

THE NAVESINK LIBRARY - 1917-1967

On December 12, 1967 it will be fifty years since the Navesink Library, organized three years before, moved into its own building on the corner of Monmouth and Sears Avenues. In celebration of this event the Navesink Library Association will hold a brief out-of-doors ceremony at two o'clock on Sunday, October 15th, followed by a program, an open house and a tour of the building.

Founded in 1914, largely through the initiative of Mrs. William Barclay Parsons of Locust, and generously supported by many persons in Navesink, Locust, and other nearby communities, the Navesink Library was at first housed in the old Baptist Church building, with Miss Adelaide H. Wright as its first librarian. Its book collection was augmented by what were known as traveling libraries from the State Library Commission, and by inter-library loans. In 1917 about fifty magazines, including most of the popular ones of the day and several children's magazines, were available to library patrons.

The library was maintained by the Navesink Library Association, with a membership of about 75. Officers and trustees of the Association for the year 1917 were:
President - Mrs. William Barclay Parsons, First Vice-

President - Mrs. E. E. Maxson, Second Vice-President - Andrew Robertson, Secretary - Miss Norma L. Swan, Treasurer - General William Barclay Parsons, also Mrs. Louise D. Card, Mrs. James May Duane, Robert Hartshorne, John L. Ingling, Mrs. J. C. Lord, William M. Roberts, James G. Timolat, and Mrs. Charles A. Vanderhoof. The members of the Library Committee were Mrs. J. C. Lord, Mrs. J. H. Brainard, Mrs. William S. Golden, Mrs. Arthur F. Curtis, Miss Susan Williams and Mr. William M. Roberts. The House Committee included, in addition to Mrs. Maxson, Mrs. Duane, Mrs. Vanderhoof and Mr. Ingling, Mrs. Arthur Johnson, Mrs. Howard DeVesty, Mrs. Walter Connor, Mrs. Joseph E. Johnson, Miss Martha Hill, Miss Ella Leonard, Miss Hazel Posten, Mr. J. H. Brainard and Mr. W. A. DeVesty.

The new building was the gift of Mrs. Ellen W. Duryea of New York City as a memorial to her husband, Herman B. Duryea. It comprised, in addition to the spacious and attractive library room, a well equipped gymnasium with stage at one end, and bowling alleys in the basement. Tennis courts, still in use, were in the rear of the building. All these facilities were enjoyed in the early days by various clubs, for meetings of the local branch of

the Red Cross, and for exhibits of handiwork and antiques, dances, lectures, musicales, and dramatic performances of various kinds. Programs of some of the plays put on by the local young people are on display in the library.

A performance of "The Merchant of Venice" was presented by the distinguished actor Robert Mantell and his company for the benefit of the library, and during the early years many lectures were given, ranging in subject from "The Ancient Civilization of Middle America" to the best methods for canning and otherwise preserving fruits and vegetables. This was war time, and classes in sewing and first aid were also conducted in the library.

The names of the men from Navesink and vicinity who served in World War I are inscribed on a bronze plaque to the right of the front entrance to the library.

In the course of the last fifty years there have been several Navesink librarians, among them Miss Sarah Wright, Miss Dorothy Williams, Mrs. Spooner, Miss Antonina Houghwout, Miss Hope Turner, Miss Florence Holmes and Miss Janet Smith.

With the opening of the Middletown Township Library in 1921, it and the Navesink Library were closely allied. For many years Mrs. Usilla S. Walling, Township Librarian,

had her headquarters in the Navesink Library building, and gave generously of her services to the Navesink Library. Today the Navesink Library is a branch of the Middletown Township Library, with Mrs. Adelaide H. Connor, a lifelong resident of Navesink, as Branch Librarian. Circulation for the month of July 1967 alone was over 1800, and the Navesink Library, open 21 hours a week, has over 1000 borrowers.

The gymnasium is in frequent use, by the Brownies, by a local dance group, and by the Monmouth Players, who make the library building their headquarters. For their productions, given three times a year, the gymnasium is transformed into a theater, with standard theater seats for the audience. Once a year the Players give a benefit performance for the Navesink Library.

Changes have come, as of course they must, but throughout the years the library has always provided a thread of continuity and interest in the village of Navesink.

OFFICERS OF THE NAVESINK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

President - Miss Mildred I. DeVesty

Vice President - Mr. Milton Wright

Secretary - Mrs. Leonard Hodgetts

Treasurer - Mr. David Finch

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Mrs. Marion H. Brainard

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