is a typical "Library Night" scene with Mrs. Lee, librarian for 25 years, seated at her desk. Pictures by Herald-News staff photographer Bob Wehner.

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The gift of a north wing to the library building by Mr. and Mrs. Lee in 1940 further enhances the library's structural charm and usefulness but, in a sense, the building is still incomplete. Architect William Dewsnap who designed the building and contributed a portion of his architect's fees as a donation, provided for a companion wing on the south side of the building as well as a future large, oblong extension at the back. These,

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Lounging at one of the big walnut tables in the spacious reading room, browsing through one of the new best sellers, or some old-time favorite, or poring over some of the current periodicals and magazines, it is not easy to associate the Allendale Library of 1946 and jet propulsion, atomic bombs and "The Huskster," with its primitive predecessor of 1901.

"And forty years is a long time to run an institution of this kind," Mrs. Lee observed. "Particularly to run it on a shoe string. It was all right maybe, two score years ago in the days

the horse and buggy, unlighted streets, mud and the carrying of lanterns from December through March. There was little variety and little entertainment in those days. Any good book meant a great deal." Today, however, broadened reading habits complicate the problems of small town libraries that want to cater adequately to the spreading demand of their borrowers, when funds are virtually frozen at pre-war levels.

What? Certainly not! No complaints, said Mrs. Lee. She would do it over again . . . if necessary. That "if necessary" was underscored the way she said it.

Library Has 200 Members

The Library now has about 200 members who pay \$1 a year dues. Officers of the Association are Mr. William C. Lee, president and treasurer; Albert L. Zabriskie, vice-president; H. E. Sylvester Buechner, secretary. Present trustees include the officers and W. G. J. Critchley, Mrs. D. W. Frazier, Jr., Kenneth E. Burge, Mrs. Hilda Sprague, Ray Jones, Mrs. David M. Colburn, Mrs. J. W. Jack-

son, Mrs. Sidney Geismer, Mrs. Parnell Thomas, Mrs. Lee, and Frank Berdan.

Library hours are Monday and Friday afternoons from 3 to 5 and Monday nights from 7 to 9 p. m. Mrs. Lee's volunteer library workers include Mrs. David Frazier, Jr., Mrs. Sprague, Mrs. Colburn, Mrs. William Dewsnap and Mrs. Ray Jones.

All in all, the story of Allendale library is the story of Allendale itself. The minutes of meetings of a half century are splashed with names of men and women long identified with the town's development from a horse and buggy hamlet of the Victorian Era to an enviable residential New York suburb of the atomic age.

It is the story of "the little colonial library" on the corner . . . the story of sacrifice, work and sweat of a small band of earnest workers, for young children and grand children; a work that the city fathers know practically nothing about; a work begun in long these many years.

"I wonder if we deserve so much handed to us on a silver platter," murmured an Allendalian on hearing the story.