

A Brief History of the West Nyack Free Library

The West Nyack Free Library has its origins in property deeded to School District Number Seven of the Town of Clarkstown on November 20, 1886 through a warrantee deed from Abram A. Demarest and his wife, Ann S. Demarest, for the sum of seven hundred dollars. Originally, a two-room frame structure was built on the site for the purpose of educating the local children. In 1922, a brick building was added.

When the frame structure was razed in 1959, a group of civic-minded West Nyack residents successfully petitioned the school district to use the brick building as a public library. In 1989 the library trustees brought a proposition before the taxpayers to purchase the building and property in a revenue neutral manner. On December 13, 1989, the proposition overwhelmingly passed. Contracts were signed on November 1, 1990, transferring the building and property to the West Nyack Free Library.

To accommodate the increasing needs of the community, a plans were made to expand the building to triple its size. On October 2, 1994, a rededication ceremony was held for this newly renovated facility. This addition and alteration received an honor award for recognition of architectural excellence by the American Institute of Architects Westchester/Mid-Hudson Chapter. The lower level included a community room, a periodical room, and technical services staff areas.

Since then, the library has continued to grow. Our beautiful library building now boasts a quiet study room, an additional smaller community room, an emergency generator, and an outdoor patio.

Of historical note: the library has an authentically restored desk from the original schoolhouse. The old school bell, which was part of the original schoolhouse, was obtained from the school district on October 1, 1995 and now hangs in the library hall. This bell was dedicated to Odena Kling, an advisor to the original board. We also proudly display an original oil painting of *The Old Sawmill, Clarkstown* by John William Hill and a Chromatic Wood Sculpture by Mortimer Borne.

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