



The New York Public Library  
New York Public Library Archives

Guide to the

**Riverdale Branch records**

1955-1985

MssArc 5859

Compiled by Jim Moske; machine readable finding aid created by FAKER.

## Summary

**Creator:** New York Public Library. Riverdale Branch

**Title:** Riverdale Branch records

**Date:** 1955-1985

**Size:** 1 linear foot (3 boxes)

**Source:** Transferred from Riverdale Branch.

**Abstract:** Reports, memoranda, correspondence, brochures, clippings and administrative files documenting the operation of the Riverdale Branch of The New York Public Library.

**Physical Location:** RG 8

### Conditions Governing Access:

Box 3 is closed to research.

**Preferred citation:** Riverdale Branch Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Compiled by Jim Moske; machine readable finding aid created by FAKER.

### Related Materials:

Free Circulating Libraries Records, held by NYPL Archives, includes one box of Riverdale Library Association records, 1942-1952.

Riverdale Neighborhood House Records, ca. 1883-1982, held by Lehman College Library, includes substantial holdings pertaining to the library operation.

## Creator History

The Riverdale Branch of The New York Public Library traces its origins to 1872, when a gardener on the Cleveland H. Dodge estate in the northwest Bronx established a lending shelf of books in a corner of the greenhouse. In 1883, Miss Grace Dodge saw that a formal organization would widen the usefulness of the library. On October 23 of that year a meeting took place at the home of William H. Appleton to "furnish a circulating library, reading room, and other means for the entertainment and improvement of the neighborhood," leading to the establishment of the Riverdale Library Association. Samuel D. Babcock donated a plot of land, Mr. and Mrs. Percy R. Pyne funded construction of a building, and over the years the Dodge family contributed many improvements and gifts. The institution later expanded to become Riverdale Neighborhood House (RNH), and offered lectures, dramatic readings, flower and minstrel shows, ventriloquist acts, slide presentations and vocational training, as well as loaning books.

On July 1, 1954 the library operation was incorporated into The New York Public Library system, becoming the Riverdale Branch. During these years the construction of many large apartment buildings in the area led to an increase in population. In 1961 RNH purchased a plot of land across Mosholu Avenue as a site for a new branch building. Funds for the purchase were provide by the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation. The structure was built under an innovative leaseback arrangement between the RNH and NYPL. The building and the land were leased to the Library for a 20-year period, and the Library then assumed ownership. The formal dedication of the building, designed by architect Robert L. Bien, took place on October 26, 1965.

The following have served as Head Librarian at the Riverdale Branch: Louise H. Woods (1954-1955), Janice Ferguson (1956-1957), Walter Roziewski (1957), Ruth Higgins (1958-1978), Patricia Smith (1978-1995), Georgia Strong (1996-1999).

## **Scope and Content Note**

Records consist of reports, memoranda, correspondence, brochures, clippings and administrative files documenting the operation of the Riverdale Branch from 1955 to 1985.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

Branch libraries

Libraries -- New York (State) -- New York

Public libraries -- New York (State) -- New York

### **Names**

New York Public Library. Riverdale Branch

Riverdale Neighborhood House (New York, N.Y.)

## Container List

### Riverdale Branch Records 1955-1985

- b. 1 f. 1 Annual Reports 1964-1978
- b. 1 f. 2 Annual Reports 1980-1985
- b. 1 f. 3 Adult Services Annual Reports 1956-1979
- b. 1 f. 4 Young Adult Annual Reports 1956-1979
- b. 1 f. 5 Work with schools and groups 1969-1979
- b. 1 f. 6 Correspondence, clippings, and flyers 1975-1979
- b. 1 f. 7 Brochure - Riverdale Library Opening 1965
- b. 1 f. 8 Brochure - Riverdale Library 1975
- b. 2 f. 1 Children's Room Annual Reports 1955-1980
- b. 3 f. 2 Children's Room Annual Reports 1965-1972
- b. 2 f. 3 Children's Room Fall Reports 1956-1966
- b. 2 f. 4 Children's Room Summer Reports 1957-1973
- b. 2 f. 5 Children's Room Program Reports 1958-1979
- b. 2 f. 6 Children's Room Correspondence and Memos 1962-1980
- b. 2 f. 7 Children's Letters - samples n.d.
- b. 2 f. 8 Film Program for Children and Young Adults flyers 1967-1973
- b. 3 Children's Registration Books 1949-1981  
Closed to research.