



*Lee Memorial Library
Allendale, N.J.*

Country Fair Will Aid Library Building Fund

ALLENDALE - An old-fashioned country fair with a two-fold purpose is being planned by the Junior Woman's Club of Allendale for Saturday, Oct. 16 at the Recreation Field in Allendale.

Mrs. Ronald Huse, co-chairman of the Fair, states: "Our main goal in sponsoring this event is to focus attention on the needs of the Allendale Free Public Library and to encourage donations to and raise funds for the Library

Building Fund. As an extra added bonus, we hope to provide good old-fashioned fun as a means of "painless contribution" -- all proceeds from the day's events will benefit the Library's Building Fund."

Plans for the day include a boutique booth (where hand-made items such as hand-painted decorative tins, boxes and salt shakers; knitted purses; felt-on-burlap children's wall hangings; and crewel embroidery, among other things, will be sold), Games (including an old-fashioned "cake walk"), rides, contests with an old-fashioned flavor (tug-o-war, etc.), and the sale of hand-painted pumpkins and personalized balloons.

The day will begin with a parade and end with entertainment, hopefully including an old-fashioned band concert. Members of the Junior club will be dressed in old-fashioned skirts and bonnets and the public is invited to dress in old-fashioned costumes if they desire.

Any organization, group or individual interested in participating in the planning or running of the fair is asked to contact Mrs. Huse, 124 Elbrook Drive, or Mrs. Stephen Moore, 8 Harreton Road, co-chairmen of the Fair. Organizations who have thus far indicated an interest in participating in the Fair

include The Community Arts Association, the Woman's Evening Club of Allendale and the Friends of the Library.

Mrs. Huse pointed out that Allendale for many years has been aware of the need for a larger library building. The current building is literally "packed to the rafters", offers no parking facilities at all, and because of limited grounds the current building cannot be expanded.

Many residents would like to see a future library that would serve as a cultural center for Allendale; one that would offer room for students to sit and study, room for children to browse and discover, and room for senior citizens to relax and enjoy.

The library in Allendale, one of northern Bergen County's first, was begun by the Village Improvement Association in December, 1900. The V.I.A. had been formed in 1887 when Allendale was still a part of Orvil Township, to improve conditions in the tiny community. The V.I.A., under its first and only president, Alberg L. Zabriskie, laid Allendale's first stretch of paved road and was responsible for erecting and maintaining the town's first street lights.

In 1900 the V.I.A. organized a library committee, comprised of five civic-minded ladies, Mrs.

E.W. Sring, Chairman Mrs. Wallace E. Carver Mrs. Stephen Van Houten Mrs. Frank Merrill and Mrs. Frank Drummond, to begin and maintain a lending library for Allendale.

In December, 1900, the Library, housed on the second floor of the school building (now Allendale's Municipal Building) was opened for business. The Ramsey Journal, in its issue of December 14, 1900, reported: "The Allendale Public Library ... was opened last week ... The state has already sent a large case of books from the "traveling library" ... After these are read, they are sent to some other town and a fresh supply sent here ... Non residents may also take books out ..." The population of turn-of-the-century Allendale was 694 when the library, supported entirely by private funds, including membership dues and donations, opened with about 600 volumes.

In 1910, the school found itself in need of a cloak room, so the library made its first of several subsequent moves, to a store owned by John Ackerman. In 1915 its second move took place - this time to the second floor of Allendale's recently constructed fire house, which at that time also doubled as the Borough Hall. In 1919

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ALLENDALE PUBLIC LIBRARY, SUMMER 1946. Mr. and Mrs. William C. Lee display the weather-beaten Library sign first hung by the Village Improvement Association in 1901.

All. Library

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the library made its next
move - to the Braun

Building in the center of town.

On April 7, 1919 the Library Committee disbanded (its sponsor, the V.I.A. had been defunct since about 1903, its purpose having

been superceded by the organization of a Borough Council when Allendale was incorporated as a Borough in 1894). In its place, the Allendale Library Association was formed, with

its goal being "the perpetuation of the Allendale Public Library and the extension of its work in the community." The secondary goal of the Association was to establish a building fund, to solicit donations to the fund, and to find and purchase a suitable site for the construction of a permanent home for the library.

In the ensuing busy years, a site was located and purchased from William H. and John A. Mallinson; the Library Association was incorporated (in November 1923) and architect William Dewsnap (who had also designed the fire house) began to draw up plans for the long-awaited building. By June 7, 1926, the foundation had been completed.

December 18, 1926 was the big day for the library - a public reception and open house was held in the newly completed building. Years of hopes and dreams had finally become reality: Allendale's Library at last had a permanent home.

Libraries, like families, sometimes tend to outgrow their first homes, and it wasn't long before Allendale's "squeeze" began - in more ways than one. In 1930 Allendale's turn of the century population had nearly tripled and the library, in only four years, had outgrown its quarters. If the library was feeling a squeeze, its borrowers were feeling one too, for the depression was affecting Allendale as well as the entire country, and library membership dues and donations dropped alarmingly.

On March 21, 1931, Mr. H.E.S. Buechner presented to the Board of Trustees of the Library a framed panel on which his daughter, Eugenia, had hand-lettered the names of all those residents who had contributed to the Building Fund. This plaque hangs in the library to this day and reads like a veritable "Who Was Who" of Allendale.

by 1941 the toll of existing by the skin of its teeth became very apparent - renovations to the existing building were sorely needed and the need for additional space was even more acute than ever. Money was still tight, when, in June 1941, Mr. and Mrs. William C. Lee came to the rescue of the Library by presenting to the Board of Trustees their generous offer to renovate the existing building and donate the addition of a wing. A whole separate article could be written about the contributions Mr. and Mrs. Lee made to the library over the years - Mr. Lee served the library for over 31 years first as trustee lat-

er as vice president and treasurer and finally as president. His wife, Mary K. Lee served as Allendale's volunteer librarian for over 33 years. By November 1941, the renovations and the new wing were completed.

Through the years, many efforts had been made to officially municipalize the library, but it was not until November 4, 1952 that the residents of the town 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 re-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. In March 1953, Schuyler C. Lee, son of Mr. and Mrs. William C. Lee, unveiled the bronze letters over the doorway, which read "Lee Memorial Library."

Although the present library has served extremely well over the years, and continues to do so, under the direction of its present librarian, Mrs. Grace Huselman, it does not meet the needs and demands of a town the size of Allendale, whose current population is 4 1/2 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.

With the possible Borough purchase of the Crestwood Lake tract imminent, the library awaits another chapter in its long history—for the purchase of the land could mean that a future library site is at last in view. The Junior club hopes to help get that new chapter written with this Old-Fashioned Country Fair on October 16.

Mrs. Huse observed that although the Allendale Junior Club has long been interested in the support of the Library (one of the first fund raisers the club held after its incorporation in 1933 was a card party for the benefit of the library) even stronger efforts are being made in its behalf these days. Over a year ago, the club began its project "to improve library facilities and services in Allendale" by entering the Community Improvement Program, a contest co-sponsored by the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the Sears Roebuck Foundation.

The club has held fundraisers, including fashion shows and the sale of privately printed notepaper featuring a member's sketch of the Library, and for the past several years has conducted story hours for pre-schoolers in the Library.

Along with its attempts to aid the Public Library, the club has been working to improve library facilities in Allendale by helping to catalog and shelve books in the Hillside School Library this summer. Because the school has no permanent circulating library, the club hopes to begin a roving circulating library in the school beginning in October. The "book buggy", stocked with a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction books and staffed by members of the Junior Club, will visit each classroom monthly to allow students to borrow books.