

History of West Islip Public Library

by Ethel Gold (c. 1966)
(transcribed by Alicia Sullivan)

INTRODUCTION

West Islip residents are often asked by "outsiders" to pinpoint the location in which they live. Most of the time they merely say that it is sandwiched in between Babylon on one side and Bay Shore on the other, on the south shore in Suffolk County. Usually, no further clarification is asked for. However, when one plans to set the stage for a study of one of the focal points of the community, more than merely a cursory description becomes necessary, since such a close relationship exists between any institution and its environment.

At the present time, there is a lack of formal historical material dealing specifically with West Islip. Basic sources have yielded very little information. Since printed references to the area are hard to find, this history will show that the growth of the region has paralleled that of Islip Town (of which it is a part), Suffolk County, and Long Island.

Except for church-sponsored functions or school functions, West Islip has rarely experienced community endeavors in the nature of drama groups, art centers, music centers, theaters, or other cultural pursuits the way many suburban communities have done. Its residents who have wished to devote their time to these activities have had to turn to neighboring communities. At the same time, there has been almost constant support of the public library, and today this is still the only community center of cultural activity. The library was opened nine years ago in one room which had been equipped and staffed by volunteers and supported by contributions of books and money. Today, a half-million dollar building has been approved by the town's voters. An examination of the background of this library and its relationship to its community should help to determine the reasons for its small failures and larger successes, thereby bringing into focus a well-defined picture of the library and the community of which it is such an important part.

CHAPTER I

To go back and commence at the starting point of history, we must quote the sacred writer when he said, "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." At a period not far remote from that referred to in this quotation, we have reason to believe Long Island was created, and brought to the light of day.

Between this "beginning" and the arrival on Long Island of the first Europeans, there exists a tremendous gap in our history books. Perhaps some day clues will be unearthed which will enable future historians to fill this gap. In the meantime, one can only ponder and speculate about the existence of the original inhabitants who for many centuries lived undisturbed in areas where now millions of newcomers are making their homes. The written history of Long Island begins in 1524, when Giovanni Verrazano, the Italian explorer, first sighted the southern shores of Long Island as he sailed his ship from the western end to Block Island. Countless numbers of volumes have been devoted to the study of the intervening years, and the examination of the contents of any of these histories rivals what is found in the most imaginative works of fiction. We find heroism, romance, adventure, and calamity as well as success in these tales of pioneering, shipwrecks, wars, suffering, and high society. The cast of characters consists of Indians, explorers, aristocrats, Quakers, farmers, fishermen, whalers, politicians, shipbuilders, pirates, and smugglers. More recent history reveals stories of sport and vacation, wild flowers and birds, duck farms and potato farms, the expansion of transportation and industry, and tremendous population increases. Mainly, the story of Long Island has been one of constant growing and building. Comprehensive histories are readily available to those who have the interest and wish to examine them. However, even a brief look at a chronology of the highlights of Long Island's early history is enough to point out some of its unique characteristics.

Because of an accident of geography, Long Island beckoned to European colonists as early as the 1600s, when Dutch settlers established farms on the western end. It was here that they first

encountered the Long Island Indians, the Delawares of the Algonquin branch. Thirteen small tribes of them were scattered the length of the island. Each had its own name and chief or sachem, each had its own territory. The tribes living further east were the Missaquogues, Setaukets, Secatogues (natives of West Islip), Shincocock, Patchogues, and Montauks. The Dutch settlers were closely followed by English settlers, and within a short period of time, European intervention had thinned out the Indians. Smallpox spread with fatal results, and fifty years after the first settlers arrived, a third of the native population had died; by 1761, they had virtually vanished from large parts of the island.

During the next one hundred years, the island enjoyed relative peace and became domesticated. Isolation from the rest of New York forced the early settlers in these frontier communities to depend on their own resources for protection and welfare. Gradually, over the many years, farms expanded, villages sprang up, small businesses increased, roads took shape, and news traveled faster. With the advance of civilization, Long Island grew steadily in size and importance. By the early 1900s, many startling innovations were accepted as a matter of course and helped to bring the island and the city closer together. There appeared the automobile, telephone, and telegraph, along with gas, running water, cement roads, electric light and power, moving pictures, motor boats and victrolas.

Over the years, Long Island has survived natural disasters in the form of hurricanes and droughts as well as man-made disasters in the form of wars and economic depressions. It has more than survived, and recent years have brought with them one of the most dramatic chapters in its colorful and fascinating history. Its expansion, which began during colonial times, has not yet reached its zenith. It is still proceeding at such a rapid pace that statistics become obsolete soon after they are printed. The aircraft industry has had a great deal to do with spearheading the island's recent industrial development, and the building and growth of the Sperry, Republic, and Grumman plants partially explain the fantastic increase in population that took place soon after the end of World War II. This growth reached a peak in the early 1950s when Nassau County was the fastest growing county in the United States. Taxes were low, land was cheap, and there was the pent-up demand for escape from New York City. This has been summed up as a "revolt against the city--any city--and the cramped, noisy bustle of urban life." The end of the war and the end of shortages caused a phenomenal surge which added 678,000 people to the population of Nassau County from 1950 to 1960. The wave of migration extended into Suffolk, and the population there went up 390,000, over one million new people for Long Island in ten years. They were predominantly young people with small children at hand or on the way. There were the war workers who were crowded into whatever quarters they had been able to find, the returning servicemen and their brides, and families from the city searching for a patch of green lawn in the suburbs. The needs of these people were met in a large measure by Levittown in central Nassau County, with its inexpensive homes, ten thousand of which were built almost overnight. The birth of this community played a significant role in the development of Long Island.

Most communities grow gradually with the passing years, and this was true of Long Island for almost three centuries. Then rapid changes began to take place in the population with corresponding changes in the economic, cultural, and social life of Queens and Nassau Counties. Now Suffolk County is having its turn, and it would take a brave person to predict the final outcome. By 1965, twenty years after the beginning of that great migration, there were almost 893,000 people living in Suffolk, and there is every reason to predict a continuing population growth. The forecast is made that it will have 1,100,000 residents in 1970. By 1985, the total should exceed two million.

The county, with over nine hundred square miles of usable, desirable land comprises one-seventh of the entire New York metropolitan region. It is bounded on the north by Long Island Sound and on the south by the Atlantic Ocean. The south shore is paralleled by barrier beaches which create bays between the south shore of the island and the Atlantic Ocean. Connecting these bays and the ocean are Fire Island, Moriches, and Shinnecock Inlets. The county is approximately eighty-six miles long and twenty-one miles wide at its widest point, which is its western boundary. The major land mass extends eastward from Nassau County for forty-two miles to Riverhead, where two peninsulas continue eastward separated by the waters of Peconic and Gardiners Bays. The northern peninsula, terminating at Orient Point, is approximately twenty-eight miles long, and the southern peninsula which terminates at Montauk Point, is about forty-four miles long.

For a long time, Suffolk was a rural and isolated area in which farming, fishing, and tourism were the principal industries. "Then the people came in vast hordes, in hundreds of thousands. They made the famous migrations of history seem like slow trickles." Since that time, Suffolk County's population, with a substantial 40.8 per cent increase, or 272,062 people, was estimated to be at 938,846 on January 1, 1966. Most of its recent growth has taken place in its five western towns, one of which is Islip. Its population figures, which are the largest of any of the other towns in the county, stood at 71,465 in 1950, and at 172,959 in 1960, an increase of 101,494 or 142.01 per cent.

What are the implications of this "population explosion" for the young, inexperienced, and as yet unseasoned community known as West Islip and for a study of its public library? They are the same as the implications for all of Islip Town, Suffolk County, and Long Island. The implications are in terms of the human needs which have to be met: physical, social, economic, and cultural. If it were not for the tremendous influx of people during the 1950s there probably would not be a West Islip as we know it today.

CHAPTER II

In the southwestern part of the town and scattered along the old south country road for a distance of about four miles is a locality known as West Islip, occupied almost exclusively by the country seats and palatial residences of gentlemen of wealth and ease. This locality lies between Babylon on the west and Bay Shore on the east. Nowhere else in the county do we find so many elegant and aristocratic establishments grouped together, with such rich and elaborate surroundings as here. And it is worthy of remark that this same locality, where now we behold such a full exhibition of what art and wealth have done to gratify the ideas of a high grade of civilization, was once the headquarters and strong hold of the Secatogue tribe of Indians. What a marvelous transformation scene has passed here: Less than two centuries ago this very spot was the undisputed heritage of savages.

It is practically impossible to obtain separate facts about the characteristics of West Islip's population. It is not an incorporated area, and the school district boundaries are not the same as the United States Census tracts. The only accurate available source of the population count is the school district census, which represents the number of children in the school district who are less than eighteen years old. In a recent report by Milton H. Steinhauer, Educational Consultant, the 1962 census was analyzed and the following figures were presented.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>INCREASE OVER PREVIOUS YEAR</u>
1953	3,193	1,198
1954	4,067	874
1955	5,291	1,224
1956	6,652	1,361
1957	7,424	772
1958	8,236	812
1959	8,904	660
1960	9,615	711
1961	10,315	700
1962	10,977	662

The Study also indicated that the increase is due to both a higher number of births to residents and to the movement of families with children into the community. Further evaluation states that West Islip must be predominantly made up of a young population. It is an area consisting of parents with growing children. These people did not come from rural areas, but rather from a metropolitan environment. This not only assures heavy school use, but insures also a large potential for heavy use of the public library and all its facilities. West Islip, which less than two centuries ago was "the undisputed heritage of savages," was the setting in 1962 for 5,988 dwellings, only 477 (less than ten per cent) of which were twenty years old or over, 224 were fifteen to nineteen years old, and 1,180 were ten to fourteen years old. Almost seventy per cent of the homes in West Islip were less than ten years old in 1962. It becomes necessary to turn the clock back at least twelve years in order to determine what sequence of events led up to the first (unsuccessful) attempt to organize a public library in the community.

CHAPTER III

The library in West Islip is nine years old. In spite of its youth, it has already had three homes, and now stands on the threshold of its fourth. If any generalities can be drawn from an examination of its growth, they are the constant need for space, endless long range plans, and absence of a status quo. The cycle has been one of ever-increasing services to accommodate ever-increasing community needs. The public voiced its demands and the library complied.

The West Islip Public Library is now organized under New York State Statutes as a school district library serving the geographical area of the Union Free School District #9, which is known as the West Islip School District. Its facilities are available without charge to all residents of the school district, and it gives service to non-residents for a yearly fee of fifteen dollars. At the present time it is located in a small shopping center, where it occupies approximately five thousand square feet of space, the equivalent of two stores.

Twelve years ago there was no library in West Islip. The people who wished to avail themselves of library facilities registered as non-resident borrowers in either the Babylon Public Library or the Bay Shore Public Library for a yearly fee of two dollars. West Islip was then in the throes of the same population explosion and was in dire need of more educational facilities. While the idea of a library might have occurred to some people in the abstract, it was a very real concept to at least one local resident. This was Mrs. Theodore Lindenberg, an educated, resourceful, and capable woman who made no secret of the fact that she believed that good schools and libraries were vital to the life and well-being of the community. Other civic leaders soon joined her and with great foresight prepared the groundwork for the formation of a library in the community.

It was during a meeting of the West Islip Parent-Teachers Association on November 11, 1934 that a public library for West Islip was first discussed. Mrs. Lindenberg, who was then President of the P.T.A. in the Secatogue Elementary School in West Islip, presented the idea to the membership and asked for a committee to "start the ball rolling" for a public library in the community. The seed was thus planted.

Mrs. Lindenberg no longer resides in West Islip. She moved to a distant part of the country several years ago, and was unable to be reached during the time this thesis was being prepared. Shortly afterward, in a feature called "Camera Quotes" which appeared regularly in a local newspaper, some residents were asked, "Would you like to have a public library in West Islip?" An office worker answered, "Yes. I believe that we should have a public library because of the growing population's needs. We'll have to get one sooner or later." A pharmacist said, "I think a public library is an essential part of a community with West Islip's tremendous expansion in population." A housewife replied, "Yes, we should. Our children, as well as ourselves, quite often need some source of information. Without a library here, we must either forget it or try to find it in other towns." Finally, a retired man said, "I myself like to keep up with modern times and do research on many subjects. A public library would come in quite handy." Whether or not opinions of these few people were shared by their neighbors remained to be seen.

During the next year and a half, the P.T.A. concerned itself with keeping an active interest in the idea of a public library. When a vote was finally presented for the library's establishment, the proposal

was a direct result of the work accomplished by this association. Meetings were organized and took place so that the people could hear representatives of the Library Extension Service from Albany tell how to start a library. A new group to be known as the Friends of the West Islip Library was soon organized with the purpose of assisting the library through volunteer efforts. Plans were formulated for them to work on book collecting, to prepare rooms for the use of the library, to secure furniture, to raise funds, to work on publicity, and to do anything else that needed doing. Membership was solicited, with the purpose of their organization outlined as follows:

1. To maintain an association of persons interested in books and libraries.
2. To focus public attention on library services, facilities, and needs
3. To stimulate gifts of books, magazines, collections, endowments, and bequests.

With great optimism, a paragraph appeared in the local press which stated, "The Friends of the West Islip Public Library and the many people of West Islip who are interested in developing the cultural effectiveness of the community anticipate a large vote on July 10th to get the new library off to a successful beginning." Despite their efforts, this optimism was short-lived and their dreams and aspirations were soon shattered when the library proposition was defeated by a vote of 109 to 85. There are differing theories regarding the reasons for the failures of the first library vote. The Friends felt, at the time, that it was the result of misinformation and biased thinking. Recent conversations with Mrs. Joy Meisels, Library Director, and Mr. John S. Steele, founding trustee and current President of the Library Board, reveal their mutual theory that the vote failed because the people who had recently come into the community were not ready for a public library. They had moved into new homes, many for the first time, and their financial resources were overly strained. Their first consideration was schools for their children, and they were afraid to take on what to them appeared to be a prohibitive tax burden. In all likelihood, the defeat was attributable to a combination of reasons, but the fact remained that plans for a school district library had to be temporarily abandoned.

The Friends planned, as an alternative, an association library until a school district tax-supported library could gain approval of the voters. Mr. William Dzus, a West Islip industrialist, offered a rent-free building located on Hawley Avenue for the use of an incorporated association library. Plans were implemented, papers were drawn up, directors were elected, and members were once again recruited. A concerted drive for funds was initiated so that the building could be equipped, supplies purchased, and books cataloged. After much hard work and extensive publicity, and with the assistance of the Division of Library Extension, New York State Education Department, a plan of action was submitted to the New York State Board of Regents by the seven founding trustees. Both the plan and the trustees were approved at the October meeting of the Board of Regents. So, when a library finally made its appearance in the community, it was the result of the diligent and stubborn efforts of a small group of determined citizens.

In view of the library's most recent developments, the perusal of the minutes of early trustees' meetings evokes both announcement and wonder at the duties which the founders found it necessary to carry out before the doors to the library could be opened. "Mrs. VanCaessel. (a founding trustee and future President of the Board) asked when her husband could come to wash and wax the floors and who would help him move furniture. Mr. Steele will get together with him for an evening in the first week of May." So went the early history of the library, filled with incidents involving a wide range of problems, from the ethereal to the humdrum.

At the first board meeting, there was a review of the provisional charter granted to the library on October 26, 1956. There was a discussion of membership provisions, a consideration of by-laws, and the report by President of the Board, Mrs. Lindenberg, that West Islip was not eligible for federal aid to libraries because of the lack of sufficient population. She also offered her personal contribution of one hundred dollars to start a fund with which to buy the routine supplies and reference books needed by the trustees. The ensuing months saw frequent door-to-door solicitations for funds, books, membership, equipment, furniture, supplies, and a constant call for volunteers to take part in all facets of the organization's activity. The work was hard, but it went well, and it soon began to be greeted with stronger community interest. It also captured the attention of the local press. Within a few short weeks, the following editorial, entitled "Library for West Islip," appeared in a local paper.

...It is the conviction of this newspaper that every community should have a publicly supported library. It is also our belief that the formation of a central library system, either for the Town of Islip or perhaps all of Western Suffolk, would save the taxpayers' dollars by preventing a certain amount of duplication of reference books. This idea might be premature at the present time, but it certainly should not be overlooked. Over and above a central library, local library branches should be established. West Islip has been without a public source of books. The West Islip Library will not be tax-supported, although we think it will become a true public library in time. In time we hope to see branch libraries springing up in all of our booming communities. We are happy that West Islip is taking the lead.

Friends of the Library publicity, such as the press release quoted below, appeared in the newspaper and did its part in fanning the spark of interest which had started in the community.

... Extra time was needed in order to reach every home in the community. Each door-to-door visit has taken much longer than was originally thought necessary because of the tremendous interest shown in the library. At almost every home the volunteer workers have been asked to fully explain the functioning of our association library. As the residents of West Islip have become familiar with the kind of free library we are going to have, they have been joining the library in great numbers.

May 4, 1957 was chosen as the official opening date of the library, and plans were made for the dedication. When it was discovered that the library's patron, Mr. Dzus, would be unable to attend on that day, the opening was re-scheduled for May 18, 1957 so that he could participate. The ribbon-cutting ceremonies took place as planned, and the library was officially opened to the public for twelve hours a week. The origins of the library in West Islip were humble and poor, and dependent almost completely upon the charity of others. However, soon after its official opening, it found itself in the unique role of "homeowner," for Mr. Dzus had generously turned over the deed to the property to the members of the Board of Trustees of the West Islip Library Association.

CHAPTER IV

The trustees found themselves, during the next three years, learning about libraries from the ground up. Matters of policy were determined and dealt with as they arose, and in this way precedent was established. In the meantime, the library, in spite of severe limitations in its hours, lack of paid professional staff members, and an inadequate book collection and facilities, was experiencing an incredible growth.

	1957	1959
Books	3,218	10,033
Circulation		45,242
Registered Users	272	3,352
Hours per week	12	36

Changes took place almost steadily during the first two years. The building was remodeled and modernized and had now been divided into a children's room, general reference and reading room, a stack area for works of fiction and non-fiction, and an alcove where periodicals and newspapers were kept. Hours were gradually expanded, the collection grew, and programs were added. A story hour was conducted once a week by a volunteer mother, and a graduate librarian, Miss Julia Sullivan, was appointed Director. Additional furniture and shelving was purchased. Plans were under way to increase the salaried staff, to build the children's collection, and to build a picture collection for circulation. Annual budget meetings took place, and annual budget proposals were supported.

As early as September 1958, the subject of library expansion was brought up, and a building committee was appointed to investigate the possibilities of the expansion of the existing facilities as well as the costs of construction of a new building. Miss Sullivan resigned in January, 1959, and not long afterward, Mrs. Meisels, a professional librarian, was appointed, effective March 23, 1959. She was, and still is, a well-trained, efficient, and able administrator with strong and definite ideas about how a library should be operated. When asked why she chose to accept the position of library director for the West Islip Library, she replied that in West Islip, she saw intangible qualities which enabled her to look beyond the primitive conditions around her and envision steady expansion and progress. This was due, to a large extent, to the ideas and plans for the future as expressed by Mrs. Lindenberg, Mr. Steele, and the other trustees. She felt that these were forward-looking people with the same philosophy and goals as her own. The years have proven that her instincts were correct. She and the board have worked together harmoniously. It would be unrealistic to expect that there has always been total agreement. What there has been is continuous and excellent rapport together with a reciprocity of ideas, and the community has derived the full benefits of this relationship.

Mrs. Meisels had not been at the helm for very long before the library found itself in the midst of its first major crisis. May 3, 1960 ushered in a defeat of the annual library budget, and, unexpectedly, everyone was faced with the possibility that the library might have to close. Ironically, this came at a time when it was seventh in circulation among the thirty-eight libraries in Suffolk County. When the initial shock had worn off, the library officials, puzzled over this rejection, decided that it was imperative for them to try to determine the reasons. Many opinions were exchanged by the trustees and staff. They compared their own views with those heard in the community throughout the day following the defeat. Some believed that the budget figures were really too high, and that this young library wanted "too much too soon." Others felt that the figures were valid, but that there had been the lack of a sound and logical presentation of the library's needs. Also, many residents who had neglected to vote were astonished at the fact that the library's existence now stood in jeopardy. The consensus at the special board meeting which took place on May 4 was that these and all other explanations could be compressed into just one--there had been a lack of adequate publicity, resulting from a degree of complacency on the part of the public. This was evidenced by the small number of registered library users who were on hand to vote at all, for the budget had been defeated by a vote of 210 to 110. At this time there were well over three thousand registered borrowers.

It was generally agreed that the library budget had not been "sold." A concentrated publicity campaign was initiated, during which it was emphasized that the library administration was aware of the residents' worry about the over-increasing cost of running the library, but that at the same time, the importance of library growth could not be denied. Although they were re-submitting a reduced budget, the figure still had to be realistic in order to meet the library's upsurging growth, a growth caused by the public itself. Most important, the fact was stressed that a second defeat would mean the closing of the library.

On June 16, 1960, the new proposal was passed by the record-breaking number of voters who had flocked to the polls. The machines registered 889 votes in favor, and 123 against. This victory was directly attributed to the "welter of informational and get-out-the-vote activities by church and civic groups following the May 3 defeat." Mrs. Meisels stated at the time, and still believes strongly, that the library must always be kept in the public eye through the excellence of its services and through extensive newspaper coverage of these services. Since 1960, for many weeks before the approach of the annual budget meetings, open informational meetings take place, brochures are written, printed, and mailed, posters and signs are prepared, neighborhood telephone committees are formed, and the library director and trustees spend many wearisome hours presenting and explaining the library budget at meetings of the P.T.A., church groups, and community groups. A valuable lesson had been learned, and it has never been forgotten.

It was not long afterward that Mrs. Lindenberg and her family found it necessary to move away from West Islip, and it was with much regret that she resigned from the board. By this time, the library was well-established, although much still needed to be done. Later that year, a small children's library was opened in an adjoining building, although it was to be some time before a qualified children's librarian could be found to run it properly.

The annual meeting of the West Islip Library Association later in the year publicized the many changes which had occurred during the past year. Outstanding among them was the increased use of the library by the people in the community. The heavy demand for books and services taxed all of the library resources. Circulation had increased to 83,052, an increase of sixty-two per cent, and the number of registered borrowers stood at 6,195, about twenty-four per cent of the total population of the school district. The items added, besides books, included adult and juvenile foreign language records, shorthand dictation records, college and university catalogs, thousands of pamphlets, and many paperback books. The hours had gradually been increased to forty-four, and a Saturday film program and Great Books discussion group had been organized. This was an impressive list for a library barely two and a half years old.

Those close to the library, however, were uncomfortable about its status. Its precariousness had been demonstrated by its brush with disaster earlier in the year. Making the library a permanent part of the community, one which could not be voted out of existence by a budget defeat, became the next crusade. A school district library was the answer. Its security would be established because of the provision for using the previous year's budget should the current one be defeated. Such a library also would present a more democratic method of choosing trustees, by providing for their election by the taxpayers. Once again, the legal machinery was set into motion. A petition was filed with the Board of Education, the campaign was begun, and a special referendum was held in March, 1961 for the purpose of changing the legal status of the library, and electing five trustees. The proposal was passed overwhelmingly, 257 to 30. However, there was no time to be wasted even after this victory, because budget figures had to be prepared for the annual vote to take place in May. Another successful effort was realized, and on May 2, 1961, the taxpayers approved a \$72,292 library budget. The West Islip Public Library was subsequently granted an absolute charter by the Board of Regents of the State of New York in October 1961.

CHAPTER V

Each change which took place created greater and greater stress for the library staff, and there was a constant awareness that it was only a matter of time before the question of library expansion would have to be faced. In August, 1961, the renting of two vacant stores at the Captree Shopping Center was suggested by Mrs. Meisels as a possible solution to the hopeless overcrowding in the existing quarters. She pointed out that a library in the shopping area had the distinct advantage of being seen by many people who, even though they might not yet be library users, would get to know of its existence and location. It also would be strategically housed between a dime store and the West Islip Post Office, it would be the recipient of such town services as snow removal and street sweeping, and there would be good outdoor lighting in a more than ample parking area. Months of discussion and debate followed, representing a great divergence of ideas. The library was on dangerous ground financially, and some officials worried about the need for a much larger budget in the new quarters. They feared that the change from the present type of operation would entail many items of expense which could not be anticipated, and some felt that it was imperative to maintain the present budget level except for relatively normal increases of \$2,000 or \$3,000. A new budget with possibly \$7,500 to \$10,000 in excess of the current figures was considered inadvisable. Still others were opposed to moving the library into rented quarters at all. They believed that it should have its own building, and that the well-to-do people in the community should help to achieve it. On the other hand, Mrs. Meisels pointed out that if it was decided not to move the library, the 1962-1963 budget would have to be decreased because the money could not be spent on its present location and facilities. She reminded the board, however, that they would not be meeting the needs of the community, and that space would have to be rented somewhere for storage. Furthermore, she pointed out that the library had grown in use and prestige because of its expanded book collection and service to the public, but that it was still not known or accessible to many people, and that the present location did not reflect its substantial budget. Finally, she said that since the library had to struggle for its share of the tax dollar, it needed to be where the greatest number of people would see it. Deliberations continued until a decision became imperative, feeling that if no move was made, and lowering the budget would be a backward step for the library, the trustees decided in favor of the move. Within a few months, the West Islip Public Library found itself in newly decorated, air-conditioned quarters.

The move, in January 1962, signaled the start of still greater and more dramatic growth of the library collection, facilities, services, staff, and budget. The figures for 1962-1963 totaled \$79,640.53,

and for 1963-1964 reached \$101, 407.51. With each vote a tremendous effort was expended to call to the attention of the people what they were receiving for their continually increasing taxes, and each time the effort met with success.

In April of 1963, the question of library buildings was raised, along with discussion of their costs and the ways in which they are financed. Committees were once again formed and a short time later they began serious investigation of financing plans, sizes and types of buildings, and sites. Along with the consideration of these long-range plans, there was still the existing library to operate. Book circulation for 1962 was 166,180, fifty-four per cent greater than the previous year. 3,149 new borrowers had registered and 2,671 new books had been added during 1962. However, the collection, numbering 22,073 volumes, was still falling far below the demands placed upon it, and therefore the 1963-1964 budget provided for the purchase of six thousand new books and for maintaining subscriptions to one hundred and sixty periodicals.

In August, 1963, the following item appeared in the newspaper.

...A 24-hour book return service has been initiated at the West Islip Public Library with the installation of a book depository outside the library's main entrance at 272 Union Street. In announcing the after-hours service, library director, Mrs. Henry Meisels, pointed out that "fines for overdue books can now be easily avoided." An automatic photocopy machine was also recently installed for public use at the West Islip Library. The coin-operated machine renders instant photographic copies of book pages and documents.

Subsequently, a request was made for donations of paintings suitable for addition to the library's picture-lending service, because the "present collection of framed art reproductions is no longer sufficient to meet the growing demand." In October, 1963, a recently formed chess club began to hold its weekly sessions at the library on Thursday evenings, and before long, this turned out to be a well-attended, popular occurrence. Displays and exhibits of interest to the community began to occupy prominent places along the library walls and partitions. The Friends of the West Islip Public Library regularly planned and executed book sales in order to raise funds and donate them to the library. Microfilm made its appearance, as did a Microfilm reader-printer. The back issues of countless periodicals were made available through the borrowing privileges extended to the library by the Suffolk Cooperative Library System, of which it was and still is a member.

It was probably with feelings of security and confidence in the library that the administrators decided to distribute to the taxpayers, along with their 1963 brochure, a reprint from the Kiplinger Magazine, Changing Times. This article, which enumerated a series of questions based on American Library Association standards, pointed out to the taxpayer the ways in which he could judge the effectiveness of his library. West Islip residents were urged to visit the library to prove to themselves that their library measured up to these standards in spite of the fact that it was a young institution and still growing. This action was well received in the community, and proved to be a psychological success.

For several months, discussion had been taking place and investigation going on regarding the best way to provide service to the people who lived in those areas of West Islip which were beyond easy access to the library. The lack of public transportation made their regular use of the library a hardship. This was particularly true of the children. The board studied the experiences of other libraries and their solutions to similar problems. A bookmobile was considered, as was the opening of a branch library. After careful deliberation, it was decided to use a small part of the funds from the sale of the Hawley Avenue building to experiment with a bus service. This plan was put into effort on March 16, 1964. Schedules had painstakingly been set up and bus stops had been designated. The library was now open sixty hours weekly, and preparations were made to accommodate extra people. A strong publicity program was instituted to promote the library's attempt to "bring the people to the books." With their library cards serving as bus passes, the West Islip residents for whom the location of the library had been too remote, now literally flocked to its doors. For the most part, as anticipated, they were children, and for them the bus service was an immediate success. Within a short time, the schedule was revised to add hours and stops. Within a month, statistics showed that the children's use of the library was up one hundred per cent. It was precisely the spectacular success of this experiment which led to its destruction. Inevitably, there was confusion when forty to fifty youngsters entered the

library at the same time, and, inevitably, there were those in the community who raised objections. Many problems were created by this sudden influx each afternoon, and, admittedly, the library staff was not yet equipped to cope with them. Perhaps these problems could have been solved with the passage of time. However, the opportunity to do so was not destined to present itself. The 1964-1965 library budget, on which there appeared a \$5,200 item for library bus service, was defeated on May 6, 1964. The budget was re-submitted a month later with a reduced figure for the cost of the bus service, but once again, it was voted down. The bus was discontinued immediately, and the library, for the first time in its history, operated on the previous year's budget.

Good things were also taking place during this trying period. The library, to everybody's pride and satisfaction, was awarded top honors in the John Cotton Dane Publicity Awards Contest, which is sponsored annually by the American Library Association and the Wilson Library Bulletins

...The West Islip Public Library, which celebrated its 7th birthday only last month, has been awarded first prize for its superior year-round programs in a contest among hundreds of libraries in the world's three major English-speaking countries. Participating were libraries in England, Canada, and the United States, which were judged on the basis of representative samplings of their programs for 1963.

Although they were still part of the future, plans for a new building were gradually beginning to take shape. Building consultants were being interviewed, and Library Building Consultants, Inc. was finally assigned the responsibility of analyzing the present and future services of the library with the ultimate purpose of making "recommendations regarding the nature and extent of the public library service which would be best suited to the future needs of West Islip." Also, the firm of Gibbons and Heidtmann was chosen from among many architectural firms to begin preliminary plans. Property was examined and sites were considered. The library director submitted a tentative schedule to the board so that the library could apply for a construction grant under the federal Library Services and Construction Act, and a few months later, correspondence from the State of New York indicated that West Islip might expect federal aid in the amount of twenty-five per cent of the total cost of its library building.

Spring of 1965 brought with it an important development in the life of the West Islip Public Library. It appeared in the form of a Board of Education proposition to the voters. The school board proposed at an estimated cost acre parcel of land for school purpose at an estimated cost of \$198,000. This property, located on Montauk Highway, extended to land already owned by the school district, and tentative plans were made to set aside two acres of this land for a new library building. Once again, the time had arrived for a strong publicity campaign. The library endorsed the purchase, indicating that it considered the area to be a "very attractive site for a future library building, and urging the taxpayers to vote in favor of the land purchase." The special vote, held on June 15, 1965, resulted in the support of the proposal, 961 to 480. On June 17, 1965, Mrs. Meisels notified Albany that the library now had two acres of land for a building. Information soon began to be presented to the people of the community regarding the land which had been made available, and regarding the various surveys of the library's needs which had been conducted by the Board of Education, the Library Board of Trustees, the Suffolk Cooperative Library System, Library Building Consultants, Inc., and Gibbons and Heidtmann over the preceding two years. The Library Board pointed out the need for a new library in the following statement, published in the local press in August of 1965.

...Since the library was first established in 1957, the annual book circulation figures have jumped from 6,700 to 185,726, while registered borrowers have increased from 1,400 to 12,181. West Islip's population in 1957 was approximately 18,000, while now it is 25,000, and projected estimates give a saturation figure of between 30,000 and 36,000. The present library is being operated in 5,740 square feet instead of the state recommended 15,000 square feet. Several steps must be taken before a library building plan can be submitted for a vote. A contract must be negotiated between the library-selected architect and the board of education. Once this is signed, preliminary drawings will be prepared and reviewed by the library trustees and library building consultants. The revised plans must then be sent to Albany for the required state approval. When all of this is completed, a district vote can be held.

Although plans were still in the early stages, discussion was taking place concerning building details - storage space, furniture arrangement, and the placement of offices, conference rooms, audio-visual facilities, and a staff kitchen. Meetings were not without their surprises. For instance, Mr.

Gibbons, the architect, informed the trustees that the cost of the building could be estimated within five per cent from the first preliminary building plans.

By January, 1966, when the state Education Department had given its tentative approval to the request for funds, the board applied for a \$140,750 grant to help defray the cost of the \$563,000 building. February 23, 1966, the day of the special building referendum, ushered in a dramatic victory for library supporters. By a vote of 871 to 376, better than a two to one margin, the residents of School District #9 approved the proposal to erect a new public library. They had truly come a long way in less than nine years. Figures reflecting the library's activities during 1965 were presented to the public shortly thereafter.

189,000 volumes loaned for home use

2,722 new borrowers registered

4,329 new titles registered

180 magazine subscriptions

346 new reels of microfilm processed

1,217 volumes borrowed for West Islip readers from other libraries

100 story hour sessions offered

29 featured exhibits

A striking chapter in the library's brief history was coming to a close, leaving in its wake the promise of an even more exciting future.

CHAPTER VI

How does one plan for the future of an offspring in a community which is still unseasoned, where precedents have not yet been established, and where the unpredictable is the rule rather than the exception? In September, 1961, the library director said that it was her plan to remain in the shopping center for five years, but after two and a half years there, she hoped that the board would secure land on which to build. She hoped that a year later a building program could be started. Here was a forecast which had now become a reality. Mrs. Meisels, however, saw nothing very unusual in this. Instead, she considered it a normal part of her job as an administrator. A librarian, working closely with his board, must try to foretell the future. These predictions should be drawn from diligent investigations of the experiences of others, together with many years of personal experience in the professions and in business. Past and present boards of trustees in West Islip have consisted of representatives of many diverse fields of interest with that experience. Today, for example, the five trustees are as follows.

Mr. John S. Steele, editor, McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.

Mr. William Aubin, engineer, Grumman Aircraft Corp.

Mr. Thomas Downey, Chemist, Charles Pfizer and Co.

Mr. Lawrence Elliott, author.

Mr. George Hoffman, sales and systems representative, Addressograph and Multigraph Corp.

The varied careers represented by these and former board members over the years have added scope and perspective to their solutions to problems and their formulation of long-range plans.

Predictions also evolve from estimates based on past growth patterns and characteristics of the area, from accepted standards, and from consultation with experts in the library field. What makes the situation in West Islip unusual is the estimate that this district will achieve its maximum size within the next few years.

The building consultants took these, and many other factors into consideration in making their final determinations of space requirements, stock of books and other materials, size of staff, and units of equipment. By the time their work was done, they estimated that the book stock should eventually reach more than 100,000 volume, that there should be provision in the adult services area for two hundred periodicals and two thousand phonograph records, that the minimum number of required readers' seats should be thirty-six in the children's services area and seventy-two for the adults and young adults. Also designated were the many equipment and space requirements for the various other sections of the new building. This report was made prior to the acquisition by the library of its two acres of land. It, therefore, included recommendations of several possible locations and sizes of building sites. Finally, there are "the factors to be considered in designing the new building," namely the expansion possibilities, exterior appearance, flexibility of interior, interior design, and other miscellaneous considerations. It is apparent that the library's building program, which did not become a reality until 1966, had its origins in 1963. At a joint meeting between the library board and the school board "to clarify and define responsibilities of each board in a library building program for West Islip," the following tentative steps were outlined:

Discussion of sites:

Before a site can be considered acceptable for a library building, the following points must be considered:

- A. detailed grid survey and plot plan of the entire track.
-
- B. All natural terrain and growth plus all man-made structures and accessories must be indicated.
 - C. location and elevation of adjacent structures and natural phenomena should also be shown.

General Outline of space requirements:

- A. 17,500 square feet for the total building area.
- B. 4,920 square feet for space for 70, 000 volumes on the main floor.
- C. 2,400 square feet for space for 81 persons.

At this time there should be a discussions as to what special features or services this library is expected to provide - e.g. music listening room, meeting rooms, auditorium, story hour rooms, coat checking facilities, etc.

Obtaining the service of a library building consultant:

- A. canvas the list of library consultants approved by ALA.
- B. obtain a record of consulting work done in the past.
- C. examine this as to extent and variety.
- D. if possible, visit some of the libraries referred to in resumes.
- E. obtain information from the librarian of one of the buildings finding out how well the consultant worked with the board and the architect.

Define the services you expect from a consultant - such as.

- A. a complete written building program which would outline the library's needs

- B. a schematic drawing with explanatory report which would show the program in graphic form.

Make sure that the consultant will not consider his responsibilities ended when he presents a typed report for handing to an architect. The consultant should not disassociate himself from the project until the building is occupied.

Interviews with architects:

Following is a list of architects (taken from Feb. 61 Bookmark) who have designed buildings in New York State from 1953 to 1961: ...

Criteria for the selection of the architect:

- A. good standing in his profession and community.
- B. ability in design.
- C. competence in construction.
- D. practical efficiency.
- E. business capacity and good judgment.

Architect prepares schematic plans.

After discussion with the board and having received board approval, architect submits preliminary plans. The preliminary plans together with an outline of specifications prepared by the architect will provide the basis for preparing a preliminary cost estimate for the entire structure.

Building program is submitted to taxpayers for approval.

School board sells the bonds.

Architect will then prepare working drawings together with specifications to be used by buildings for the erection of the building.

School board awards contracts on the bids submitted.

Construction of the building begins.

The overall success which the West Islip Public Library has enjoyed during its short lifetime can be directly attributed to the receptiveness of a young, spirited community, and to the foresight which has been repeatedly displayed by a progressive, dynamic director and board of trustees. It has been said, "if you do not think about the future, you can not have one." This appears to have been the watchword during the past nine years. It must continue to be the watchword if the library is to continue to develop, to strengthen, and to serve.

FOOTNOTES

1. Richard M. Bayles, *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Suffolk County with a Historical Outline of Long Island*. p.61.
2. Suffolk County Planning Commission, *County Catalog*, p.7.
3. Wallace Lamb, *Lamb's Sectional Histories of New York State*, p.1.
4. Jacqueline Overton, *Long Island's Story*, pp2-3.
5. Howell Walker, "Long Island Outgrows the Country," *The National Geographic Magazine*. XCIX (March, 1951). p.281.
6. Loc. cit.
7. Overton. op.cit.. p.302.
8. Lamb. op. cit., p.15.
9. Bernice Marshall, *The rest of the Story, 1929-1961*, p.11.
10. *Long Island Where Are We Going?*, p.9.
11. Walker, op. cit., p.286.
12. *Long Island Where Are We Going?*, loc. cit.
13. Marshall, loc. cit.
14. Loc. cit.
15. *Ibid.*, p.39
16. *Long Island Where Are We Going?*, loc. cit.
17. Lee Edward Koppelman, *Planning for Open-Space in Suffolk County*, p.15.
18. Suffolk County Planning Commission, *Economic Base*, n.p.
19. Suffolk County Planning Commission, *County Catalog*, p.2
20. Marshall, op. cit. p.12
21. LILCO, *Population Survey 1966*. n.p.
22. Koppelman, op. cit., p.14.
23. Bayles, op. cit., p.208.
24. Library Building Consultants, Inc., *A Statement of program for a New Library Building for West Islip Public Library*. pp.3-4.
25. Lillian Hallock and Beatrice G. Rogers, "See Historic Suffolk County," *Long Island Forum*. XXI (April, 1958). p.72.

26. Long Island, the Surprise Homeland, p.199.
27. Library Building Consultanta, Inc., op. cit., pp.4-7.
28. Marie T. Sullivan, Report of a Study of the West Islip Public Library, p.5.
29. Ibid., p.2.
30. Bayles, loc. cit.
31. Library Building Consultants, Inc., op. cit., p.12.
32. West Islip Bulletin. November 11, 1954, p.1.
33. Ibid., January 13, 1955, n.p.
34. The Babylon Eagle, June 7, 1956, pp.1 and 8.
35. Islip Town Bulletin and West Islip Bulletin, June 7, 1956, n.p.
36. Loc. cit.
37. Ibid., pp.1 and 12B.
38. Ibid., n.p.
39. West Islip Public Library, Personal Interview with Mrs. Joy Meisels, Library Director, July 20, 1966.
40. West Islip Public Library, Personal Interview with Mr. John S. Steele, President, Board of Trustees, July 19, 1966.
41. The Babylon Leader, July 26, 1956, p.1.
42. Islip Town Bulletin and West Islip Bulletin, November 15, 1956, p.1.
43. West Islip Library Association, Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, April 22, 1957.
44. Ibid., October 30, 1956.
45. Islip Town Bulletin and West Islip Bulletin, November 15, 1956, p.4.
46. Ibid., December 13, 1956, n.p.
47. Ibid., January 10, 1957, n.p.
48. Ibid., January 17, 1957, n.p.
49. West Islip Library Association, Minutes of Meeting of the board of Trustees, March 25, 1957.
50. West Islip Public Library, Personal Interview with Mr. John S. Steele, op. cit.
51. West Islip Public Library Association, Annual Budget Brochure, June, 1959.
52. West Islip Library Association, Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, September 20, 1958.
53. West Islip Library Association, Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, March 9, 1959.

54. West Islip Public Library, Personal Interview with Mrs. Joy Meisels, op. cit.
55. Newsday, June 7, 1960, n.p.
56. Loc. cit.
57. The Babylon Leader, June 16, 1960, n.p.
58. West Islip Public Library, Personal Interview with Mrs. Joy Meisels, op. cit.
59. West Islip Library Association, Minutes of Annual Meeting, November 21, 1960.
60. Newsday, March 29, 1961, n.p.
61. Islip Town Bulletin and West Islip Bulletin, May 4 1961, n.p.
62. Long Island Press, October 3, 1961, n.p.
63. West Islip Public Library, Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, August 28, 1961.
64. Loc. cit.
65. West Islip Public Library, Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, August 28, 1961.
66. Ibid., September 25, 1961.
67. Ibid., October 5, 1961.
68. Ibid., May 27, 1963.
69. West Islip Public Library, Annual Budget brochure, April, 1963.
70. Newsday, August 26, 1963, n.p.
71. ?????
72. "How Good Is Your Public Library?", Reprinted from Changing Times. (January, 1963), n.p.
73. West Islip Public Library, Annual Budget Brochure, April, 1964.
74. The Babylon Leader, March 19, 1964, n.p.
75. West Islip Public Library, Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, May 6, 1964.
76. Ibid., June 13, 1964.
77. Long Island Press, June 4, 1964.
78. Library Building Consultants, Inc., op. cit., p.1.
79. West islip Public Library, Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, June 22, 1964.
80. Ibid., November 23, 1964.
81. Newsday, May 6, 1965, n.p.

82. West Islip Public Library, Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, May 24, 1965.
83. Long Island Press, June 16, 1965, n.p.
84. West Islip Public Library, Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, November 29, 1965.
85. The Babylon Lender, August 5, 1965, n.p.
86. West Islip Public Library, Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, November 29, 1965.
87. Long Island Press, January 25, 1966, n.p.
88. Newsday, February 24, 1966, n.p.
89. West Islip Public Library, Annual Budget Brochure, April, 1966.
90. West Islip Public Library, Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, September 25, 1961.
91. Library Building Consultants, Inc., op. cit., p.40.
92. Ibid., p.52.
93. Loc. cit.
94. Ibid., p.53.
95. Ibid., pp. 73-83.
96. West Islip Public Library, Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees, December 9, 1963.
97. John Galsworthy, A Modern Comedy, p. 722
98. Suffolk County Planning Commission, County Catalog, p.4.
99. Ibid., pp. 7-9.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Babylon Eagle. Babylon, New York: June 7, 1956.

The Babylon Leader. Babylon, New York: July 26, 1956.

_____. June 16, 1960.

_____. March 19, 1964.

_____. August 5, 1965

Bayles, Richard M. Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Suffolk County with a Historical Outling of Long Island. Port Washington, New York: Ira J. Friedman, 1962.

Galsworthy, John. A Modern Comedy. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.

Hallock, Lillian, and Rogers, Beatrice G. "See Historic Suffolk County." Long Island Forum. XXI (April, 1958). p.72.

"How Good Is Your Public Library?" Reprinted from Changing Times, (January, 1963).

Islip Town Bulletin and West Islip Bulletin. West Islip, Babylon, New York: June 7, 1956.

_____. November 15, 1956.

_____. December 13, 1956.

_____. January 10, 1957.

_____. January 17, 1957.

_____. May 4, 1961.

_____. August 15, 1963.

Koppelman, Lee Edward. Planning for Open-Space in Suffolk County. Hauppauge, New York: Suffolk County Planning Commission, May, 1964.

Lamb, Wallace. Lamb's Sectional Historian of New York State. Phoenix, New York: Frank E. Richards, n.d.

Library Building Consultants, Inc. A Statement of Program for a New Library Building for West Islip Public Library. Evanston, Illinois: Library building Consultants, Inc., October, 1964.

LILCO. Population Survey 1966. Mineola, New York: Long Island Lighting Company, 1966.

Long Island Press. Rockville Centre, New York: October 3, 1961.

_____. June 4, 1964.

_____. June 16, 1965.

_____. January 25, 1966.

Long Island, the Sunrise Homeland. Garden City: The Long Island Association, Inc., 1957.

Long Island Where Are We Going? Hempstead, New York: Hofstra University, October 16, 1965.

Marshall, Bernica. The Rest of the Story, 1929-1961. Port Washington, New York: Ira J. Friedman, 1961.

Newsday. Garden City, New York: June 7, 1960.

_____. March 29, 1961.

_____. August 26, 1963.

_____. May 6, 1965.

_____. February 24, 1966.

Overton, Jacqueline. Long Island's Story. Port Washington, New York: Ira J. Friedman, 1963.

Suffolk County Planning Commission. County Catalog. New York: Suffolk County Department of Planning, 1964.

Suffolk County Planning Commission. Economic Base. New York: Suffolk County Department of Planning, 1962.

Sullivan, Marie T. Report of a Study of the West Islip Public Library. Patchogue, New York: Suffolk Cooperative Library System, September, 1963.

Walker, Howell. "Long Island Outgrows the Country." The National Geographic Magazine. XCIX (March, 1951). pp. 279-326.

West Islip Bulletin. West Islip, Babylon, New York, November 11, 1954.

_____. January 13, 1955.

West Islip Library Association. Annual Budget Brochure. West Islip, New York, June, 1959.

West Islip Library Association. Minutes of Annual Meeting, November 21, 1960.

West Islip Library Association. Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Trustees. 1956-1961. (Typewritten.)

West Islip Public Library. Annual Budget Brochure. West Islip, New York, 1963.

_____. April, 1964.

_____. April, 1966.

West Islip Public Library. Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Trustees. 1961-1966. (Typewritten).

West Islip Public Library. Personal interview with Mr. John S. Steele, President, Board of Trustees, July 19, 1966.

West Islip Public Library. Personal interview with Mrs. Joy Meisels, Library Director. July 20, 1966.

APPENDIX

HISTORICAL FACTS

1524 The site of Suffolk County was first seen by a white man when Giovanni Verrazano, the Italian explorer, sailed his ship along the south shore from the west end to Block Island.

1609 Henry Hudson became the first explorer to land on the Island's western end.

1614 Adrian Block, Dutch trade-explorer, was the first white man to land in the area when he did so at Montauk.

1636 Long Island granted to Lord Sterling by English Crown,

1639 Lion Gardiner became the first white inhabitant on the Isle of Wright, East Hampton Town.

- 1640 The towns of Southhold and Southampton, the oldest towns in the State of New York, were settled.
- 1641 Elizabeth, daughter of Lion Gardiner, born September 14--first white birth in future Suffolk County.
- 1642 County's first place of worship built at Southhold.
- 1643 First whales taken off south shore at Southampton by white men in locally built whaleboats using iron harpoons.
- 1648 East Hampton town founded.
- 1650 Suffolk County area first set apart from westerly end of island as English territory by treaty made between New Netherlands and New England.
- 1652 Shelter Island settled.
- 1653 Town of Huntington founded. See Footnote 98.
- 1655 Town of Brookhaven founded.
- 1659 Montauk Chief Wyandanch, grand sachem of the Long Island Tribe and friend of the white settlers, died.
- 1663 Town of Smithtown settled.
- 1664 English take over New Netherlands including all long Island.
- 1665 Suffolk County area becomes the East Riding of the New Province of New York.
- 1673-74 Dutch re-conquer and claim all Long Island.
- 1674 Island returns to jurisdiction of the English.
- 1682 First Roman Catholic Mass celebrated in Suffolk area by newly appointed Thomas Dongan enroute from Montauk to New York.
- 1683 Suffolk County established, with 11 other counties, in the Province of New York.
- 1683 William Nicoll makes first purchase of land in future Islip Town.
- 1683 Suffolk County Towns send representatives to first Provincial Assembly.
- 1699 Captain William Kidd buried cache of treasure on Gardiner's Island; later recovered by authorities.
- 1707 Sag Harbor first used by Whaleships.
- 1710 Islip Town established.
- 1717 Long Island Presbyter, first in State, organized.
- 1729 Caroline Episcopal Church, Setauket, erects present edifice, now oldest church building in County.
- 1747 Earliest Baptist congregation organized in Coram.

1749 Samson Occum, great Indian missionary, took up residence at Montauk.

1756 Canadian French expatriated to Long Island where many remained.

1759 Samson Occum ordained as Presbyterian minister.

1770 County's first Sons of Liberty organized to oppose British taxes.

1774 County organizes first Committees of Correspondence.

1775 Suffolk towns elect delegate to Continental Congresses.

1776 Battle of Long Island fought in closing days of August.

1776 British Army occupies entire Island.

1776 Nathan Hale landed at Halesite, Huntington Town.

1777 Suffolk County representatives participate in founding New York State.

1783 British evacuate County and Island at war's end.

1784 Sag Harbor becomes State's first port of entry.

1785 Clinton Academy, first in State, founded at East Hampton.

1791 Long Island Herald, Island's first newspaper, founded at Sag Harbor.

1792 Town of Riverhead created from Southold Town's west end.

1793 State's first Sunday School founded at Mattituck home of Phoebe Wickham.

1796 State's first coastal lighthouse completed at Montauk.

1812 British squadron arrives to dominate eastern Suffolk County.

1815 British leave Island waters

1815 Christmas blizzard, most devastating in history.

1816 Year without summer, not crops grown in County.

- 1819 Walt Whitman born in West Hills, Huntington.
- 1824 Fire Island lighthouse built.
- 1824 Island's first history by Silas Wood, native of Huntington.
- 1844 First through railroad service to Greenport.
- 1845 Sag Harbor's most disastrous conflagration.
- 1847 Whaling's "Million Dollar Year".
- 1849 Tremendous exodus of whalers and whaleships to California.
- 1849 Shinnecocks moved from Canoe place to present reservation.
- 1861 Many local men join Union Army for Civil War.
- 1872 Town of Babylon created from southern part of Huntington Town.
- 1872 First U.S. Life Saving stations established in County.
- 1876 County's and Island's first bank, Southold Savings, founded.
- 1886 Huntington Town annexes Lloyd Neck from Oyster Bay Town.
- 1886 Suffolk County Historical Society founded.
- 1888 County's second greatest blizzard.

Source: Paul Bailey, County Historian.

See Footnote 99.

APPENDIX

TRUSTEES OF THE WEST ISLIP LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

FOUNDING TRUSTEES

Mrs. Theodore Lindenberg, President
Mrs. Martha Limberg, Vice President
Mrs. Gloria Van Caesele, Secretary
Mr. John S. Steele, Treasurer
Mr. Arthur S. Babbitz
Mr. Ridgeway T. Haggerty
Mrs. Jean Parker

1957

Mrs. Theodore Lindenberg, President
Mrs. Martha Limberg, Vice-President
Mrs. Gloria van Caessele, Secretary
Mr. John S. Steele, Treasurer
Mr. Arthur S. Babbitz
Mr. Ridgeway T. Haggerty
Mrs. Astrid Pulver

1958

Mrs. Theodore Lindenberg, President
Mrs. Martha Limeberg, Vice President
Mrs. Gloria Van Caessele, Secretary
Mr. John S. Steele, Treasurer
Mr. Arthur S. Babbitz
Mr. Ridgeway T. Haggerty
Mrs. Jean Parker

1959

Mrs. Theodore Lindenberg, President
Mrs. Martha Limberg, Vice-President
Mrs. Gloria Van Caessele, Secretary
Mr. John S. Steele, Treasurer
Mr. Arthur S. Babbitz
Mr. Ridgeway T. Haggerty
Mrs. Jean Parker

1960

Mrs. Gloria van Caeseele, President
Mr. John S. Steele, Vice President
Mrs. Jean Parker, Secretary
Mr. Arthur S. Babbitz, Treasurer
Mrs. Jean Falcon
Mr. Thomas Kean
Mrs. Martha Limberg

1961

Mrs. Gloria Van Caeseale , President
Mr. John S. Steele, Vice-President
Mr. Arthur S. Babbitz
Mr. Thomas Downey
Mrs. Betty Edwards

1962

Mrs. John S. Steele, President
Mr. Thomas Downey, Vice President
Mr. William M. Aubin
Mr. Lawrence Elliott
vacancy

1963

Mr. John S. Steele, President
Mr. Thomas Downey, Vice-President
Mr. William M. Aubin
Mr. Lawrence Elliott
Mrs. Dorothy Attridge

1964

Mr. John S. Steele, President
Mr. Thomas Downey, Vice-President
Mr. William M. Aubin
Mr. Lawrence Elliott
Mrs. Dorothy Attridge

1965

Mr. John S. Steele, President
Mr. Thomas Downey, Vice-President
Mr. William M. Aubin
Mr. Lawrence Elliott
Mr. George T. Hoffman

APPENDIX 111 - BY LAWS AND POLICIES

BY-LAWS FOR THE WEST ISLIP LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Section A Association By-Laws.

Name The name shall be the West Islip Library Association.

Purpose the purposes for which it is to be formed are:

To operate a free non-profit library for the residents of Union free School District Number Nine in West Islip, New York Providing for access to public writings, papers, books, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals and other publication; to establish reading rooms; to arrange literary, educational and musical programs and to work for the intellectual, moral and social advancement of its members and for all of the residents of the Union Free School District Number Nine of West Islip, New York and to all other things necessary and proper for the continuation and maintenance of a public library.

Membership and Dues and voting privileges;

All residents of the Union Free School District Number Nine are eligible for membership.

There shall be three following classes of membership:

- 1-Regular Member - Annual Dues \$2.00
- 2-Sustaining Member - Annual Dues \$25.00
- 3-Life Member - Payment of \$100.00 per year

All members shall be entitled to one vote at the Annual Meeting regardless of classification, provided that they are not in arrears of dues at the time of the Annual Meeting. Associations shall cast one vote by their president or duly authorized member of the association. Dues shall be due and payable December 1st of each year.

Officers -The Officers of the West Islip Library Association shall be as follows, President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The term of office shall be one year. They shall be elected by the trustees from their own members at the January meeting following the Annual Meeting of the Library Association.

Duties -The duties of said officers shall be as follows:

President - Shall preside at all meetings of the board of trustees and at special meetings of the West Islip Library Association and in general perform the duties of the presiding officer. He shall also appoint all committees. His signature or secretary's shall be required on all checks issued by e association. In the absence of the president, the Vice-President shall perform his duties. In the absence of both officers, the board members present at the meeting shall select a temporary chairman for that particular meeting.

Secretary -Shall keep a true and accurate account of all of the proceedings of all meetings of the association and of the board of trustees. In addition be shall issue all notices of regular and special meetings and shall be the custodian of all of the records of the association and board of trustees. His signature or the president's shall be required on all checks issued be the association.

Treasurer -Shall have charge of the library funds, shall keep all financial records, pay all bills. His signature shall be requiredon all checks issued by the association.

BY-LAWS FOR THE WEST ISLIP LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Meetings - There shall be an Annual Meeting of the West Islip Library Association on the third Monday of November of each year.

Notice of meetings for the Annual Meeting:

Notice of such meeting shall be mailed to all members of the Association in good standing as of November 1st at least two weeks prior to the day of the Annual Meetings or in lieu thereof notice may be published in the Islip Town Crier and the Babylon Leader.

Audit - there shall be an Annual Audit of the financial 30 days prior to the annual election of trustees.

Special Meetings - May be called by the board of trustees or by the presentation of a petition bearing the signatures of 10% of the existing membership, to the president of the board of trustees. Each petition shall state purpose of the proposed special meeting and propose a date not less than four weeks, subsequent to the presentation of the petition to the president. A notice of said special meeting shall be mailed to all members in good standing at least two weeks in advance of said special meeting. Such notice shall state the purpose of such meeting and only matters stated in such notice shall be considered at said special meeting.

Quorum - A quorum to transact business at the annual meeting of the Library Association shall consist of twenty (20) of the members of the association.

Order of Business at the Annual Meeting:

Meeting is called to order by the President of the board of trustees of the West Islip Library Association. Election of chairman to preside over the meeting. Reading of the minutes of the previous Annual Meeting. Treasurers report. All other committee reports. Old business and new business. Nomination and election of trustees. Adjournment.

An amendment to these by-laws may be proposed in the following manner:

1) By the board of trustees.

2) Upon petition to the board of trustees at least four weeks in advance of the Annual Meeting. Such petition to contain the signatures of at least 10% of the paid up membership of the Library Association. The notice of the next regular Annual Meeting shall contain a statement that said by-laws change will be considered. Such change may be adopted at the next regular annual meeting by at least 2/3 of the members present.

These by-laws shall become effective when adopted by a vote of 75% of the trustees, and shall not be considered in any manner inconsistent with the Education Law of the State of New York and the Provisional Charter of the West Islip Library Association and that in the event that any inconsistency shall appear, the Education Law and the Provisional Library Charter shall take precedence over these by-laws.

BY-LAWS of the WEST ISLIP PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Firstly, in accordance with Sec. 260, Par. 2 of the New York State Education Law, trustees of the West Islip Public Library are elected by the tax-payers of Union Free School District #9 to serve for five years. It is the trustees's function to assume responsibilities and obligations predicated on sections of the New York State Education Law as pertains to that office of Public Library Trustee.

Secondly, where no provision shall be made in the By-Laws, strict adherence to the New York State

Education Laws be assumed.

Also; in the event a foregoing section(s) of these By-Laws is discovered to be inconsistent with present legislation; or, is seen outdated as a result of subsequent legal enactment; the law of the State of New York shall negate such section(s) or any part of such section(s).

Furthermore, as unanimously agreed this day, October 22, 1962, the trustees recognize general ALA principles as stated for trustee responsibility, obligation, duty and function as basic constructive guidelines.

Section I

A. Officers

- a) Two board members shall serve as officers. Namely: President and Vice President.
- b) They shall be elected annually by the trustees at the July meeting.

B. Duties

a) President

1. shall preside at regular and special board meetings
2. for regular meetings, shall prepare agenda to be sent to each trustee in advance of meeting, agenda to include call to order, approval of minutes, unfinished business, correspondence and announcements, bills for approval, librarian's report, new business, adjournment
3. for special meetings, shall reserve right to exercise judgment regarding advance agenda
4. shall have authority to call special meetings, as necessary
5. shall be requested to resign as president if absent from three consecutive meetings without just cause.

b) 1. shall perform duties of president in the absence of president

2. in the absence of president and vice president, the board members present shall name a temporary chairman for that particular meeting

c) Secretary to the board

1. shall be hired by the board from outside its members
2. shall keep a true and accurate account of the proceedings of all board meetings, regular and special
3. shall send notices, handle correspondence, and handle all board business interpreted as secretarial.

The position of treasurer is not included since, in consonance with the New State Education Law, Sec.259, Par. 1, the treasurer of the school district must serve as treasurer of a free public library in that district.

Section II

A. Meetings

1. Public meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of January, July and October of each year and a meeting in April on a convenient date prior to the school district Annual Meeting; special meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of all other months during the course of the year; and such other meetings shall be held as deemed necessary for conducting library business; subject to the right of the president of the board to waive any particular meeting; all meetings to be scheduled for 8:15 p.m.

2. Notice for all Board meetings shall be mailed 6 to 10 days in advance of meeting to each trustee and to the library administrator, as necessary.

3. Special meetings shall be called at the discretion of the president, or called by the president upon reasonable request of library administrator. In matters of urgency, a special meeting may be called by any three trustees.

4. If any trustee shall fail to attend three consecutive meetings without excuse accepted as satisfactory by the trustee, he shall be deemed to have resigned, and the vacancy shall be filled.

(Sec. 226, Par. 4)

B. Audit

The board shall require a monthly statement prepared by its accountant and an annual audit within sixty (60) days of the end of the fiscal year.

C. Quorum

A quorum to transact business shall consist of 3 board members.

Section III

A. Amendments

An amendment to these By-Laws may be proposed by any Board member. Enactment of amendment shall be valid by a majority vote at a full board meeting only.

WEST ISLIP PUBLIC LIBRARY

272 Union Street

West Islip, New York

STATEMENT OF POLICY

STATEMENT A

SELECTION of Staff

In selecting a competent head librarian, the board shall act in accordance with the standards of the New York State Education Law, and shall July consider professional, personal, and physical qualifications required by the position.

No discrimination or favoritism shall be shown because of race, sex, creed, color, or political affiliation.

The head librarian shall have full charge of the staff under the adopted board policies.

STATEMENT B

Acceptance of memorial gifts and other gifts exclusive of books and allied materials:

Memorial and other gifts shall be accepted or rejected by the Board of Trustees on the basis of their suitability to the library's purposes, needs, and objectives.

The librarian shall present his evaluation of such gifts.

All gifts accepted shall become the property of the West Islip Public Library, to be allocated for use or discard according to the discretion and needs of the library by the Board of Trustees.

STATEMENT C

Audio-visual and other non-book materials

The acquisition and circulation of audio-visual and other non-book materials are properly to be considered as a part of library function. These materials shall include for example motion picture, filmstrips, slides, microfilm, art reproduction, and recordings.

Standards shall be adopted for selection of such materials.

It is desirable for the library to cooperate with other agencies in the community in the selection and use of such materials.

Circulation rules may be adapted to the type of material.

The library may find it necessary to provide mechanical equipment for the use of such materials, and may restrict the use of such equipment.

STATEMENTS OF POLICY

STATEMENT D

Handling of citizen complaints

It is assumed by the Board of Trustees that the majority of citizens' complaints have been anticipated or answered by other sections of policy statement. In such cases where no policy exists, the Board shall determine whether the complaints are administrative or pertain to policy decisions, and act accordingly.

STATEMENT E

Budget--construction, scope, presentation

It is the policy of this Board of Trustees in regard to the Budget, that the Budget Committee of the Board, together with the librarian, prepare a Budget; the Budget to be presented to the taxpayers at pre-budget meetings, as deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees, and presented at the Annual School District Meeting by members of the Board of Trustees and the Librarian.

STATEMENT F

Library sponsorship of activities

In order to meet the cultural and informational needs of the community and to stimulate the use of library materials for the enlightenment of people of all ages: The library shall actively promote group discussions and lectures and shall give program planning assistance to community organizations to the fullest extent possible of personnel and library resources. Request for program sponsorship will be evaluated by the librarian and/or Board of Trustees who will make final decisions for acceptance in accordance with Library Bill of Rights.

STATEMENT G

Cooperation with other libraries

The Board will accept the responsibility of fostering in every way possible cooperative methods with all other libraries to the end that every individual in the community may have access to the widest possible library resources.

STATEMENT H

Service to residents outside Union Free School District #9

It is recognized that the primary objective is to provide library service to the residents of Union Free School District #9. In addition, the library endeavors to extend similar service to non-residents on payment of a non-resident fee as established by the Board of Trustees.

STATEMENTS OF POLICY

STATEMENT I

Service to business, industries, government, and organizations

This library shall endeavor to maintain a balance in its service to its public. Working from this general policy, the library shall endeavor to serve industry, business, government and organizations with informational material within the scope of our budget and personnel.

Statement J

Handling of staff grievances

All staff grievances shall be submitted to the director of the library.

STATEMENT K

Relations with schools

The public library, although an independent and responsible body, shall function as a cooperative agency in the total or over-all educational program.

A close-working relationship shall be established between the public library and the school system, using the needs of the public as a guide adapted to the local situation.

STATEMENT L

Publicity

The library shall publicize its service to all the people.

STATEMENT M

Friends of the Library

The Board encourages the organization of such a group to assist the Library and Board in:

1. Enlisting community interest in the library.
2. Presenting the needs of the library to the community.
3. Facilitating communication between the library and the community.
4. Getting financial support from the community when necessary
5. Interesting young people in library service as a career.

This "Friends of the Library" shall be an independent, autonomous group, supported but not controlled by the Board of Trustees. Liason between the Board and the Friends shall be effected by the director who shall attend "Friends" meetings and report to the Board.

STATEMENTS OF POLICY

STATEMENT M

For maximum effectiveness, it is desirable that the "Friends" have a membership with as broad a base in the community as possible. The "Friends of the Library" organization shall have no part in policy-making for the library, since this is a function solely of the Board of Trustees.

STATEMENT N

Service to children and young adults

The library shall maintain separate collection of good quality books and other materials for children and for young people, including reference works especially written for these age groups.

The library will encourage good reading habits by establishing story hours for children, providing stimulating displays and visual aids, and furnishing instruction in the use of the library and its materials.

The library will employ, where possible, personnel qualified in service to children and to young people.

STATEMENT O

Use of the building by groups

The library's facilities shall not be available for meetings by any group not directly associated with the West Islip Public Library; and no soliciting shall be permitted.

STATEMENT P

Acceptance of free materials other than books and allied materials

The library shall accept the free materials which the director feels fit within the stated purposes of the library. The rules governing acceptance shall be those that apply to the acquisition of all other library materials. The use or disposal of these free materials shall be at the discretion of the director. (In cases of indecision or pressure the director may consult with the Board.)

STATEMENTS OF POLICY

STATEMENT Q

Location of branches and bookmobile stops

Library services shall be extended equally to all persons within the school district when there is demonstrated present and future need, through the establishment of branch or bookmobile service. Specific decisions about the manner of extending services and the location of outlets shall be made on the basis of a community survey to determine such factors as transportation facilities, building patterns, economic patterns, populations trends, physical and geographic features of the community.

STATEMENT R

Eligibility for membership

Any person who resides in Union Free School District #9 or who is a property owner therein, shall be eligible to become a member of the library.

Also, non-resident membership fees shall be waived for all teachers in Union Free School District #9, these latter privileges to be restricted to the teachers' personal use.

WEST ISLIP PUBLIC LIBRARY

Preamble To

BOOK SELECTION POLICY AND PRINCIPLES

Good public library service is measured by faithful adherence to standards that are steadfast in

determination to present as wide a spectrum of significant reading matter as its budget can afford and its physical capacity to contain.

The Book Selection Policy of the West Islip Public Library is detailed to clarify numerous factors considered guide lines for adding books and allied material to this library.

The West Islip Public Library Board of Trustees, concerned for the well-being of the community and the proper function of the library, recognize that freedom of expression is one of the cornerstones of our democratic society.

The members recognize that it is the responsibility of every tolerant, rational and informed citizen to resist encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking it impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

The members believe that the functioning of the American democracy presupposes the existence of an adult society possessed of the ability, if left to itself, to distinguish freely between the meretricious and the valuable, between obscenity and decency, between banality and creative vigor.

It is the belief of the members of the Board of Trustees that there is great danger in coercive action which strives to impose criteria against which communication media must be judged.

A public library should first, last and always act as a bulwark to assure intellectual freedom. The First Amendment is the safeguard guaranteeing the protecting the individual's right to freedom of expression.

The Freedom to Read Statement (prepared by the Westchester Conference of ALA and the American Book Publishers' Council, 5/2-3/1953) and the Library Bill of Rights (adopted 6/18/48 and amended 2/1/61 by the ALA Council) - these documents state the position of ALA and more than 26,000 libraries. They are appended to the West Islip Public Library Book Selection Policy having been adopted by this Board on December 4, 1961.

WEST ISLIP PUBLIC LIBRARY

BOOK SELECTION POLICY AND PRINCIPLES

AUTHORITY

The authority for the determination of policy in the selection of materials is vested in the librarian, and finally, of course, in the Board.

RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility and privilege of book selection belongs to the library administrator. The privilege of selection of books belongs, ideally, to every member of the staff since no one person can know enough about all subjects, nor the reading needs of all people.

BOOK SELECTION AIDS

Since it is impossible to have every book read by a librarian before it is acquired for the collection, skilled use is made of such selection aids as basic general lists, current reviewing journals, special bibliographies, and current general lists. Although book reviews are a major source of information, they are not followed blindly. No one publication is relied upon exclusively.

BOOKS ON APPROVAL

Where it is impossible to make a decision based on published reviews, the book in question is ordered on approval and examined by the library administrator.

CRITERIA

The Library's policy is to purchase the best books which satisfy, within budget limitations, the needs of its public. The established criteria for all fields include:

Content

1. Permanent or timely value.
2. Social significance.
3. Presentation of both sides of controversial issues.
4. Balancing special group interests with general demand.
5. Selection on the basis of content as a whole.

Treatment

1. Accurate information.
2. Authoritativeness.
3. Clear presentation and readability.
4. Elimination of the cheap and deliberately distorted or sensational.
5. In the case of fiction, is the book true to life, has it valid psychology, and does it give an insight into human nature?
6. Does the book stimulate, inspire, or entertain?
7. Literary style.

Author

1. The personal history of the author is not to be a deciding factor in the selection or rejection of a book.

Format

1. Collector's items as such are not purchased.
2. The possibility of rebinding, type, and legibility should receive some consideration.
3. Price may be a deciding factor.

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

The library administrator attempts to be aware of the changing needs of the people of West Islip, and this awareness should be an integral part of book selection. The library's resources should reflect the

whole community and the many viewpoints within it.

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

It is the right and the duty of the Library to keep on its shelves a representative selection of books on all subjects of interest to its readers and not prohibited by law, including books on all sides of controversial questions. The public library has no right to emphasize one subject at the expense of another.

RELIGION

As a public library, we attempt to maintain an impartial recognition of all religions. The Library's selection of religious literature should be broad, tolerant and without partisanship.

SEX

The Library purchases books about sex for such readers as social workers, clergymen, physicians, teachers, parents, young adults, newly married couples, and adolescents. An effort is made to obtain only the material which is authoritative and up-to-date. Scientific and technical works on the subject of sex, medicine and health are not usually added to collection.

TEXTBOOKS

It is the responsibility of the public school system to supply the textbooks required in school courses. It is the responsibility of the Library to furnish supplementary materials for both formal and informal education. As a general rule, textbooks are not purchased except where such books are considered the best available.

EXCLUSIONS

If a book is not chosen for the collection, it has not been excluded because it does not measure up to the library's standard; because the library already has adequate coverage of the subject; because of budget limitations; or it is too scientific, technical, or specialized for the general reader.

PAMPHLETS

The Library acquired pamphlets to supplement books in subject fields where reference or circulation material of recent date is essential.

GIFTS

The Library accepts gifts without commitment as to final disposition. Collections of books will not be accepted with restrictions which necessitate special housing or which prevent integration of the gift into the general collections. In determining whether a gift item is to be added to the collection, the same standards are applied with respect to it as are used in the selection of an item for purchase.

DUPLICATION

It is difficult to evaluate the demands and needs for the duplication of materials, but the general policy is to duplicate current titles if there are five reserves for that title. Each additional five reserves may justify further duplication.

MUSICAL SCORES and SHEET MUSIC

The Library does not use its funds for the extensive purchase of scores and sheet music, but welcome gifts of scores.

SPECIALIZED MATERIAL

Since the West Islip Public Library is not a research library specializing in any field, the Library makes NO attempt to acquire expensive books in such specialized fields as art, law, medicine, etc. The Library does attempt to have an adequate coverage in the fields of business and technology.

LABELING

The Library does not indicate, through the use of Labels or other devices, particular philosophies outlined in the book, or held by the author. To do so would be to establish in the reader's mind a judgment before the reader has had an opportunity to examine the book personally.

WEEDING

The Collection should be constantly and systematically weeded of material which is no longer useful. The West Islip Public Library is not a center for historical research except in the case of local history, and it does not have the space to retain all the material which might possibly be of use to some future scholar. Many materials --especially in the social sciences, for instance-- become outdated rapidly because their facts are no longer accurate and because interests change. the retention of this material decreases the library's effectiveness.