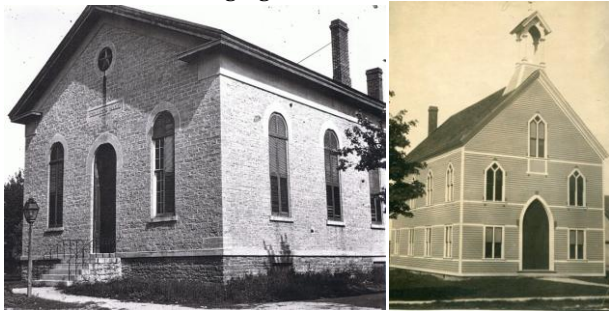


## OUR ISLAND LIBRARY DATES BACK TO 1864 – Part 1

Newcomers to the island take our “new” library, dedicated in 2000, for granted, but library services have a long history on the island. The Kelley’s Island Library Association was organized on February 21, 1864 under the direction of M. K. Holbrook and E. C. Barnard. It had a membership fee for men of \$1.00 and for women-50¢. There were 32 books to check out and \$11.05 in the treasury. The association boasted a membership of 32 active and three honorary members by the end of the first year.

The library was located in Kelley’s Hall and, later, in the Congregational Church.



The Library was kept at Kelley’s Hall for 13 years. When the Congregational Church building was completed in 1877, the library moved to its basement under the operation of the Young People’s Association. The bookcase had to have the bottom taken off because of the low ceiling. The Association boasted quite an extensive library. The by-laws read that outsiders could draw books for 50¢ per year and that was changed to read \$1.00 per year. A committee was also appointed to inquire into and look after the Township Library, which was also in their

bookcase as they were interested in its preservation.

Prior to the establishment of an official library, the Reading Room, established in 1896, served the purpose. A small sign above the window on the far left marks its location.



After declining interest caused the library to languish, the Ladies’ Library Association incorporated in 1896. The library moved into rented rooms at the rear of The Lodge, taking over Elminger’s shoe shop. After maintaining a generous schedule, the all-volunteer effort decided to abandon the extensive hours and kept it open as a public Reading Room.

While library officials cannot pin down the exact date that the Island branch was established, minutes do show it in place by 1916. The Sandusky Library established several branches in

The first official library was in the rear of the Iola Riedy’s house, the former stone school house.



December 1912 and Kelley’s Island was probably one of those. They show receipts for fees from the Island as early as 1926.

An earlier library location was the Iola Riedy house. Former head of the Kelleys Island branch of the library, Lillian Phinney, recalled when the library was located in the rear part of the Riedy house, formerly the Old Stone School house. Lillian was honored at a Citizen of the Year Banquet (hosted by the Kelley’s Island Landowners Association) in 2002. During her speech she recalled that Iola started the island library in her laundry room and Lil remembered coming in to visit and seeing books piled up on

the washing machine. Lil was selected as Citizen of the Year because of the impact she had on the community, particularly her volunteer efforts on behalf of the library. The banquet was held in Kelley's Hall. In keeping with the library theme, each window in the Hall was decorated with a book theme, featuring children's books, cooking, sports, westerns, gardening, romance and others.

The library was later moved into the basement of the school. Dampness, poor lighting and an annual invasion of ladybugs did not deter islanders from visiting the library. For a short time during construction of the addition to Estes School, the library was located in a mobile library

Our Island library today is warm and inviting.



truck parked near downtown. There was even a 'branch' of the library located at the Island store where a large box, painted like a house, served as a library drop box.

Today the Island library is a branch of the Sandusky Library and is part of the CLEVNET system. In 2000, the new addition to Estes school was dedicated and the Kelleys Island Branch of the Sandusky Library was relocated into its new quarters in the new wing. To this day, the library is staffed wholly with volunteers.

*From the book KELLEYS ISLAND - 1877-1884 - The fire, the Great Grooves & a mysterious disappearance*