

THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
5 WASHINGTON STREET, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102

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PRESS RELEASE

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**A Commemoration of the 125th Anniversary
of The Newark Public Library**

*Exhibition, The Newark Public Library: 125 Years of Innovation and Service, will
be on view April 14 - August 30, 2014*

The Newark Public Library is celebrating its 125th anniversary by highlighting its remarkable history and its dedication to the people of Newark with an exhibit of photographs and other historic materials on view through August 30. *The Newark Public Library: 125 Years of Innovation and Service* reflects on the Library's mission of service to the public even as it now strives to meet the demands of our 21st century customers.

In 1887, the citizens of Newark overwhelmingly approved by referendum the establishment of a free public library and in 1889 the Library opened on West Park Street near Broad Street with a collection of 10,000 books. The librarian, Frank P. Hill, introduced the concept of open stacks and demonstrated an awareness of changing community needs.

When the city's population increased, property was purchased at what is now 5 Washington Street where a larger library would be constructed for Newark's residents. The cornerstone of the four-story Italian Renaissance style building was laid in 1899 and the new Library was dedicated two years later. The prominent edifice features many striking architectural details both on its façade and throughout its interior.

The progressive and influential librarian John Cotton Dana assumed the directorship in 1902 and promoted education, business, and culture in the Library. He purchased books for the blind, established a system of interlibrary loans, and opened the first business library in the country in 1904. Dana's outreach efforts expanded to hospitals. Upon Dana's death in 1929, Beatrice Winsor continued extension services. Library materials were delivered to the homebound and, in 1930, a book truck brought reading materials to children throughout Newark.

The Newark Public Library encouraged learning, hosted exhibits and musical programs, and introduced new services, research divisions, and branch libraries to meet changing needs. Significant initiatives during the 20th century included reading improvement classes, a radio show which discussed reference books, and a job information center.

In 1963, the institution became a Federal Regional Depository for New Jersey. It has also served for many years as a Statewide Reference Center, providing research assistance to other libraries throughout New Jersey. Researchers can access unique collections held by the Library's specialized departments, most notably by the Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center, the New Jersey Hispanic Research and Information Center, and the Special Collections Division.

Seven branch libraries: Branch Brook, Clinton, North End, Springfield, Vailsburg, Van Buren, and Weequahic, continue as community anchors throughout the City of Newark.

Today, the Library hosts a range of enriching programs for its diverse population. The Library's celebrations of both Black History and Hispanic Heritage with music, dance, lectures, community discussions, and film are prime examples of the Library's extraordinary multicultural programming. Arts and crafts, SAT prep classes, college fairs, sign language classes, art exhibits, lectures, movies, and performances, are offered. Recently, grant funding has afforded the Library the opportunity to provide computer classes for all skill levels, with an emphasis on job search and career advancement. Special equipment in the Special Services room gives patrons with low vision access to reading materials. All events are listed on the Library's calendar, which is accessible at: npl.org.

Library Director Wilma J. Grey emphasizes that The Newark Public Library "will continue to promote reading, foster literacy, and offer all the traditional services that have held true for 125 years: books of all kinds, robust research materials, and first-rate reference assistance. And we will also use 21st century technology to improve our delivery of services, while expanding direct access to information and technology for our users."

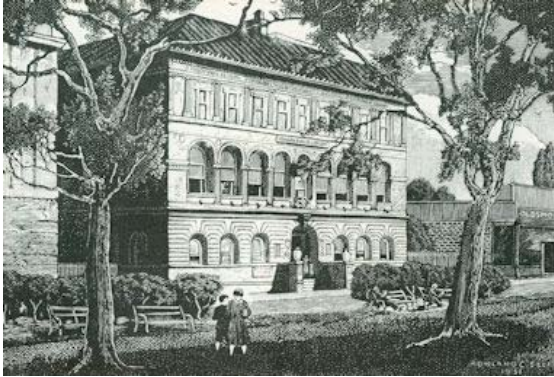
The Newark Public Library: 125 Years of Innovation and Service, displays materials from the collections of the Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center and the Special Collections Division. Architectural drawings, photographs, and ephemera documenting the Library's history, services, and modernization will be on view. Arranged thematically by curator Nadine Sergejeff, Special Collections Librarian, the exhibit emphasizes the ways the institution continues its legacy and embraces opportunities for innovation to serve Newarkers.

This exhibit is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey Historical Commission/Department of State, administered by the Essex County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs.

A reception will be held in the gallery on Monday, May 19 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Reservations are encouraged at rsvp@npl.org or 973-733-7793.

The exhibition will be on view in the Main Library's second floor gallery through August 30, 2014

during regular Library hours: Monday, Friday, and Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Closed on Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, and every Sunday). For more information or to arrange a group tour, please call 973-733-7779.



Download high resolution image at: <http://www.npl.org/Media/NPL/Ellis.jpg>
Ellis, Rowland C. *The Newark Public Library*. Circa 1937. Wood engraving. From the Special Collections Division, The Newark Public Library.
