



WEST GOULDSBORO VILLAGE LIBRARY

These notes on its early history were prepared from information provided by Mrs. Margaret Blaisdell, and by the Gouldsboro Historical Society. Picture reproduced from an old postcard lent by Mr. and Mrs. Chandler Noyes.

The Village Library was the result of a suggestion by Samuel R. Maxwell, made in July 1904 when he was preacher at the Church in West Gouldsboro. To raise funds for this purpose, a Fair (called a "Tombola") was held in and about the Town Hall on Route One. Residents in the village today can recall this event, held on August 23, 1904.

Under the direction of Eric Soderholtz, a well-known artist, the grounds around the Town Hall were decorated with cedar trees and masts hung with garlands of flowers. Booths of evergreen boughs made up a "Midway", with a flamboyant main entrance. Among the outdoor attractions were: a gypsy fortune teller, a chained wild man brandishing the bones of his victims, an aquarium of fish from pond and sea, a three-legged chicken, a purple cow, the strong man, and a shooting gallery. The Hall inside was decorated and had booths to sell confectioneries, artcraft, needlework, photographs, and articles of birchbark. Supper was served. In the evening the floor was cleared for dancing, until long after midnight. Natives and summer guests by the hundreds came many miles to attend the Fair, both to support the project of founding a library, as well as for the entertainment. Nearly \$500.00 was raised. Public interest in the project was great, and almost eighty people are recorded as serving on committees for this fair.

In the fall of 1904, a temporary library was established in the front room of the home of Mrs. Elizabeth S. Shaw. A Bible, sixteen books, and some magazines were acquired as a beginning. And a start had been made on a building fund for a permanent library.

The following summer, on August 16, 1905, a second Fair (called the "Tokio Bazaar") was held at the Town Hall grounds, featuring Japanese costumes, banners and lanterns. A supper was served by the Ladies' Sewing Circle, followed by a play called "Down In Maine" performed by the West Gouldsboro Players' Club.

With funds from the fairs, contributions from individuals and organizations, and gifts from a Mrs. Cockrane, Mr. Eliot, and Mr. Carnegie, it was voted to build a library on June 16, 1906. Largely under the supervision of Eric Soderholtz, architectural plans were approved (as of a plan by Mr. Savage). The estimated cost was \$1395.00.

Land for the library was given by Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Kingsley, by deed dated August 17, 1906. Grading of the site was done by volunteers, with many tourists from the Wayside Inn assisting. Tourists in this era were more often called "rusticators," and without their help many natives felt both Church and Library would not have been possible. A building committee was elected Sept. 8, 1906: Fred Tracy (chairman), E.E. Soderholtz, Charles Follett, Frank P. Noyes, and Fletcher T. Wood. The attractive English half timber and stone building was erected as it now stands, near the Union Church. Mrs. Helen Bradley donated the mantels, which came from "The Briars," the summer home in Bar Harbor of her father, J. Montgomery Sears. The Village Library was dedicated August 28, 1907 with a memorable address by Dr. Henry Griffen. The building report showed the cost of the structure was \$2520.38.

Loving care and hard work went into the early days of this building. The first librarians were: Mrs. Nellie Bunker, Mrs. Hannah Kingsley, and Mrs. Grace Wood Clark (who later wrote the "Historical Researches of Gouldsboro"). Mrs. Kinglsey was the faithful servant of all patrons until just before her death. By 1924, there were more than 1700 books in the library, acquired by purchase and donation. The library served the community until 1956, when it was turned over to the Village Improvement Association for safe keeping.



WEST GOULDSBORO
VILLAGE LIBRARY

West Gouldsboro
Maine 04607

THE ELLSWORTH AMERICAN, ELLSWORTH, MAINE 04605

Thursday, August 23, 1990

Library to Reopen

The West Gouldsboro Village Library will reopen on Aug. 28 at 2:00 p.m. The public is invited to a brief reopening program, to browse, and to borrow.

The library began in 1904 and was in operation until 1956. With this opening, the library staff intends to offer not only its own collection but will provide access to the Maine State Inter-library loan system, bringing more than one million volumes from Maine libraries. As a service to the community, tutoring, research, and adult literacy will also be offered.

Members of the library's board of directors are: Dorothy Osborne, chairman; Kitty LaRocco, Janet Quirk, Kathy Johnson, Eleanor Tracy, and Mary Lou Hodge, all of West Gouldsboro.

GOULDSBORO HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

#1187.037
Donor: Anne Osborne