

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ARCHIVES
Guide to the Records of the
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES
1908, 1931-1989

Record Group 11: Libraries

February 2, 2001
Rev. January 27, 2015
Rev. October 27, 2015

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**GUIDE TO THE RECORDS OF THE
Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries
1908, 1931-1989
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ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

Library service in Montgomery County originated in 1869 when a group of Rockville and other area residents assembled in the County Courthouse to plan a joint stock library. At this time E. Barrett Prettyman, Esq. presented a Constitution and By-laws that he had prepared at the request of some interested gentlemen. The constitution was subsequently adopted after some modifications. Article 1 of the 1869 Constitution stated that "This Association shall be styled the Rockville Library Association of Montgomery County, the object of which shall be to procure books by purchase or otherwise and preserve them for use and benefit of its members." The first building of the Association was a room over George Peter Esq.'s law office and the borrowing of books was restricted to members. Most of the members were men, although some of their wives also joined.

In 1893 a group of private citizens in Kensington established the Noyes Library. The library was named for its prime benefactor, newspaper publisher Crosby S. Noyes. From 1893 until 1950, independent public or subscriber funded libraries provided limited services to residents of southern Montgomery County. Nine independent library associations operated facilities located in Bethesda, Four Corners, Gaithersburg, Garrett Park, Kensington, Rockville, Sherwood, Silver Spring, and Wheaton.

The County's good-government movement of the 1930s and 1940s included local agitation for an improved County supported public library service. In 1945 the Maryland Legislature passed the State Library Law which provided matching state funds for County library systems, based on a County's population. During the late 1940s, the Montgomery County League of Women Voters lobbied for the creation of a County library system and succeeded in proposing legislation. The County Council rejected it in 1949 but appointed a Library Advisory Committee. In its report to the Council, the committee recommended the creation of a County-wide public library system.

On May 31, 1950, the County Council passed the County Library Law of 1950, which created a Department of Public Libraries administered by a professional librarian and advised by a Library Board. The act also empowered the County Librarian and Director to negotiate the acquisition of the independent libraries in forming a system of branch libraries. The Library Board was appointed by the Council soon after passage of the law, but the first director did not assume office until February 1951. The Department absorbed seven of the nine independent libraries before July of that year. The Bethesda Library Association transferred its facility and collections to the County on July 1, 1952, but the Rockville Library Association did not follow suit until July 1, 1957.

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Under the County's auspices, library service became more equitable. In 1951, the Department of Public Libraries expanded library service into rural and fledgling suburban areas through bookmobiles. The Department and Library Board in conjunction with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission formulated a series of regional and community libraries in order to meet the needs of both densely and sparsely populated areas. During the early 1960s, the Library Board and Director began anticipating the growth of the system through annual "Facilities Master Plans." By 1965, the County system was comprised of 14 branches. The modernization of the system continued in the 1980s with the addition of a computerized circulation system and expansion to 24 branch libraries.

The Department of Public Libraries has been administered by four directors: George Moreland, who served from 1951 until 1969; Norman Finkler from 1969 until 1980; Agnes Griffen from 1980 to 1996, and Harriet Henderson, who was appointed director in 1997.

PROCESSING PROCEDURES

General processing procedures consisted of discarding duplicates, unnecessary binders, and routine transmittals. Oversized documents and photographs were removed from the original location in their assigned series and placed in separate containers. Separation sheets were inserted in the original location within the folder to indicate the new location of any records placed elsewhere.

Preservation copying of newspaper clippings was performed whenever feasible. Records in folders were arranged, unless otherwise indicated, in forward chronological order, with undated records appearing at the end of the folder.

PROVENANCE

Not applicable.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The records of the Department of Public Libraries and its Directors comprise 3.33 cubic feet and cover the years primarily between 1931 and 1989. Records include correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes, and publications dating primarily from 1950 to 1980; however, they also consist of material predating the creation of the Department when library service was provided by independent, local libraries. Records detail the creation of the department, and its organizational structure, policies, and functions. Other topics include the incorporation of the independent libraries into the County library system and its expansion during the late 1960s to 1970s. The collection also contains correspondence and memoranda from the Department of Public Libraries History Project that produced *A Grateful Remembrance*.

The record group has been arranged into three series:

Series I: Branch Files

Series II: Correspondence Files

Series III: Director's Files

Series IV: Facilities Plans

Series V: Publications

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I: Branch Files, 1908; 1931-1985, 1989 (2.5 cu. ft.)

The branch files document the library system's formation and expansion. Included in the series are records from seven of the nine independent libraries: Bethesda, Four Corners, Noyes, Sherwood, Silver Spring, Rockville, and Wheaton. Much of this material is concerned with the incorporation of these independent libraries into the County library system, although there are several comprehensive files of the Silver Spring, Rockville, and Sherwood branches, spanning pre-incorporation years.

Materials include receipts, financial reports, book inventories, book circulation statistics, newspaper clippings, and photographs.

Folders are arranged in alphabetical order by branch title.

Series II: Correspondence Files, 1969-1982 (0.63 cu. ft.)

This series reflects the issues faced in the daily administration of the County library system. The correspondence contained in the series deals with a variety of subjects, including budgets, employee relations, risk management, and capital planning. The correspondence was directed toward and originated from County departments and citizens. The bulk of the material covers the period of 1977 to 1980.

Arrangement is alphabetical by department.

Series III: Director's Files, 1951-1985 (0.20 cu. ft.)

This series consists of material from Department Directors George Moreland and Norman Finkler. In addition, the series contains correspondence and memoranda relating to the Historic Review Committee project that produced *A Grateful Remembrance*, a joint undertaking of the library and the Montgomery County Historical Society.

The series is arranged in alphabetical order.

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Files in this series located within Flat File 22 are:

- Library System Scrapbook I, 1951-1972
- Photographs, 16" x 20" (from Scrapbook I)
 - 1957-1958 images from Bethesda Library ACC 2000-10 removed from original scrapbook for preservation. Scrapbook flat file suffered water damage during storage period at Broome School (2010-2014). PHOTOCOPIES (10 16"x20" photographs)
 - 1957-1958 images from Bethesda Library ACC 2000-10 removed from original scrapbook for preservation. Scrapbook flat file suffered water damage during storage period at Broome School (2010-2014). ORIGINALS (10 16"x20" photographs)
- Photographs, 11" x 17" (from Scrapbook I)
 - 4 images [assuming] Davis Library opening June 21, 1964. Images were removed from scrapbook for preservation purposes. (4 11"x17" black and white photographs)
- Interior: Rocking Horse Library. Exterior: Little Falls, Silver Spring, Rockville. 2 2"x3" color outside Carl Sandburg Elementary School bookmobile. 5 8"x10" various years, bookmobiles, interior & exterior. 2 8"x10" Davis Library. 1 8"x10" interior unnamed library. (6 photos b/t 2"x2" - 2"x3", 8 photos 8"x10")

Files in this series located within Flat File 23 are:

- Library System Scrapbook II, 1970-1979
- Library System Scrapbook III, 1979-1985

Files in this series located within Audiovisual Record Group 19 are:

- Archives, Reopening, 1996
- Bookmobiles, c. 1952-c. 1990
- Branch Files, Sherwood Library, 1956
- Davis Public Library, 1968
- Department of Public Libraries, n.d. (1-8)
- Four Corners Public Library, n.d.
- Gaithersburg Public Library, n.d.
- Little Falls Public Library, n.d.
- Twinbrook Public Library, n.d.
- Montgomery County Archives 15th Anniversary Celebration July 27, 2000

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Series IV: Facilities Plans, 1968-1983

This series consists of correspondence, memoranda, research papers, preliminary drafts, and published materials regarding library master plans, facilities plans, site selections, public service programs, and system usage.

This series is arranged chronologically.

Series V: Publications, 1950-1980

This series consists of the Department of Public Libraries' newsletters, *The Open Book*: a bound volume containing newsletters from June 1962-May 1967; and then individual copies of newsletters from June 1967-October 1977 and March 1979. This series also contains a variety of pamphlets produced by the Department of Public Libraries from c. 1950-c. 1980.

This series is arranged alphabetically, then chronologically.

BOX INVENTORY

Series I: Branch Files

Box 1 (Located C6d)

Aspen Hill, 1965-1967
Bauer Drive & Route 28, 1971-1977
Bethesda, 1950-1964
Bethesda, 1971-1976
Bethesda Information Center, 1989
Bookmobile, 1954-1979
Central, 1957-1967
Chevy Chase, 1963-1977
Damascus, 1970-1983
Davis, 1962-1980
Detention Center, 1971
Four Corners, 1948-1981
Gaithersburg, 1951-1981
Gaithersburg, North, 1969-1981
Garrett Park, 1951, 1966-1972
Germantown, 1972-1977
Kensington Park, 1964-1974
Little Falls, 1957-1976
Long Branch, 1972-1980
Noyes, 1908, 1947-78
Olney, 1965-1982
Poolesville, 1974-1980
Potomac, 1973-1977
Rockinghorse, 1955-1965
Rockville
 Rockville Public Library Book of Accessions Book 1, c.a. 1940s; Book 2, c.a. 1956-1959
 Annual/Monthly Reports, 1938-1957, 1971-1973
 Book Inventories, 1950-1969
 Correspondence, 1949-1966
 General, 1949-1971 (1 item **RESTRICTED** within folder)

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(Series I: Branch Files, Cont.)

Box 2 (Located C6d)

Rockville

- Minute Book, 1869-1876
- Newsletters, 1950-1957
- Newspaper Clippings, 1934-1985
- Photographs, 1950s, 1974

Sherwood

- Book Circulation Records, 1948-1952
- Book Circulation Records, 1952-1962
- General, 1950-1978
- Minutes
 - Advisory Committee, 1952-1955
 - Library Association, 1948-1951
 - Operating Committee, 1948-1951

- Photographs, 1956

Silver Spring

- Annual Meeting Notification, 1934-1950
- Annual/Monthly Reports
 - Librarian, 1936-1940
 - Librarian, 1941-1945
 - Librarian, 1945-1950
 - Treasurer, 1932-1940
 - Treasurer, 1941-1951
 - Other Committees, 1932-1946
- Architects' Drawings, 1954; Parking Lot Extensions, 1970
- Book Circulation Records, 1938-1946
- Book Circulation Records, 1946-1950
- Budget, 1932-1951
- Building & Site, 1937-1955
- Constitution & By-Laws, 1931-1949
- Correspondence
 - General, 1931-1951
 - Nominating Committee, 1931-1950
 - Treasurer, 1941-1950
- County Library System, 1947-1951
- General, 1932-1949
- History: Your Library: Silver Spring Public Library, 1949
 - 1931-2001 Enriching Lives for Seventy Years by Robert E. Oshel, Ph.D., @2001
- Membership, 1931-1945

(Series I: Branch Files, Cont.)

(Box 2, Cont.)

Silver Spring

Minutes

Library Association, 1931-1950

Trustee's Board, 1932-1940

Trustee's Board, 1941-1951

Box 3 (Located C6e)

Silver Spring

Receipts, 1940

Receipts, 1941

Receipts, 1942

Receipts, 1943

Receipts, 1944-1948

Receipts & Disbursement Ledger, 1940-1945

Receipts & Disbursement Ledger, 1945-1947

Resumes, 1936-1950

Tax Levy, 1936-1947

Twinbrook, 1958-1979

Wheaton, 1950-1962

Wheaton, 1979-1983

White Oak, 1965-1977

Series II: Correspondence

Box 4 (Located C6e)

Departmental

Budget & Research, 1977-1979

CAO, 1977-1978

CAO, 1979-1981

County Executive, 1977-1981

Employee Relations, 1974-1978

Facilities & Services, 1971-1979

Memoranda to Staff, 1977-1982

Office of Planning & Capital Programming, 1977-1979

Personnel, 1977-1979

Purchasing thru Transportation, 1977-1979

Suggestions & Complaints, 1977-1978

Suggestions & Complaints, 1978-1980

(Series II: Correspondence, Cont.)

(Box 4, Cont.)

General, 1969-1977

General, 1978-1980

General, 1980-1982

Series III: Director's Files

(Box 4, Cont.)

Administrative Council Minutes, 1980-1982

County History Program (Grateful Remembrance, BiCentennial), 1975-1976

George Moreland, 1951-1969

Proposal for Inventory Circulation Control System, 1980

Reports & Memos, January 1983-February 1983

Reports & Memos, March 1984-October 1984

Reports & Memos, October 1984-April 1985

Suburban MD Library Project, 1967-1970

FLAT FILE 22

Library System Scrapbook I, 1951-1972

Photographs, 16" x 20" (from Scrapbook I)

Photographs, 11" x 17" (from Scrapbook I)

FLAT FILE 23

Library System Scrapbook II, 1970-1979

Library System Scrapbook III, 1979-1985

Series IV: Facilities Plans

(Box 4, Cont.)

Facilities Plan, May 1968, January 1973

Facilities Plan, July 1973-April 1974

Facilities Plan, May 1974-1976

Facilities Plan, May 1977-November 1983

Series V: Publications

Box 5 (Located C6e)

Newsletter: The Open Book, June 1962-May 1967

Newsletter: The Open Book, June 1967-November 1971

Newsletter: The Open Book, December 1971-October 1977, March 1979

Pamphlets, c. 1950-c. 1980