THE HISTORY OF THE GLEN COVE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The foundation of our present library was laid when 175 legal voters of School District No. 5 of the Town of Oyster Bay approved a resolution on August 7, 1894 establishing the Glen Cove Public Library. According to the first annual report, published in 1896, the Library was open three hours a week or one hour on three days for the sole purpose of lending books from the collection of 1572 books. There was no reading room. By the terms of the original resolution, the Library was housed in the left wing of the old Glen Cove High School building that had been built the previous year at the corner of Dosoris Lane and Forest Avenue. The Library’s location changed several times over the years, and eventually found its current home on Glen Cove Avenue in 1959. In 2002 an expansion and renovation designed by architect, Herbert Beckhard, was completed.

The original Library Board consisted of five trustees, three of whom were elected: Franklin A. Coles, G. Arthur Dalton, and Sidney B. Bowne. Two members were appointed by the School Board: Dr. Fred A. Wright and Charles J. Baldwin. The first librarian was Carolyn S. Reed (pictured above) who later married Franklin A. Coles, a descendant of one of the five original proprietors of the community that was to become Glen Cove.

Not only did the Coles family play a major role in the Library’s founding, they were also instrumental in establishing the Library’s renown history collection housed in the Robert R. Coles Long Island History Room, which is named after Carolyn and Franklin Coles’ son, Robert. Robert Coles was a guiding light behind the founding of the History Room, along with Alexander S. Van Santvoord and Peter L. Van Santvoord. Almost all of the items in the collection are directly related to Glen Cove and Long Island with manuscripts, documents and maps dating back to Glen Cove’s founding in 1668. The collection also includes treasure artifacts, documents and photos from Glen Cove’s Gold Coast era when the wealthy industrialists, such as Charles Pratt, J.P. Morgan, F.W. Woolworth and others resided in Glen Cove.

In 1970 the Friends of the Glen Cove Public Library was established. The Friends are a group of dedicated volunteers who advocate for the Library, raise much needed funds, purchase equipment, and sponsor numerous cultural and educational activities and services.

Today, the Library strives to connect the community with knowledge, literacy of all kinds, technology and entertainment. It also offers bilingual programs and services for children and adults. As a community gathering place, the library collaborates with local schools, community, and business groups to provide an array of services, programs, and events for patrons of all ages.