

CORFU FREE LIBRARY HISTORY

Franklin Library

In February of 1819, twenty residents of the Towns of Alexander and Pembroke formed an organization to keep and maintain a public library. They met at the home of Eber North and called the association the Franklin Library, In honor of Benjamin Franklin. Later, as a direct result of this, the Corfu Ladies Library would be formed.

Corfu Ladies Library

On October 31, 1872 the Corfu Ladies Library was organized. It was operated in the house of Amelia Giddings on the SW corner of Main and Alleghany. Mrs. Giddings served as the first Librarian. An admission fee of \$1 was charged along with dues of \$.65 a year. An article in the January 31, 1902 *Batavia Daily News* stated that the library moved to the home Of Martha Scheldt on January 28.

The May 6, 1911 *Batavia Daily* reported that the library moved from the Sloat Building [14 E. Main] to rooms over the Stevens Corner Store [NW corner Main & Alleghany]. There is no information on when it had moved into the Sloat Building. Sometime between this time and 1920, the library was dissolved.

Corfu Free Library

In 1920 the Corfu Study Club [originally called the Shakespeare Reading Club] organized The Corfu Free Library. In February 1920, they rented a room in the upper floor of the D.R. Lawrence building [10 E. Main]. They also applied to the University of New York for a

charter. On April 29, 1920 they were granted a provisional charter as The Corfu Free Library Association. The library was opened to the public on June 5, 1920. The first trustees were: Mrs. Julia Flaherty, Clarence Curtiss, Mrs. Mabel Bangert, Mrs. Clara Bartlett and Mrs. Almira Tyler.

In 1927 the library was moved to its present location. This site was originally built in 1900 for Corfu Gas Company. It was purchased by the Corfu Girls Scouts in 1919 and used as scout headquarters. The scouts were under the leadership of Nettie Falk. On June 29, 1927 the Scouts deeded the building to the library for \$1.

The library was granted an absolute charter by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York on February 16, 1951.

The NIOGA Library System was set up in 1959, serving Niagara, Orleans, and Genesee Counties. Corfu was one of the libraries to join.

In 1963, it was decided that repairs to the building were urgently needed. On February 15, 1964 everything was moved to the former Red & White building [12 E. Main], while repairs were made. The remodeled library was reopened on March 21, 1964.

A fund drive was started in 1965 for an addition to the library. The new wing was added to the north side and opened in 1967. An old village gaslight was repaired and put outside the library. The building was also resided. The official dedication was on July 12, 1968, during the Corfu Centennial.

A 16' X 18' addition was opened as a reference room and office was added to rear of the

rear of the library and opened on May 16, 1976. It was dedicated as the "Grace Thompson Room." Mrs. Thompson was Librarian for 35 years.

In 1988, a ramp for the physically impaired was constructed and the foundation of the north wing was repaired. The north wing had settled and was pulling away from the original building. These repairs were completed in the spring of 1989.

A grant received in the early 1990s was used to install a water heater, providing the library with hot water for the first time.

In 1995, money donated to the memory of Wilma Starkweather [long time library supporter] was used to install a bay window in the front of the library. A new 25 year roof was also put on the library.

A new entrance door was installed in March of 2005. A new enclosed handicapped ramp was also built. And the foundation of the Grace Beach room was repaired.

In 2005 the Corfu Library was ranked 9th of 975 libraries its size in the United States.

With the help of a state grant and a \$1000 donation from the Corfu Grange the library underwent a total remodeling in 2008. A 624 square foot addition was built, a complete new roof was installed, new siding installed, and the interior was completely remodeled.

The library now has computers, DVDs, and much more. It has come a long way since the early 1800s.

CORFU FREE LIBRARY

Diana Reding- Library Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Kathleen Dethier- President
- Kristie Miller- Secretary
- Andrea Vogler- Treasurer
- Shelly Chittenden
- Julie Hengenius
- Heather Klotzbach
- Tony Kutter
- Andy Maurer
- Pam Zwolinski

FORMER LIBRARIANS

[partial list]

- Carrie Sumner [First Librarian]
- Grace Thompson [served 35 years]
- James Murphy
- Andrea Sullivan
- Kelly March
- Stacy Anderson

LIBRARY HOURS

- Monday 10:00-2:00**
- Tuesday 2:00-8:00**
- Wednesday 10:00-2:00**
- Thursday 2:00-8:00**
- Friday 2:00-8:00**
- Closed Saturday & Sunday**

SOME OF THE CORFU LIBRARY SERVICES

Preschool Story Time
Every Wednesday 10:30am
Songs, Crafts, and Stories

Adult Reading Group
Meets the third Thursday of
the month at 6:30.

Also:
Movies, Lectures, Book signings,
Summer Reading Programs

**Contact the Library for a
schedule of their events**

Phone: [585] 599-3321
e-mail: www.corfufreelibrary.org

*This History Compiled and updated
[2013] by: Allan Starkweather*

from:

- * History notes by Grace Beach*
- * Notes from Wilma Starkweather*
- * Batavia Daily News*
- * Library administration notes*

Pembroke Historians: Lois Brockway,
Joann Cummings, Allan Starkweather

**CORFU
FREE
LIBRARY**

**SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1920**

7 MAPLE AVE.
CORFU, N.Y.
585-599-3321

