

Wyckoff's Stories—Past and Present

By Laura Leonard, Wyckoff Public Library

In 2026, our community proudly celebrates Wyckoff's centennial. This presents the perfect opportunity to reflect on the people, places, and stories that have shaped our town over the past one hundred years. At the Wyckoff Public Library, our local history collection offers residents a meaningful way to explore that journey, whether through books, archives, or our growing digital resources.

If you're looking for a place to begin, a few standout titles provide an excellent foundation, including *On High Ground: A History of the Township of Wyckoff, New Jersey*, published by the Friends of the Wyckoff Library in 2000. It is a remarkable achievement born from years of research and interviews conducted by dedicated volunteers. The book is available to borrow or purchase at the library, and a digital version can also be accessed on our website. Another engaging overview is *Wyckoff* by David R. Brown, part of the popular *Images of America* series, which brings the township's past to life through photographs and narrative.

For those interested in stories of service and sacrifice, *Small Town - Big Sacrifice II* by Paul Cherpurko honors the men and women from Wyckoff and Midland Park who gave their lives in service to our country.

Local history isn't limited to nonfiction. Readers who enjoy historical fiction may recognize Wyckoff in the pages of Amy Stewart's Kopp Sisters series, which begins with *Girl Waits with Gun*. Based on the life of Constance Kopp, New Jersey's first female deputy sheriff, these novels are set in Wyckoff and surrounding communities in the 1910s. Stewart conducted extensive research at both the Wyckoff and Ridgewood Public Libraries, and readers can further explore the real-life story of the Kopp sisters through archived articles in the *Wyckoff News*, available digitally and on microfilm in our History Room.

The library's History Room itself is a valuable resource and a quiet space for both study and discovery. Created with the support of the Friends of the Wyckoff Library, it houses a wide array of materials including books, memorabilia, photographs, newspaper clippings, and audio and video recordings related to Wyckoff, Bergen County, and the state of New Jersey. The collection also includes *Wyckoff News* microfilm spanning 1928–1992.

For those who prefer to explore from home, our expanding digital local history collection makes it easier than ever to connect with the past. Supported by the Friends and additional funding from Douglas Davids, this ongoing digitization project continues to grow and can be viewed at:

<https://www.digifind-it.com/wyckoff/>

Among the most popular items are yearbooks from local schools. Visitors can browse physical copies from Eisenhower Middle School, Indian Hills, and Ramapo High Schools in the History Room, or access digitized editions online, including Ramapo High School yearbooks (1957–1989) and Ramsey High School yearbooks (1930–2018, with some years still being added).

Beyond yearbooks, the digital collection includes artifacts documenting the history of the library, the Friends organization, township schools, Union Cemetery, historic homes, municipal calendars, local organizations, and a rich assortment of photographs and videos. Watch *This is Wyckoff 1958* (with an addendum from the 1970s) created by the Chamber of Commerce highlighting businesses, schools and homes. Did you know that residents wrote letters to the editor expressing their concerns about the local grocer, Phil Tempel, being drafted in World War II and how it would affect their access to food? Relive events and glimpse the fashion of the past in the Franklin Grange Youth Committee scrapbook. Read about the history of scouting in Wyckoff beginning about 100 years ago. These, and many other items provide a vivid and personal window into Wyckoff's past.

To continue your exploration, consider visiting the Wyckoff Historical Society (<https://wyckoffhistory.org/>) which is working to preserve the township's history and heritage. Whether you're a longtime resident or new to the area, there has never been a better time to learn more about Wyckoff. Visit the library in person or online and discover the history that surrounds you.