

Sargeant's Chronicles



VOLUME 1 ■ NUMBER 1 ■ FALL 2006

Norfolk Public Library

SMR & Norfolk Public Library Presents *Norfolk Memories* A Digital Image Project

The Sargeant Memorial Room of the Norfolk Public Library is proud to present *Norfolk Memories*. The Sargeant Memorial Room has the distinct pleasure of maintaining the photographic history for the City of Norfolk and the Greater Hampton Roads region. Our photographic collection contains over 60,000 images ranging from 1890s to present day from well-known photographers including Charles Borjes, Harry C. Mann, H. D. Vollmer and Carroll Walker. The collection contains images dealing with multiple facets of life here in Norfolk and the Greater Hampton Roads including Williamsburg and towns in Northeastern North Carolina, especially Elizabeth City & Moyock. With the advancement of digital technology and the need to preserve our photographs, the Norfolk Public Library is committed to digitalize our collected works. The images will be preserved for the future and make it easier for the public to see the wealth of our collection.

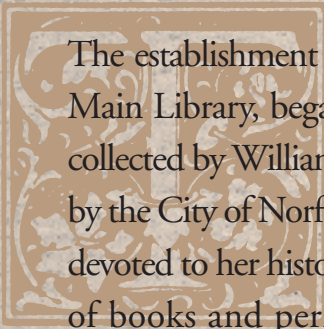
CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



Commercial Place
Photograph by
Harry C Mann
circa 1916

New Additions to SMR | *Inside* | A Forgotten Man | Great Norfolk Books

What is the Sargeant Memorial Room?



The establishment of the Sargeant Memorial Room (SMR), housed in the Kirn Memorial Main Library, began in 1927 with only a small assortment of books and historical papers collected by William H. Sargeant. William Henry Sargeant was the first Librarian to be hired by the City of Norfolk in 1897 and felt very strongly that Norfolk should have a history room devoted to her history and people. The collection, which is non-circulating, includes a variety of books and periodicals about Norfolk and Virginia, as well as Norfolk maps and photographs, high school yearbooks, and city directories for the Hampton Roads region. Nearly 200 years of Norfolk newspaper on microfilm is located nearby in Kirn's Periodical Department. SMR's genealogy collection encompasses Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, and other nearby states, with books, microfilm, and CD's to assist in family research. Today the Sargeant Memorial Room has one of Virginia's finest local history and genealogy collections.



More Microfilm Records:

The Sargeant Memorial Room's collection continues to grow with the addition of the City of Norfolk's Court records from the 1800s. We recently acquired over 200 microfilm rolls on court and city records including Deeds, Wills, and the City Council Minutes from 1790s through the 1970s. We are committed to making this Local History room the one stop place for Norfolk History!

New Books:

In addition to microfilm, our book holdings are continually growing with newly acquired books. Some of the books include:

.....
Raymond Harper's 2 Volume set of
History of South Norfolk
.....

Claudia Emerson's *late wife* poetry book.
.....

Chris Dickon's *Eastern Shore Railroad*
part of Image of Rail series.
.....

Images from our photographic collection were used in both Raymond Harper's *History of South Norfolk* and Chris Dickon's *Eastern Shore Railroad*.

FOR HISTORY AND GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH



Norfolk Cemeteries Online The tireless efforts of Donna Bluemink are evident when she took on the project to put all the records of Norfolk Cemeteries onto Norfolk City Archives's GenWeb Project page. You can search Elmwood, Cedar Grove, Cavalry, Forest Lawn, and other Norfolk cemeteries online. Mrs. Bluemink even put maps on line for each of the cemeteries to make it easier to see where your loved ones are buried. Go to: www.rootsweb.org/~usgenweb/va/norfolkcity.htm

Ancestry's Library Edition is Here! It's here at Sargeant Memorial Room and Norfolk Public Library! You can access Ancestry.com at any of our NPL branches including in the Sargeant Memorial Room. You can enter the site from the NPL's main website through the Database section. Click on the Genealogy Tab and then click on Ancestry Library Edition. This link will taking you directly to the website. Unfortunately, you can not access the website from your home or work. You need to visit one of our branches and use the computers available on site.

Ancestry.com offers a great resource for looking at census records for the entire United States and other databases like World War I draft cards to aid in your family research.



Norfolk City Hall, circa 1901; (Present Day is MacArthur Memorial)

Norfolk Memories CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Although the project is currently in its early stages, we look forward to creating new opportunities for our citizens and our region. One of the hopes for this project is to provide an invaluable resource for our grade level and college students to see snapshots of the past. Our other hope for this project is for the educators to use these images along with other items from our collection to meet and even exceed the Virginia Standards of Learning for History (SOLs).

We have already uploaded the initial photographs from our collection for everyone to see. You can reach our collection online by starting from Norfolk Public Library's main webpage and clicking on History box in upper right portion of webpage. You will reach the Sargeant Memorial Room's webpage and click on Image Collection. You can view the images in the gallery or look through our digital library with maps and documents. If you have questions or would like to see our photographic collection in person, please contact us in the Sargeant Memorial Room at Kirn Library. The SMR's contact information is located on the last page of this newsletter.

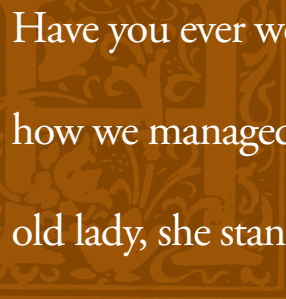
It Happened here in Norfolk: November 1 – 3, 1910

Norfolk Ledger Dispatch sponsors Aviation Show at the Exposition Grounds (Norfolk Naval Base). Glenn Curtiss, pioneer aviator, and two pilots flew for three days to a crowd of 16,000 spectators. Bud Mars, one of the Curtiss Fliers, flew up to 1,200 feet to the delight of the crowd. This aviation show was the first time Norfolk citizens witnessed these new "flying machines."

Source: *Virginian Pilot and Norfolk Ledger Dispatch*; Nov 2, 1910 & Nov 4, 1910.

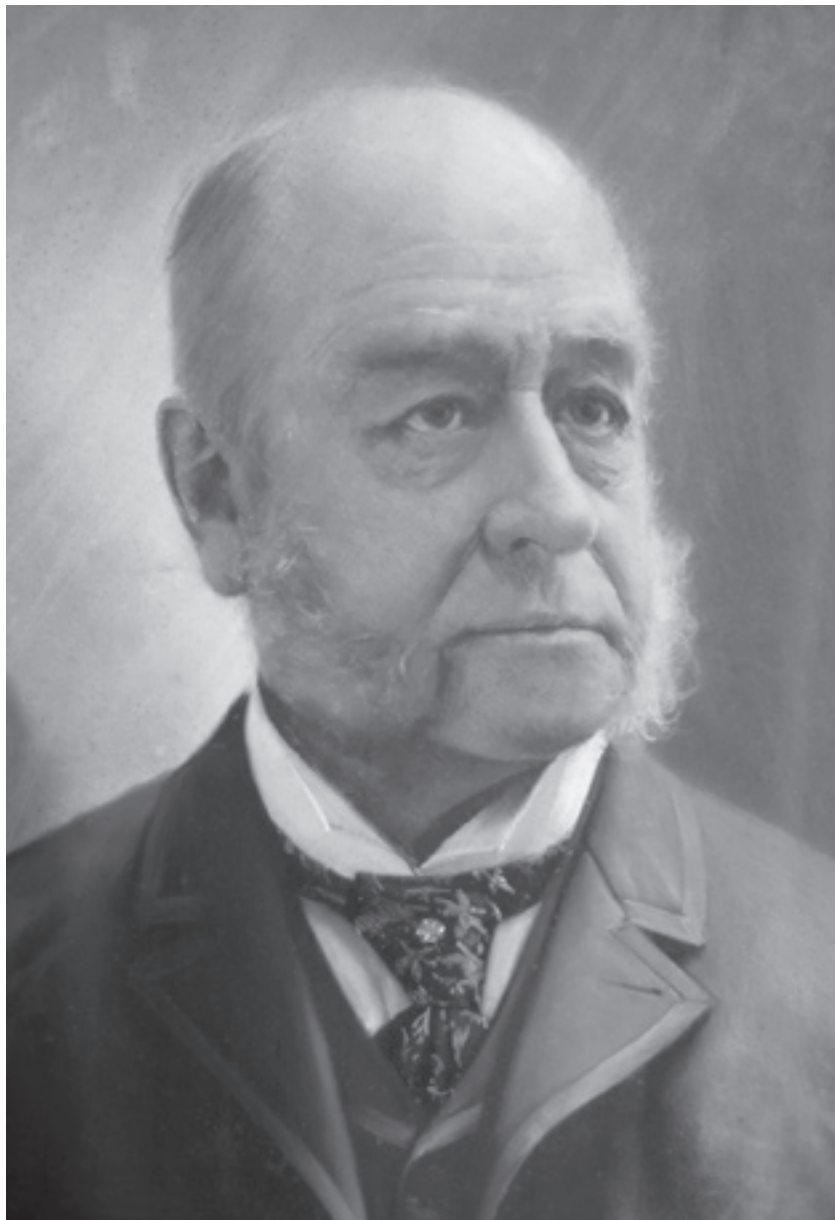
A Forgotten Man

IN NORFOLK



Have you ever wondered how Van Wyck's library got its name or how we managed to have a branch library in Ghent? Like a grand old lady, she stands majestic, strong and welcomes all who venture into her library. This is the story of a library and a man who has been lost in our history. His life, like a book, had many chapters. He was a man who was adventurous in life and whose life story reads like a hero of a Zane Grey novel. He was a true man of the West, before he returned to the East coast. He loved Norfolk, his adopted city, and wanted to make a difference.

BY ROBERT B. HITCHINGS



Painting of Henry Van Wyck by Henry DuBois Van Wyck 1823 — 1901. (Courtesy of Fishkill Historical Society, NY)

The story unfolds in a little town in New York called Fishkill. The Van Wyck family was Pennsylvania Dutch. Mr. Henry Dubois Van Wyck was born October 27, 1823 at the old homestead on the Hudson. His family's home had been in the family for over 100 years. Today this home is the Historical society in Fishkill. At the age of 24 years, he left home to make his fortune in the west. He went to California and became one of the "forty-niners." During this time, he experienced all sorts of occupations, before he struck gold. Van Wyck ventured to Mexico where he saw action with the Mexican War. He saw many skirmishes with Indians and saw many white settlers, his friends, killed by the Modocs, an Indian tribe that was nearly wiped out by white men.

Van Wyck came to Norfolk in 1869, being part owner and business manager of the estate of Mr. George P. Gordon. In handling the Gordon estate, he married the widow, Mrs. Lenore Gordon. As a

businessman, he saw the need for a new theater in Norfolk. In 1879, he started building the *Van Wyck's Academy of Music* on Plume Street where the Selden Arcade stands today. It opened with fan-fare to the theater going public of Norfolk on September 20, 1880. Moreover, it proved to be a huge success in our area. Musicals, concerts, dramas, and commencements were all held here in his theater for over 30 years. Sarah Bernhardt & Ignace Paderewski were also at the Academy.

Mr. Henry Van Wyck passed away at the Atlantic Hotel in Norfolk on March 18, 1901. However, in his will dated December 20, 1900, he did not forget his adopted city. Mr. Henry Van Wyck

left a provision for the sole purpose of erecting a building for a public library. Years later the library board decided to use this provision by purchasing land on Shirley Avenue, across from Maury High School for this new branch. A letter was quickly sent to Andrew Carnegie in Scotland, who agreed to give \$20,000.00 for the new library building. Therefore, the Van Wyck Branch Library came to be.

Van Wyck Public Library, the first branch of the Norfolk Public Library system was opened on May 15, 1916. If walls could talk, "What would they say?" Ninety years of service to so many for almost a century. Like that grand old lady, she has aged gracefully and the service still goes on as she continues to welcomes all to her library.

HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY VAN WYCK. And thank you Henry Van Wyck for making this all this happen. You, like so many, Mr. Van Wyck, made a difference for all Norfolk citizens. This we "all" thank you!



Academy of Music Building on Main Street. Burnt down in April 1930 and the Selden Arcade was built on the same site the next year.



Van Wyck Branch Library of Norfolk Public Library Located on Shirley Avenue and across the street from Maury High School. Built in 1916, it just celebrated its 90th Anniversary.

Great Books

ON NORFOLK'S HISTORY

BY ROBERT B. HITCHINGS

Every now and then, I am asked,
“What are some good books on Norfolk’s rich history?”
I have listed below a few good reads for you.

- *Historical And Descriptive Sketches of Norfolk & Vicinity* by William S. Forrest
- *The Twin Cities of the South* by William Lamb
- *Norfolk, the First Four Centuries* by Thomas C. Parramore, Peter Stewart & Tommy L. Bogger.
- *Norfolk: Historic Southern Port* by Thomas J. Wertenbaker
- *Norfolk: A Pictorial History* by Carroll Walker
- *Norfolk, A Tercentennial Pictorial History* by Carroll Walker



THEY ARE HERE!

Get Your Very Own SMR-JAMESTOWN 2007 Bookmark!

You can get them at any branch of the Norfolk Public Library system including Kirn Main Library and the Sargeant Memorial Room. Get them quickly before they are gone!

Support THE Sargeant MEMORIAL ROOM



The establishment of the Sargeant Memorial Room (SMR), housed in Kirn Memorial Library of the Norfolk Public Library, began in 1927 with a small assortment of books and historical papers collected by William H. Sargeant.

William Henry Sargeant was the first Librarian hired by the City of Norfolk in 1897 and felt very strongly that Norfolk should have a history room devoted to her history and people. Since then, the Sargeant Memorial Room has grown into an impressive collection of Norfolk and Virginia history by the generosity of individuals and organizations who wanted to give back to the community and see to it that Norfolk's past was preserved. The collection includes a significant photographic collection of some 60,000 images of Norfolk and the surrounding Tidewater region from world-renowned photographers with many cherished images seen in local establishments.

We are continually expanding the collection to meet the needs and desires for our patrons. We also engage in projects to allow greater access and ease of our collection for everyone to use and appreciate it. We are always looking for books on history and genealogy for Norfolk, Virginia, North Carolina, West Virginia, and Maryland; organizational records – cultural, business, and church; rare and/or significant books; genealogical records; family & personal papers – letters, diaries; newspapers for the Hampton Roads region, publications – newsletters; pamphlets, maps, blueprints, artwork, photographs of Norfolk and Hampton Roads region, posters, and even postcards. If you wish to give a monetary tax-deductible donation or a planned gift to the Sargeant Memorial Room, the Norfolk Public Library has an endowment set up for the Sargeant Memorial Room which is administered

by the Friends of Norfolk Public Library and the Norfolk Foundation. Your donation to the Sargeant Memorial Room will be appreciated greatly and will make a dramatic difference in the preservation of Norfolk History by raising the level of materials and services offered. We will be able to present more books, conserve historic materials, offer more microfilm and periodicals, and digitalize aspects of our collection. We will be able to “Preserve our past, for our future.” Please contact the staff or mail in the form below to the Sargeant Memorial Room if you wish to help the collection continue to grow.

Please Consider a Gift or Donation to the Sargeant Memorial Room

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Email: _____

How would you like to help?

- Volunteer
- Donate Materials
- Sponsor a Book or Map or Microfilm
- Donate to SMR's Endowment Fund

Please mail back to:

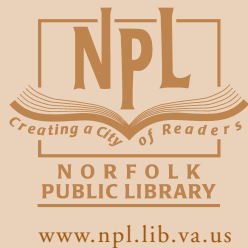
Sargeant Memorial Room,
Kirn Main Library
Norfolk Public Library
301 East City Hall Ave
Norfolk, Virginia 23510

Sargeant Memorial Room

Kirn Main Library

Norfolk's Local History & Genealogical Collection

301 East City Hall Ave.
Norfolk, Virginia 23510
Phone: (757) 664 – 7323 ext 43736
Fax: (757) 664 – 7321
<http://www.npl.lib.va.us/history.html>
Email: smr@norfolk.gov



301 East City Hall Ave.
Norfolk, Virginia 23510

HOURS OF OPERATION:

Monday, Tuesday,
Thursday, & Saturday:
10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Wednesday:
10:00 am – 9:00 pm

Sunday:
12:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Friday:
CLOSED

STAFF:

Robert B. Hitchings,
*Head of Sargeant
Memorial Room*
robert.hitchings@norfolk.gov

Wm. Troy Valos
troy.valos@norfolk.gov

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Norfolk's First Public Library

Built in 1904 on Freemason Street with a donation from Andrew Carnegie. It served Norfolk until the early 1960s when Kirn Main Library was built to hold the ever expanding collection. William Sargeant oversaw the construction of Carnegie or Freemason Street Library and was head librarian until his death in 1917. Pictures from 1940s and 1950.



See page 7 to find out ways you can help support the Sargeant Memorial Room