

HISTORY OF THE CHATHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

Edited by Kathleen S. Phillips
covers

This account, the period from May 1924 to the present. For the period prior to that please refer to and credit "As I Remember" by Lynda Phillips Lum, the first librarian of the Chatham Public Library.

Shortly after the dedication and opening of the new building on May 10, 1924 Miss Phillips tendered her resignation to become effective September 30, 1924 as she was being married to Dr. Frederick H. Lum Jr. (letter of resignation in the minutes of the Library Board for 1924) Subsequently Miss Margaret Jackson of Ridgewood was appointed Librarian. Miss Jackson, well known in the library world, started her term of employment Feb. 1, 1925. Miss Katherine^{Wolfe}, Associate Librarian, served as Substitute Librarian during the interim. At this time the Board of Trustees consisted of: Charles M. Lum, President; Lawrence Day, Treasurer; Emory N. Faulks, Secretary; Mrs. Homer Diefendorf; Mrs. Ralph E. Lum. Ex-officio members were Mayor Floyd L. Auble, and President of the Board of Education Jotham R. Condit. Miss Jackson brought to the Library and to Chatham a wealth of literary background and critical sense. She was in great demand throughout the eastern states as a lecturer and book reviewer. The writer recalls when just starting her library career being inspired by hearing Miss Jackson speak in Passaic in the early thirties. In the Chatham Press for August 8, 1925 appears the announcement of the presentation to the Library of a mural honoring Lynda Phillips Lum, designed and given by Mr. & Mrs. Henry W. Thayer. (Mrs. Thayer is Lee Thayer, detective story writer). The words at the bottom of the mural were selected by Mrs. Thayer and Ralph Lum Sr. They are taken from John VIII, 32. ^{Ye shall} "know the truth and the truth shall make you free". In the Press article Miss Jackson said: "To those who know well the books which have been placed in the Library under Miss Phillips' guidance, they will seem particularly appropriate. Her sincerity and

and breadth of vision have characterized that choice and the Village of Chatham must have grown towards the truth through the efforts of the Trustees, the Librarian and the many interested citizens". The mural is over the mantel, the one unchanging thing in the physical part of the Library. The bookplate designed by Mrs. Thayer also with the maple leaf motif is still in use.

Mrs. Frederick H. Lum (Lynda Phillips) was appointed to the Library Board in 1926. She served in several capacities, always a help and inspiration to the librarians, until her death in June 1954.

Miss Jackson was granted a leave of absence from February through August 1926 to serve during an emergency as Supervisor of Advanced Courses in the Library School of the New York Public Library; a position she had previously held. (Library minutes) Miss Emma Baldwin, another well known name in the library and book field, served as Acting Librarian during her absence. In the six month report of the Library Miss Baldwin stated: "Small as is the Library's collection compared with that of a large library as that at Newark, it is gratifying to note that it rarely happens that a serious inquirer for information has to be turned away dissatisfied".

For many years during the summer months members of the Literary Department of the Woman's Club of Chatham sponsored Porch Parties to raise money for the purchase of books for the Library. The fee was one dollar for the season or twenty-five cents a session. At these Porch Parties informally referred to by past members as Porch Readings, participants read short stories, gave book reviews, or talked about and read passages from favorite authors. (Chatham Press and records of the group). During the early days when the book budget was small these ladies performed a great service in adding richly to the book collection. Year after year accounts of these gatherings appear in the Chatham Press.