



The Osterville Free Library is now over a hundred years old! No, not the building it occupies, but the Library -- a thing apart from the structure which houses it.

The library is a living and continuing collection of books about everyone you ever knew of, heard about, or wanted to know about. And it's a collection of information about things, dreams and aspirations, places and philosophies. If the information you seek isn't on hand, the library can obtain it for you.

Early memories of Osterville Free Library include images of Miss Katherine Hinckley, librarian, who presided over her domain during all the years I was growing up in the village.

In those days the library occupied the building which now is attached to the west end of the House & Garden Shop. Those who remember Miss Kathy's little library are surely reminded of it, and of her, when shopping at the store.

The village was all so different then; not necessarily better -- it only seems so, in retrospect. The elms shaded the side entrance from the afternoon sun. A cool breeze followed you into Miss Kathy's presence where she sat at her desk whenever the library was open, checking books.

Behind her, the Children's Room, with books appealing to young people displayed on its shelves, was furnished with a small table and tiny chairs.

On the right was the reading Room. The heavy dark woodwork and furniture, the high ceiling overhead, were overwhelming to a small child, and the massive table surrounded by carved oak chairs seemed cold and formal.

On the left were the book racks where you chose the ones you wished to borrow. Here was a world of reading! How much was offered! Ah, how little there was, compared with the variety available at our library today.

In 1873, Osterville's first library occupied a room in the house directly across West Bay Road from our present building, the house now owned by Mr. Malcom Crosby. Mrs. Thankful Ames was Osterville's first librarian. She was followed, when space demanded a move to the Old School House, by the Rev. E.B. Hinckley, uncle of our well-remembered Miss Kathy.

The old library building was constructed with money donated by Wianno residents under the sponsorship of William Lloyd Garrison. That name, in my family, is always pronounced with a certain emphasis. No one ever refers to Mr. Garrison, or to Billy Garrison (unless they speak of his son), or to William Garrison; it's always William Lloyd Garrison, with the same tonal respect accorded Abraham Lincoln and George Washington.

But all this is long ago. Few remember. Now we have a new library, across from the Post Office on the corner of Wianno Avenue and West Bay Road.

Here, Claudia Morner, librarian since September, 1972 (assistant librarian since May, 1971), is helped by Barbara Baker (September 1972), Cathy Crosby, a library worker since she was in 7th grade, and Norma Sims. Cathy will attend Cape Cod Community College and Norma, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, this fall.

In addition, three CETA workers, Eileen Hurley of Osterville and Freddie Clary, who began their employment in December, 1974, and part-timer Pat Avallone of Osterville, a student at Barnstable High School, work at cataloguing, record-keeping, and checking books in and out.

All these changes: the library moved down the street, grown to more than five times the size of the one I remember standing across the street from what used to be the Methodist Church. (Everything today must be identified by what it used to be!)

Now it takes seven people to do what Miss Kathy used to do alone. Right? Well, not exactly. The Osterville Miss Kathy served had a year round population of approximately 600 souls, counting babes in arms.

Today there are over 7,000 registered voters in Osterville, plus the children, plus the summer residents, of which there are considerably more today than there were then.

The library has a great many more volumes and offers many services never dreamed of in earlier days. On a busy summer's day some 450 books were loaned, for example. Miss Kathy's shelves would have been bare!

There's a regular program of free films shown on Wednesday evenings beginning at 7:00, as well as Alistair Cooke's America series shown on Thursday evenings and Friday mornings.

A collection of large-print books is on hand for people with limited vision and Talking Books are available to the blind.

Especially for children, the Hyannis Jr. Woman's Club sponsors a "Summer Read-in" for youngsters, and a craft program is scheduled Wednesdays from 10 to noon through July and August.

Puppet-making and play production is scheduled on Mondays to encourage children to feel at home in the library and familiar with its facilities. In cooperation with the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, field trips are offered to both fresh and salt water locations.

Your library in Osterville offers everyone, children and grown-ups alike, something of interest, something worthwhile, something stimulating, during the 57 hours a week it's open. From 9 a.m. daily, Monday through Saturday, until 5 p.m. on Monday and Friday, and until 9 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and until 3 on Saturday, the library is open. On Sunday, it's open from 2 to 5 p.m.

If you're not making use of it, you're overlooking one of the finest

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services Osterville has to offer and one of the pleasantest spots in the village.

Like all libraries in the Town of Barnstable, Osterville Free Library needs your support. Its expenses are greatly in excess of its income from endowments, generous though they have been. With operating expenses increasing here, as everywhere else, bills are higher each month.

Libraries are partially supported by money appropriated at Town Meeting; this year, the requested funds were cut several thousand dollars.

Voting members, in an effort to hold the tax rate down, felt the libraries, important though they are, could best be supported by those who can afford to do so, and that every possible economy must be made to control the mounting costs of town government.

When some people's real estate taxes become confiscatory even vital programs must be restricted, and the deficit covered by those who can, with smaller sacrifice, increase their contributions to such a cause.

Twelve percent of the library's budget is allocated to the purchase of new books each year. This figure cannot be allowed to drop below 12% without the loss of important federal grants available to public libraries meeting this minimum standard.

To meet the real needs of the community, 20% of the budget should be available for purchasing new books. The demand is here--but the funds are not.

Within the next few weeks the library will seek contributions for its ongoing program. In the past, help has always come, even when other worthy causes were necessarily restricted. The entire village is appreciative of the support the library receives, and all benefit immeasurably from the fine services it provides.

Books are more than entertainment, more than decorative accessories, more than resource material. Books are beloved friends, counselors for the troubled, wisdom encapsulated. Books reveal us to ourselves, take us further afield than we might otherwise ever go, give us the world at our fingertips, pattern our dreams, and spread our horizons to the edges of time.

Know your library... use your library... support your library.