

Big Plans For Tiny Library

ALLENDALE—The Junior Woman's Club of Allendale has received permission from the Borough Council to hold an "Old-Fashioned Country Fair" at the Allendale Recreation Field on Oct. 16. All proceeds from the fair will be donated to the Allendale Public Library Building Fund. Allendale's various civic and service organizations have been contacted and asked to participate in the fair.

For many years Allendale has been aware of the need for a larger library building to serve as more than just a "book warehouse" — Allendale's present library building is even too small to serve this purpose alone. Many of Allendale's residents would like to see room enough to provide an all-round cultural center: room for students to sit and study, room for children to browse and discover,

room for senior citizens to relax and enjoy.

Allendale was one of the first municipalities in northern Bergen County to start a library—its birth was reported in a newspaper article of December 14, 1900: "The Allendale Public Library . . . was opened last week . . . in charge of Mrs. E. W. Spring and Mrs. Wallace E. Carver. The state has already sent a large case of books from the 'traveling library' . . ."

Allendale's library was the brain-child of the Village Improvement Assn., a civic organization formed in 1887 when Allendale was still a part of Orvil Township and had not yet been incorporated as a borough. In 1900, when Allendale's population was 694, the Village Improvement Association formed a Library

Committee, originally comprised of five dedicated ladies: Mrs. Spring, chairman; Mrs. Stephen Van Houten, Mrs. Carver, Mrs. Frank Merrill and Mrs. Frank Drummond.

Early in December 1900, the library, supported entirely by private funds, including membership dues and donations, was opened in the Public School (now Allendale's Municipal Building) with approximately 600 volumes.

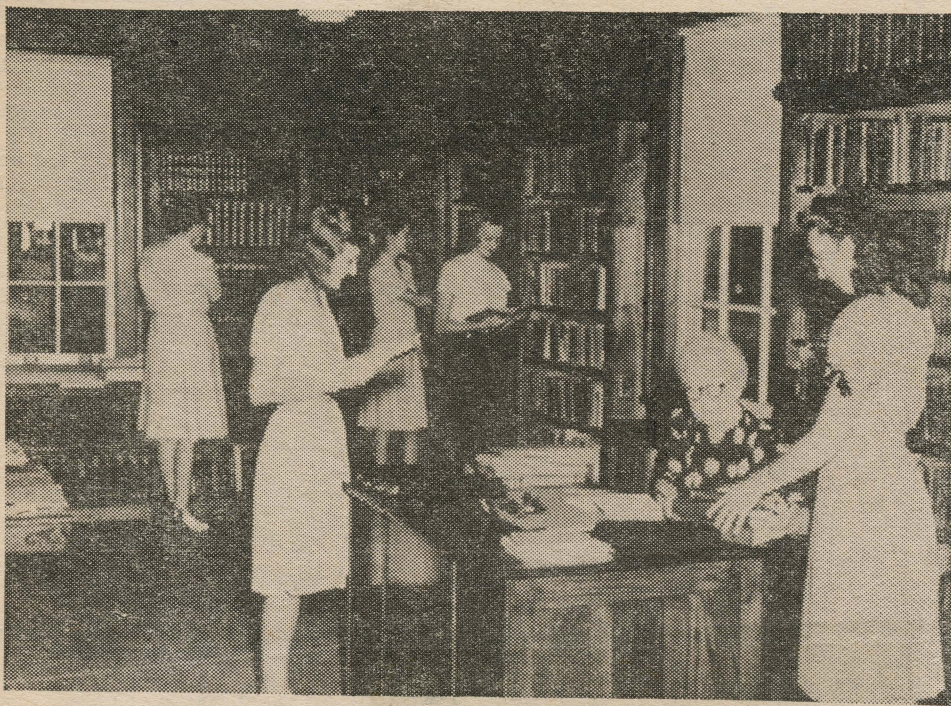
Sometime around 1910, the need for a cloak room in the school led to the library's first move — to a store rented from John Ackerman. In 1915 the library moved again, this time to the second floor of Allendale's recently constructed fire house. The fourth move occurred prior to 1919, with the entire operation being moved to the Braun building in the center of town.

On April 7, 1919, the Allendale Library Assn. was formed with a goal of "the perpetuation of the Allendale Public Library and the extension of its work in the community." Another goal of the association was to establish a building fund and to solicit funds for the purchase of a suitable site for the construction of a permanent home for the library.

The next few years were busy ones for the association: a building site was purchased from William H. and John A. Mallinson; the Library Association was incorporated in November 1923; Architect William Dewsnap began to draw up plans for the proposed building; a contract for construction was signed, and by June 7, 1926, the foundation had been completed.

All of this activity culminated with a public reception held in the newly completed library building on December 18, 1926. The library at last had a permanent home.

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The Mary K. Lee room of the Allendale Public Library was completed in 1941, named in honor of librarian Mrs. William C. Lee (seated). Expansion of the facilities has been a continuing project antedating 1946, when this photo was taken.

Big Plans

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It wasn't too long, however, before the "squeeze" began—in more ways than one. In 1930 Allendale's turn-of-the-century population had nearly tripled and the library was already "outgrown." On top of this, the depression was upon all, and membership dues and donations dropped alarmingly.

The library weathered the

storm, however, and in June, 1941, Mr. and Mrs. William C. Lee presented to the board of trustees their generous offer to donate the addition of a wing to the library building. Lee served the Allendale Library for over 31 years, first as trustee, later as vice president and treasurer and finally as president. Mary K. Lee, his wife, served as Allendale's volunteer librarian for over 33 years. By November 1941 the new wing was completed.

On November 4, 1952, the library trustees saw their dream of half a century come true: the citizens of Allendale voted to have the borough government take over the library building and grounds and to operate the library municipally as a Free Public Library.

In December of 1952 the Library Board voted unanimously to name the library "the Lee Memorial Library" in memory of William C. Lee, whose death had occurred in

July. In February of 1953, Mrs. Austin Sprague became Allendale's first paid librarian.

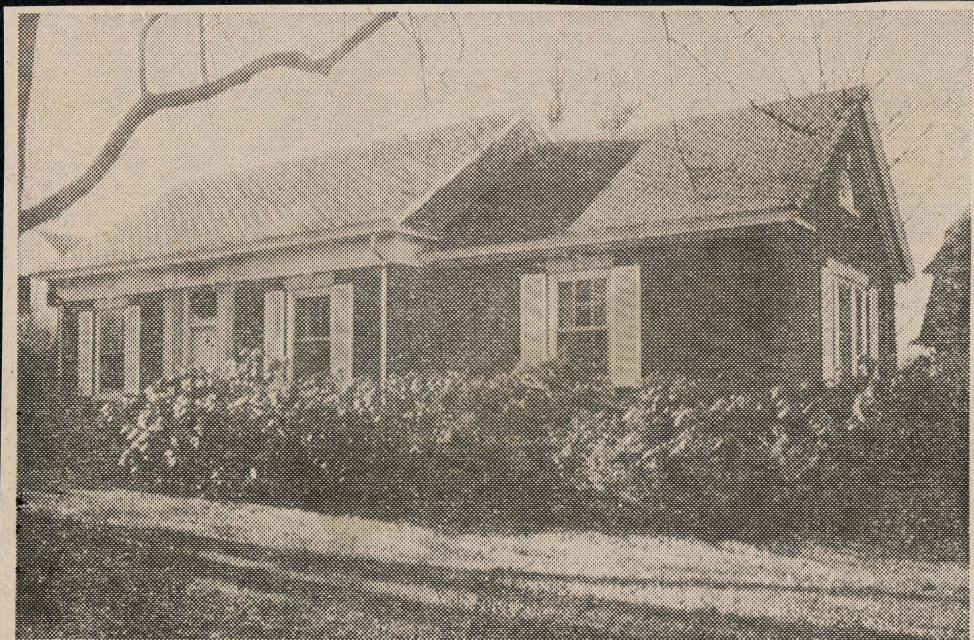
Although the present library has served extremely well over the years, it does not meet the needs and demands of a town the size of Allendale, whose current population is 4½ times the population in 1926, when the library was built. The present building is about one-fifth the size recommended by the state for the borough.

Because the current site is too small to permit expansion, the board of trustees has, for the past several years, been involved in a search for a suitable site. With the borough's proposed purchase of the Crestwood Lake tract, a future library site is at last within reach.

The country fair Oct. 16 has been planned so Allendale residents can enjoy themselves and support their library at the same time. Plans for the day include the

sale of handcrafted boutique items (including needlework, macrame, handpainted items, jewelry, toys, decorative items, etc.); games (including an old fashioned "Cake-walk"; rides; contests with a country fair flavor and the sales of balloons and hand-painted pumpkins. The day will begin with a parade and will end with entertainment, possibly including an old-fashioned band concert.

Any organization, group or individual interested in participating in the planning or operation of the fair is asked to contact Mrs. Ronald Huse, 124 Elbrook Drive, or Mrs. Stephen Moore, 8 Harreton Road, co-chairmen.



Allendale's compact library building is about one-fifth the size recommended by the state for the borough. An autumn country fair will benefit the library's building fund, storing up funds against the Borough Council's planned purchase of the Crestwood Lake tract, which may include a new library site.