

Historic Roots: A History of the Guilford Free Library

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Nicholas Westbrook

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Southern Connecticut University

The Guilford Free Library is located in on the Guilford Green in Guilford, Connecticut. The library has been present in the community since 1737, taking various forms and serving the public in many ways. The library currently serves a population of over 22,000 patrons and over 100,000 volumes and access to many databases. Town growth has required expansion over the years to compensate for the increased collection size. The most recent addition was constructed in 2008, giving the town of Guilford the library that it has today.

The library began as a building for religious materials, taking shape with the trends of the church at the time. As the collection expanded, it began to expand to serve more of the community focusing not only on religious subjects, but other education and entertainment pursuits. The library now serves the full community, building a large adult collection in addition to a thriving children's section. The library also provides a wide arrange of programs available to the public.

The initial library building was erected with funds donated by E.P. Dickie in 1891. In 1926, the library began the process of becoming professionally staffed and available to residents of the town. In 1933, Frederick C. Spencer donated land to provide a physical building for the library. The library was later expanded in 1977 to compensate for the expansion of the new children's section. The library began digitizing the catalog in 1993 and offered Internet access to its patrons for free in 1996. In 2006, another expansion was approved and the library took the shape that it has today.

Edith B. Nettleton was the first librarian of the Guilford Free library. She remained an active member of the staff for forty-four years and then continued on as a

volunteer in the historical room. She continued to volunteer in the library's historical room until her death in 2014, as a prominent figure in the library's activities and an invaluable resource to the town and its people. After Edith Nettleton's retirement, Jean D. Baldwin filled the title of director, succeeded by Sandra Ruoff in 1987. The library today circulates with the seventeen connected libraries in the LION Library Online system of Connecticut.

With an accommodating staff, the library is still growing in the number of patrons and volumes available to the public. As new technologies emerge, the library continues to stay up to date and available for use of the public. The library works to provide new material and resources for its patrons in addition to a staff that can provide helpful services to the public.

Resources:

1) Robert, M. (2014, June 12). History << Guilford Free Library. . Retrieved June 14, 2014, from <http://www.guilfordfreelibrary.org/contact-us/about/history/>

2) Wolak, C. (2012, January 27). Library: Guilford Free Library, CT. . Retrieved June 14, 2014, from <http://wildmoobooks.blogspot.com/2012/01/library-guilford-free-library-ct.html>