

HENRY WALDINGER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Valley Stream, NY 11580

HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY

On July 20, 1932, a group of interested citizens met in the old Village Hall over the Valley Stream Theatre to discuss the establishment of a library in Valley Stream. Funds were raised by conducting card parties and by soliciting donations from citizens and community groups, and on December 17, 1932, the first Valley Stream library opened its doors – two rooms above a store on Rockaway Avenue and Valley Stream Boulevard.

The new library actually opened for business on December 19th. There were 143 applications for membership and 136 books were circulated. The library was open eight hours a week with a staff of volunteers directed by Mrs. Elizabeth P. Kelly.

The following Spring, the Village appropriated \$1,500 for the support of the library. The library received its charter as a Free Library in 1933, and hours were expanded to 30 hours a week.

As the library flourished, additional space was needed. After two years, the library moved to its second site – an old vegetable and produce store at 254 Rockaway Avenue.

The Village Board purchased the former Queensboro Gas and Electric Building at 132 Rockaway Avenue in 1942, and the library moved there on September 12, 1942. The library became a public library, supported by municipal funds, in 1949, and it received an Absolute Charter from the New York State Board of Regents in 1953.



As Valley Stream grew, the library continued to grow and to offer more services to the community. Under the leadership of Library Director Caroline M. Fitz, the Village Board of Trustees approved a \$490,000 bond issue in 1961 for a new public library building.



The new building was built on the Village Green adjacent to the Village Hall. The single-story structure, covering 16,840 square feet of floor space, was designed by Frederick P. Wiedersum Associates. Construction began in the Summer of 1962, and the building was near completion by the Fall.

On November 6, 1962, the old library at Rockaway Avenue closed its doors, and the staff began the work of moving books, equipment, etc. to the new library on the Village Green. The cornerstone of the new building was laid on November 17th during a ceremony officiated by Mayor Henry Waldinger and the trustees of the library.

Cornerstone-Laying Ceremony, November 17, 1962



Mayor Henry Waldinger and Library Board President George W. Wandell laying in the cornerstone.



(L to R): Library Board President George W. Wandell; Mayor Henry Waldinger; Library Trustee Alan D. Yeo; Library Director Caroline M. Fitz; Library Trustees Thomas Holman, Henry Carr, and Edward J. Kurfess

The formal dedication ceremony was held on December 2, 1962, with Mayor Henry Waldinger cutting the ribbon at the canopied main entrance to officially open the library to residents. Library Board President George W. Wandall received the keys to the building, and tours of the building were conducted after the dedication ceremony. The circulation of books began the following day.

On March 10, 1968, the library was renamed the Henry Waldinger Memorial Library in honor of Valley Stream's first mayor. Henry Waldinger had served as mayor throughout three decades and was mayor until shortly before his death in 1966.

In 1995, the library staff began the arduous task of entering book information into the Nassau Library System online book catalog and assigning barcodes to patrons. Circulation of books and materials by computer began in 1997. The traditional card catalog was replaced with 24/7 access to the online catalog of books and materials available throughout Nassau County.

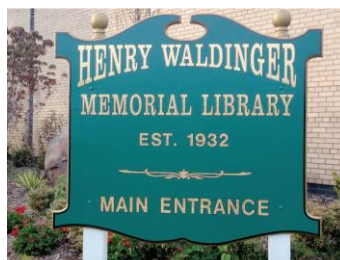
In January 2005, the first major renovation of the library in over forty years began. Throughout the year, the library remained open while the Adult Room, Children's Room, and Work Area of the library were carpeted; new circulation and reference desks were built; and computer stations, new reading areas, and a new story time area were installed. In January 2006, the library held an Open House to welcome the community to the newly renovated library.



In 2011, the library replaced the canopy over the main adult entrance and added a canopy over the children's room entrance, with partial funding from a NYS Library Construction Aid Grant.



As the library celebrates its 50th year at 60 Verona Place on the Village Green in 2012, the library offers patrons access to 127,300 books, compact discs, DVDs, ebooks, etc., with an annual circulation of over 140,000 transactions a year. Library services include programs for children, teens, and adults; services to the homebound; Wi-Fi access; public internet computers; family museum passes; and online databases, tutoring, language instruction, and test preparation.





In 2019, the library built a S.T.E.A.M. Makerspace Room with a NYS Library Construction Aid Grant to house its MakerBot Replicator 3D Printer and other STEAM equipment, including Spheros, LittleBits, mBots, and Ozobots.

New walls and shelving were installed in the Adult Room to create a Teen Space to create seating that is designated for teen patrons and to house the teen fiction collection. The project was also funded by a NYS Library Construction Aid Grant.



Roster of Directors of the Henry Waldinger Memorial Library
at 60 Verona Place on the Village Green
1962 - Present

Caroline M. Fitz
Leon Crain
Dorothy King *
John F. Morgan
Robert Hoffman *
Marshall Botwinick
Mamie Eng

*Acting Director

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