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Georgia Library Spotlight - Riverside Library, Riverside Military Academy, Gainesville, Georgia

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GLA SPOTLIGHT

Riverside Library Riverside Military Academy Gainesville, GA

The library on the campus of Riverside Military Academy (RMA) is located on the shores of Lake Lanier in Gainesville, Georgia. Riverside Military Academy, founded in 1907, is one of the premier college preparatory academies for young men in grades 7-12.

The Riverside vision began with two Gainesville businessmen and professors, Haywood

Jefferson Pearce and Azor Warner Van Hoose, Jr. Pearce was president of the local women's school, Brenau College, and based upon his success there, the two men gathered support from more than thirty local investors to charter an all-male, military school. As a result, construction for Riverside Military Academy began in 1907 and the doors opened for classes in the fall of 1908.

By 1913, the twenty-five acre campus included two brick buildings and a small wooden cottage. Pearce and Van Hoose hired Sandy Beaver to be Riverside's head of school in 1913. Beaver would go on to acquire ownership of the school in 1915 and preside over its growth until his death in 1969.

Riverside operated a winter campus in Florida for more than fifty years. In 1931, Sandy Beaver purchased the Hollywood Hills Hotel in south

Florida. With the exception of a brief time during World War II when the Navy used the Florida campus as a training facility, the school's cadets and staff would spend January through March at the Florida campus and the remainder of the school year would take place in Gainesville.

Every year when the entire school "moved south," the academy would also pack and transport a portion of the library's collection for student and faculty use at the Hollywood campus. One could truly say that the Riverside Library was indeed a "traveling library"!



Facing tremendous commercial development in the area surrounding its

Florida campus, the academy sold that property in 1984 to dedicate resources to the renovation of the Gainesville campus.

Riverside began its Gainesville renovations in 1997 and completed the project in 2004. The renovations, totaling about \$95 million, began with a new barracks building, which replaced nine older dormitory buildings, and included a new academic building, gymnasium, and library and performing arts center as well as extensive renovations to its athletic fields.

The Riverside Library is now housed in the Sandy Beaver Center for Teaching and Learning which was named in honor of General Sandy Beaver. The collection currently contains over 20,000 volumes including an extensive reference section, special collections, and thirty-five print periodicals. Over twenty-four computers are available for accessing resources

such as *Encyclopedia Britannica* and GALILEO databases.

Riverside Library programs and activities include:

- “The Career and College: Q & A,” a research section dedicated to juniors and seniors as they prepare for life after graduation from Riverside.
- “Cadets Rule!” showcases the efforts of RMA cadets in athletics and extracurricular teamwork.
- “The Forum” is a consortium of students who like to read, discuss, and think about different types of library media and

management. We provide reviews of books, blogs, websites, and virtual tours for the student body of RMA. Forum members are engaged to assist in maintaining the Riverside Library collection by providing community service hours. Students manage the library’s book sale in order to supply the necessary funds for club activities. Earlier this year, Riverside Library proudly hosted two separate World War II exhibits from the Marcus Foundation and Kennesaw State University.

The RMA Corps of Cadets consists of over 400 cadets from more than twenty countries. For more information about Riverside Library, please visit <http://www.riversidemilitary.com>