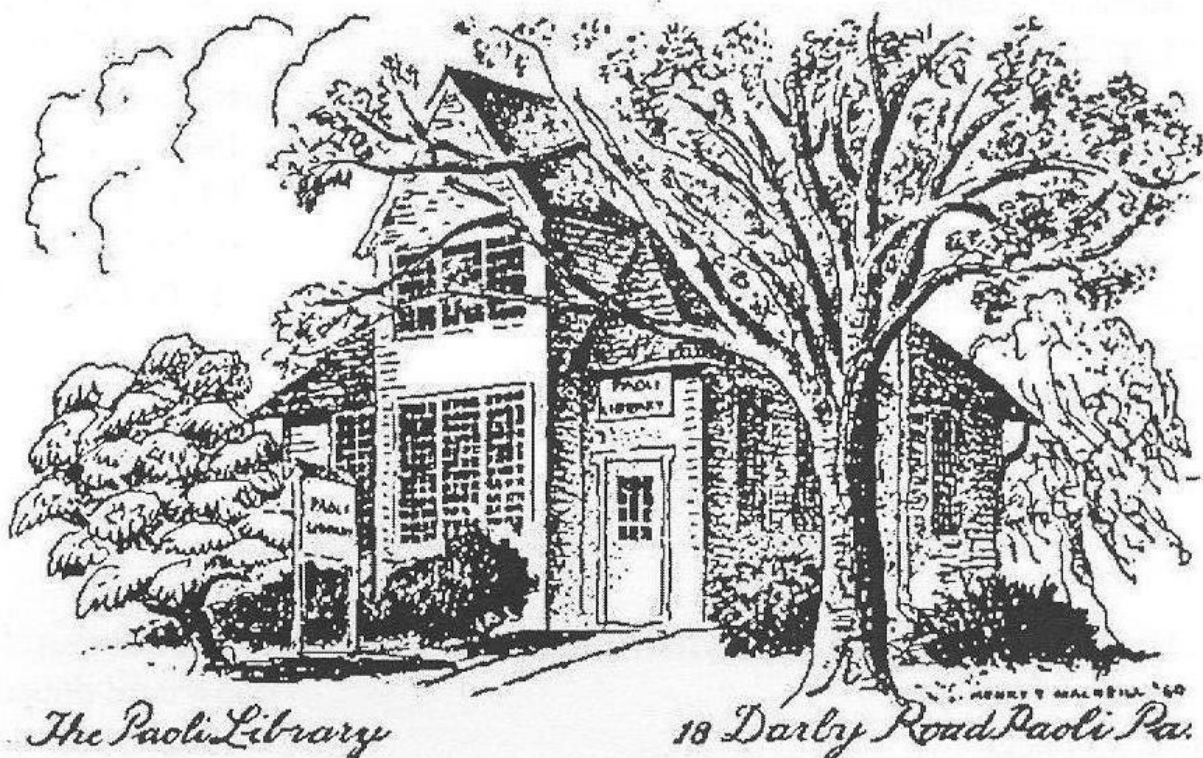


## Centennial Celebration of Paoli Library, 2010

Steve Dittmann



**100** years ago, local attorney William Shippen Roney, Esq. founded the Paoli Library. In 2010, a series of Centennial Celebration events under the leadership of Branch Manager Beverly Michaels and the Centennial Committee included an ice cream social in June, monthly Family Centennial Sundays, and seven author events, as well as increased publicity about the heritage of the Paoli Library in our community. To recap the timeline relating to the history of the Paoli library:

- ◆ Founded in 1910 by a gift of books from William Roney and a related donation of books from the Mercantile Library, Philadelphia; it moved into 18 Darby Road, the former chapel of Paoli Presbyterian Church, which had moved across the street.
- ◆ Established by charter as the Paoli Library Association in 1920; upon the death of Roney, John O. Platt becomes Board chair, 1917-1927.
- ◆ In 1955, first professional librarian hired; 1980 Paoli becomes a branch of the Tredyffrin Public Library system.

- ◆ On April 14, 1986 the library vacates its original home, the former chapel of Paoli Presbyterian Church, and the chapel is moved to the current campus of the Presbyterian Church on South Valley Road. That event was quite an undertaking!
- ◆ In January, 1987 the library became a tenant of the Meridian Bank Building on Lancaster Pike, which is now owned by Wachovia/Wells Fargo.
- ◆ Beverly Michaels becomes the new Branch Manager in January, 2010 and joins the Centennial Committee with co-chairs Betsy Allinson and Maggie Smaltz. Yolanda Van de Krol becomes chair of sponsorship for the Centennial events.

The Centennial was highlighted by an “ice cream social” in June, 2010. An outdoor gathering of over 400 community members was held in the parking lot of Paoli Presbyterian Church, in the very shadow of the Library’s former home, which was repurposed in 1986 as a chapel for the church.

In addition to the festive music, numerous colorful t-shirts from past summer reading programs hanging from clotheslines added to the celebratory atmosphere. Ice cream was served, of course. The “sky arm” from aerial tower truck T-3 of the Paoli Fire Company (itself chartered in 1909) extended its full length in the parking lot as a show of support.



A wonderful year-long Centennial Author Series included nationally known writers Mark Bowden, Matt Phelan, Tony Abbott, and Barbara Robinson. Local romance and mystery authors also offered presentations about their work.

The pamphlet outlining the history of the library was updated and republished by the Friends of Paoli Library. It is available at the front desk of the library.

## References

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