

Be Ri 3

The Ridgewood Public Library

By Sarah Kiefer

2022

Edited in 2025

Ridgewood Public Library: Bolger Heritage Center

Descriptive Summary:

Creator: Sarah Kiefer

Title: The Ridgewood Public Library

Dates: 1898 – present day (2025)

Quantity: 36 linear ft (14 mss boxes), 6 scrapbooks, 6 binders, 4 record books, 1 photo album, 1 flat mss box

Abstract: The Ridgewood Public Library began as a lending library in 1898 with a group of volunteers from the Village Improvement Association. One of the women who ran the group was Gertrude Anderson Pease. As Ridgewood grew, so did the need for a public library. Gertrude Anderson Pease bequeathed funding in her will to go towards a public library in Ridgewood. In 1923 the George L. Pease Memorial Library opened. In 1962 a new library at 125 North Maple Avenue was constructed, to meet the growing needs of the community. That building was renovated in 1998. This collection spans the history of the evolution of Ridgewood's Library, and includes correspondence, newspaper clippings, newsletters, marketing materials, departmental information, artifacts, photographs, budgets, building maintenance, program information, records, and board meeting notes.

Collection No.: Be Ri 3

Language: English

Repository: Ridgewood Public Library: Bolger Heritage Center

History: The first lending library was established in 1898 by a group of volunteers from the Village Improvement Association. The lending library was originally run out of a room in the Zabriskie Building on the corner of Ridgewood Avenue and Broad Street, but then moved to Ridgewood Avenue and Prospect Street. Funding was made possible through Village Improvement Association member Gertrude Pease MacNaughton and her husband Allan. Individuals would donate books so that the library could function.

The volunteer library was succeeded by a Village-supported library when the George L. Pease Memorial Library was opened in 1923. In her will, Gertrude Pease Anderson bequeathed \$100,000 to build a library in memory of her father, George L. Pease. She also stated to set aside an additional \$50,000 endowment to maintain the library. Construction for this library began in 1921 and in 1923 Ridgewood residents voted to accept and municipally support the Pease Memorial Library. The Library formally opened on December 28, 1923.

In 1962 a new library building opened to meet the growing needs of the community. The new Main Library was located at 125 North Maple Avenue. Pease remained opened as a branch library. Then in 1984 Pease's basement space was used to support the Bergen County Cooperative Library System's mainframe operations until 1994. As the usage of the Pease Library slowly declined, the decision to close it as a branch was made in 1995. It mainly served as a special events place for concerts, lectures, meetings, etc.

The Main Library building was renovated and reopened in 1998. During the renovation, Pease Library served the community by providing a space for the books and computers. In 1999 the Main Library fully re-opened and today serves as a center of community life. Each year the library offers more than a thousand programs for adults and children and circulates more than 400,000 items.

Personal Names:

Anderson, G. Adolph
Askew, Sarah – NJ Library Commission
Baker, Esther M. - Director
Bedell, A.M. – Pease Architect
Bolger, David F.- Local Philanthropist
Bolger, J.T.
Brodie, Lois - Children's Librarian
Brogan, Sheila
Buck, Helen
Burdette, Sarah
Butcher, Elizabeth
Campbell, Gail - Foundation President
Carrigan, Virginia – Village Improvement Association
Coben, Harlan – Ridgewood Author
Coyler, Eileen - Head of Adult Services
Crane, Anne Goheen - Board of Trustees

Crosby, H.G. – Pease Architect
del Berier, Mrs. – Village Improvement Association
Dudyk, Delight
Dunn, W. Scott – President of Public Library Trustees
Entwistle, Kathy
Fishler, Esther B.
Fitts, Joseph
Fricke, Janet - Village Manager
Fry, Varian – Ridgewood resident
Furhman, Janice – Friends of the Library, Ridgewood Businesswoman
Glynn, John J.
Greene, Nancy K. - Ridgewood Library Director
Gruber, Ellie – Ridgewood resident, Activist
Harris, Helen – Reference Librarian
Harrison, Julian C.
Hauck, Gwen – Village Council
Hawes, Henrietta – Village Improvement Association
Hilditch, Victoria – Reference Librarian/ESL Coordinator
Hopper, John B. – Mayor
Hughes, Sara M.
Jackson, Margaret
Jorgensen, Glenn F.
Kahlenberg, Jeanette
Kiefer, Sarah – Local History Librarian
Kontonicolaou, Justin – Head of Young Adult Services
Loria, Ashley – Head of Youth Services
Mancuso, Pat - Councilman
McCartney, Paul – Friends of the Library President
McNaughton, Mrs. Allen – Village Improvement Association
Milton, Ferguson
Mitgang, Gina – Head of Young Adult Services
Nichols, C. Maynard
Norris, Peggy - Local History Librarian/Historian
O'Neill, Addison – First Librarian
Panjwani, Roberta – Head of Adult Services
Patten, Leonora – Lending Librarian
Pease, George
Pease, Gertrude Anderson – Village Improvement Association/Resident
Reinauer, Franklin – Mayor
Ritter, Robin – Children's Librarian/Manager
Ross, Robert – Director of Ridgewood Library
Saraceno, John
Smith, Helen Brainard
Stover, Mabel Runyan
Taub, Catherine
Thwing, Eugene

Wheat, Howard – Young & Bortic
White, Mrs. G.W. – Village Improvement Association
Wiest, Quentin
Wilcox, Grace
Wright, Jim
Wursh, Larry – Village Manager

Institutional/Business Names:

A Hhleemann – Painter and Decorator
Baker & Taylor
Bergen Museum of Art & Science
Bolger Foundation
Ceramic Construction Co.
Friends of the Ridgewood Library
Friends Foundation of Ridgewood Public Library
League of Women Voters
Library Foundation
Library Fuel & Oil Co.
Office of Price Administration
The People's Trust Company
Shade Tree Commission
United States Trust Building
Village Improvement Association (VIA)
War Price & Rationing Board
WH Moore Inc.
Wingate & Cullen - Attorneys
Women's Garden Club
Young & Bortic

Library Associated Names:

Regional Area Library
Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS)
Board of Trustees
Friends of the Ridgewood Library
Library Foundation
Library Board
National Library Week
New Jersey Library Association
North Bergen County Federation

Library Departments

Administration
Adult Services

Bolger Heritage Center – Local History & Genealogy
Children's (Youth Services)
Circulation
English as a Second Language (ESL)
Technology
Young Adult (Youth Services)

Scope and Content Note:

This collection is 36 linear ft housed in 14 mss. boxes 1 flat mss. box, scrapbooks, record books and a photo album. The entire collection spans the years 1898-present day (2025). The types of document within the collection consist of correspondence, newspaper clippings, newsletters, marketing materials, departmental information, artifacts, photographs, budgets, building maintenance, program information, records, board meeting notes, exhibit details, ledgers and scrapbooks. The collection has 8 series.

Arrangement Note:

The records of the Ridgewood Library are arranged in the following three series and then their subseries:

- I. History of Ridgewood Library, 1916-2022
 - a. Lending Library, 1941-2008
 - b. George Pease Memorial Library (see also Financial - Pease), 1925-2008
 - i. Legal Documentation, 1916-1999
 - ii. Newspaper Clippings, 1936-2013
 - c. Ridgewood Public Library, 1956-2002
 - i. Ridgewood Public Library Dedication, 1962
 - ii. Newspaper Clippings, 1957-2018
 - d. Anniversaries, 1948-1999
 - e. Correspondence, 1923-1953
 - f. Photographs, 1961-2012
 - i. Building & Staff, 1962-1995
 - ii. Flooding, 2011-2012
 - iii. Construction, 1961-1962
 - g. Artifacts/Paraphernalia, 1963-2013
 - h. Movie Reel, dates unknown
- II. Finances, 1923-2022
 - a. Annual Reports (see also boxes AR1 – AR2), 1924-2022
 - b. Budget, 1924-2014
 - c. Capitol Budget/Assessments, 1938-1971
 - d. Collection, 1924-2012
 - e. Staffing, 1923-2019
 - f. Grants, 1992-2021
 - g. Room Rentals/ Fee Based Services, 1926-2011
 - h. George Pease Memorial Library, 1916-2005

- i. Gifts, 1924-2014
- III. Library Support, 1923-2019
 - a. Board of Trustees, 1923-2008
 - b. Friends of the Library, 1951-2019
 - i. Clippings, 1951-2019
 - ii. Marketing, 1996-2014
 - iii. Kite Sculpture, 1994-1998
 - c. Foundation, 2004-2018
 - i. Clippings, 2004-2018
 - ii. Marketing, 2004-2011
 - d. Friends Foundation of RPL, 2025-
 - i. Clippings, 2025-
- IV. Departments, 1924-202
 - a. Circulation/CDO, 1927-2018
 - b. Youth Services, 1924-2019
 - c. Adult Services, 1965-2021
 - d. English as a Second Language (ESL), 2004-2019
 - e. Local History & Genealogy, 1998-2025
 - f. Technology, 1996-2012
- V. Outreach, 1924-2025
 - a. Newsletters, 1992-2024
 - b. Programs/Pamphlets, 1968-2024
 - c. Publicity, 1923-2025
 - d. Exhibits/Displays, 1966-2022
 - e. Surveys, 1997-2022
- VI. Renovations/Campaigns, 1941-2022
 - a. Pease, 1941-2012
 - b. New Library, 1959-2013
 - c. 1998 RPL, 1996-1999
 - d. Building Updates, 1965-2015
 - e. ReImagine Campaign, 2008-2022
 - f. Renewal, 2023-
- VII. Library Organizations, 1942-2022
 - a. Regional Area Library, 1955-1986
 - i. Legal Documents, 1965-1985
 - ii. Reports/Finances, 1969-1988
 - iii. Meeting Minutes, 1964-1984
 - iv. Records, 1955-1985
 - v. Newsreel, 1974-1983
 - b. BCCLS, 1979-2022
 - c. NJLA, 1942-2012
- VIII. Records, 1923-1998
 - a. Registration Books, 1934-1988
 - b. Pease Original Documents, 1923
 - c. Pease Scrapbooks, 1962-1988

- d. Friends Scrapbook/Photo Album, 1998
- e. Project REACH Scrapbook, date unknown
- f. Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes (Pease), 1925-1955
- g. 1980 Renovation Binder, 1979-1980
- h. Pease Photo Album, 1917-1930
- i. Pease Collection/Display Materials, dates unknown (copies)
- j. Space Needs Study, 1995

Related Materials:

Be Ri 8 Village Improvement Association
 Be Ri 21.04 COVID
 Be Ri 35 Biographies
 Be Ri 35 Pease (separate box)
 Be Ri 42 Deed of Gifts
 LHA Library Photos Box C (large flat box)

Administrative Information:

Preferred Citation

Ridgewood Public Library: Bolger Heritage Center (Be Ri 3)

Container List:

This container list provides the titles of the folders that are organized in the collection and their locations in the numbered boxes.

I. History of Ridgewood Library, 1923-2023

Arrangement: Materials are arranged in chronological order. Within individual folders, materials are also categorized by topic (example marketing materials, newspaper clippings, records).

Summary: The materials in this series contain information on the history of the Ridgewood Public Library from when it was a Lending Library, to the George Pease Memorial Library, to the Ridgewood Public Library. The folders contain historical research, newspaper clippings, marketing materials, correspondence, reports, records, photographs, newsletters, meeting minutes, building layouts, statistics, artifacts, and policies. All materials are paper based.

Box	Folder	
1	1	Lending Library – History, 1941-2008
1	2	George Pease Memorial Library, 1925-2008
1	3	George Pease Memorial Library – Legal Documentation, 1916-1999
1	4	George Pease Memorial Library – Newspaper Clippings, 1936 - 2013

1	5	Ridgewood Public Library, 1956-2023
1	6	Ridgewood Public Library – Dedication, 1962
1	7	Ridgewood Public Library – Newspaper Clippings, 1957 - 2018
1	8	Anniversaries, 1948-2023
1	9	Correspondence, 1923-1953
2	1	Photographs – Building and Staff, 1962-1995
2	2	Photographs – Flooding, 2011-2012
2	3	Photographs – Construction, 1961-1962
2	4	Artifacts/Paraphernalia, 1963-2013
2	-	Movie Reel – George L. Pease Memorial Library, Pinocchio and Winnie the Pooh, date unknown

II. Finances, 1923-2022

Arrangement: Materials are arranged in chronological order. Within individual folders, materials are also categorized by topic (example marketing materials, newspaper clippings, records). Two additional manuscript boxes of Annual Reports are maintained in their original form, on the local history archives shelf labeled as Box 10 and 11.

Summary: The materials in this series contain information on the financial aspects of the library. The folders contain documents such as annual reports, records, receipts, vouchers, correspondence, charts, memos, insurance paperwork, newspaper clippings, bank statements, collection development, staffing details, grant projects, gifts, room rentals, fee based services, Pease budget, capital budgets and assessments. All materials are paper based.

Box	Folder	
3	1	(1 of 4), Annual Reports 1924-1939
3	1	(2 of 4), Annual Reports 1940-1968
3	1	(3 of 4), Annual Reports 1972-1999
3	1	(4 of 4), Annual Reports 2000-present day
3	2	Building Maintenance, 1924-2014
3	3	Budgets, 1923-2011
3	4	Capital Budgets/Assessments, 1938-1971
4	1	Collection, 1924-2012
4	2	Staffing, 1923-2019
4	3	Grants, 1992-2021
4	4	Room Rentals/Fee Based Services, 1926-2011
4	5	George Pease Memorial Library, 1916-2005
4	6	Gifts, 1924-2014
10		LHA Shelf Annual Reports, 1923-1942
11		LHA Shelf Annual Reports, 1946-1955

III. Library Support, 1923-2025

Arrangement: Materials are arranged in chronological order. Within individual folders, materials are also categorized by topic (example marketing materials, newspaper clippings, records).

Summary: The materials in this series contain information on the support organizations to the library. The folders contain minutes, reports, correspondence, marketing materials and newspaper clippings. All materials are paper based.

Box	Folder	
5	1	Board of Trustees, 1923-2008
5	2	Friends of the Library - Newspaper Clippings, 1951-2019
5	3	Friends of the Library - Marketing Materials, 1996-2014
5	4	Friends of the Library - Kite Sculpture, 1994-1998
5	5	Foundation - Newspaper Clippings, 2004-2018
5	6	Foundation - Marketing Materials, 2004-2011
5	7	Friends Foundation of RPL – Newspaper Clippings, 2025-

IV. Departments, 1924-2025

Arrangement: Materials are arranged in chronological order. Within individual folders, materials are also categorized by topic (example marketing materials, newspaper clippings, records).

Summary: The materials in this series contain information on the various departments within the library. The folders contain newspaper clippings, correspondence, records, marketing materials, building records, and projects. All materials are paper based.

Box	Folder	
5	7	Circulation, 1927-2022
5	8	Youth Services, 1924-2019
5	9	Adult Services, 1965-2021
5	10	English as a Second Language (ESL), 2004-2019
5	11	Local History & Genealogy, 1998-2025
5	12	Technology, 1996-2012

V. Outreach, 1924-2025

Arrangement: Materials are arranged in chronological order. Within individual folders, materials are also categorized by topic (examples children's programs, teen programs, adult programs, book recommendations, etc)

Summary: The materials in this series contain marketing documents used to promote programs, events, resources, and other library offerings. The folders contain newsletters, pamphlets, flyers, newspaper clippings, exhibit details and library surveys.

Box	Folder	
6	1	(1 of 4) Newsletters, 1992-2009
6	1	(2 of 4) Newsletters, 2010-Nov 2015

6	1	(3 of 4) Newsletters, Dec 2015-2023
6	1	(4 of 4) Newsletters, Jan 2024-
6	2	Programs/Pamphlets, 1968-2025
6	3	Publicity, 1924-2025
6	4	Exhibits/Displays, 1966-2023
6	5	Surveys, 1997-2022

VI. Renovations, 1941-2023

Arrangement: Materials are arranged in chronological order. Within individual folders, materials are also categorized by topic (examples newspaper clippings, correspondence, marketing documents, building plans, etc)

Summary: The materials in this series contain details on the various renovations that were either campaigned for or executed from the Pease Library to the Ridgewood Library. The folders contain newspaper clippings, correspondence, marketing documents, buildings plans and campaign details.

Box	Folder	
7	1	Pease Library, 1941-2012 (see Pease collection, flatbox)
7	2	New Library, 1959-2013
7	3	1998 RPL, 1996-1999
7	4	Building Updates, 1965-2015
7	5	ReImagine Campaign, 2008-2022
7	6	Renewal, 2023-

VII. Library Organizations, 1942-2022

Arrangement: Materials are arranged in chronological order. Within individual folders, materials are also categorized by topic (example marketing materials, records, newspaper clippings, etc)

Summary: The materials in this series contain details on the Regional Area Libraries (legal documents, newsletters, marketing materials, annual reports and meeting minutes), the Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS: marketing materials, newspaper clippings and informational documents); and the New Jersey Library Association (NJLA: marketing materials and newsletters).

Box	Folder	
8	1	Regional Area Libraries – Legal Documents, 1965-1985
8	2	Regional Area Libraries – Reports/Finances, 1969-1986
8	3	Regional Area Libraries – Meeting Minutes, 1964-1984
8	4	Regional Area Libraries – Records, 1955-1989
9	1	Regional Area Libraries – Newsreel, 1974-1983
9	2	BCCLS, 1979-2022
9	3	NJLA, 1942-2012

VIII. Records, 1923-1998

Arrangement: Materials are kept in the order they were originally created.

Summary: The materials in this series contain details on the history of the library; library organizations such as Friends and Board of Trustees; photographs of the library; records; and display materials. These materials were left in the condition they were found due to their format (scrapbooks, notebooks, registration books) and due to notations made to leave as is. They are part of the collection but will not be interfiled with the other series.

Box 12	Registration Books and Records within mss box, 1934-1988
Box 13	Miscellaneous Records Books (registration and rules)
Box 14	Pease Papers, 1923
LHA Shelf	Pease Scrapbooks, 1962-1998
LHA Shelf	Friends Scrapbooks/Photo Album, 1998
LHA Shelf	Project REACH Scrapbook, date unknown
LHA Shelf	Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes (Pease), 1925-1955
LHA Shelf	1980 Renovation Binder, 1979-1980
LHA Shelf	Pease Photo Album, ca 1917-1930
LHA Shelf	Pease Collection/Display Materials (flat mss box – copies)
LHA Shelf	Space Needs Study, 1995