



**For the final 18 years** of the library's existence, the Librarian was Annette V. Janes, who began at the library in 1966, Janes guided the library in its final transition to becoming part of the Hamilton-Wenham Library. In the final year, the library had 28,000 books, 80 magazine titles, 700 records, and a bookmobile collection.  
Photo, Hamilton Historical Society.

## *History of*

# **Hamilton's Library**

Social libraries sprang up all over Massachusetts after laws were passed in 1798 allowing them. They were in essence subscription libraries and were not for the general public, as a considerable income was necessary to belong. As few as 7 people could join together to purchase shares of the library. The members bought and circulated books among themselves, each library having rather strict guidelines. They placed all the books in the home of a member, in order to ease access.

Only those contributing books could borrow them. The homeowner acted as a librarian. Sometimes, non-members, students and researchers, were allowed to use the collections.

### **NOTE:**

Much of this information comes from "Hamilton Library, 1891-1991, One Hundred Years of Service," compiled and edited by Annette V. Janes and Mary L. Reinhalter, based on research by Janice Pulsifer and further researched by Blanche M. Day and Annette V. Janes, published 1992. Information added subsequently is shown in an alternate typeface, i.e., Times New Roman.

Generally, the book collections were nonfiction, such as history, biographies, philosophy, travel, and theology. They were fully or partially leather bound, often with gold-leaf lettering. Vellum corners protected the cover from damage. Sewing held the pages to the spine. Page edges were tinted, often blue or yellow and a ribbon bookmark was adhered to the spine.

Members of these social libraries would gather to discuss the books. They also agreed to purchase other books for their library.

Book prices became much lower with the invention of the steam-powered rotary printing press, in 1843. This technology, along with a switch to rolled paper feed, allowed the presses to run at high rates. As a result, the number of books published greatly increased and book prices dramatically dropped.

To acquire many more books, some private social libraries began to evolve into subscription libraries. Memberships increased, with new members buying shares or paying monthly fees. Members decided on books to acquire, staffing and other library costs. A librarian handled book circulation.

## The Beginning

Of Hamilton's First Social Library, very little information remains. In 1905, Otis F. Brown gave the library the Book of Records of the Hamilton Second Social Library, commenced Feb. 10, 1817. The book contains the constitution, rules and regulations, roll of subscribers, catalogue of books, and a record of books withdrawn by each individual.<sup>20</sup>

The Second Hamilton Social Library, in 1817, had 27 subscribers. Members paid \$3 and a share of all former assessments and purchases, if they were deemed proper to admit and were accepted by the society. Members could take out only one volume at a time, circulation was for a month and fines were 25¢/mon. Anyone, who allowed a nonsubscriber to borrow vv a book, was fined a dollar.

Some of the titles owned and circulated were:

"Improvement of the Mind," by Isaac Watts; "Village Sermons," by George Burder; "Goldsmith's Natural History," by Oliver Goldsmith and Mrs. Mary Pilkington; "Life of Mahomet," by William Muir; "Addison's Evidences," by Joseph Addison; "Brown's Practical Piety Exemplified," by John Brown; and "Life of Mrs. Graham," by Isabella Marshall Graham.

Early subscribers of the Hamilton Second Social Library were members of well-known Hamilton-area families: Knowlton, Dodge, Brown, Patch, Appleton, Roberts, Lovering, Woodberry, Gardner and Gittridge.

Careful accounts of books, subscribers, what was read and by whom, can still clearly be seen in the ledger of the Second Social Library. The last entry into this unique old ledger is in 1853, which would mean the library was active for about 36 years. There are fewer entries as time goes on and, in 1853, only 3 titles circulated.

At the 1890 Annual Town Meeting, voters passed an article to establish a public library, and allocated funds (\$50).<sup>13</sup>



**First library**, 1891, was at John Woodbury's house, now 588 Bay Road. Photo, Hamilton Historical Society.

A year later, the Hamilton Public Library, opened on July 1. The town unanimously voted, at the 1891 Annual Town Meeting, to accept the provisions of Chapter 347, Acts of 1890 of the Massachusetts Legislature, providing for the formation of public libraries in towns and for the assistance of such libraries by the State.

The library was in a room at the back of the left side of John L. Woodbury's house, 588 Bay Rd.<sup>1</sup> Annie E. Woodbury was the librarian, at a yearly salary of \$25. John Woodbury provided the room, with use of furniture and lights free of charge. To "fit the room for its use, shelves were made, and a door cut to the entry to allow ingress and egress directly from the road."<sup>2</sup>

The First Report of the Library Trustees covered the period of 7-1/2 months, during which the library was open 64 days. The \$50, appropriated at town meeting, was inadequate, but with contributions from the Myopia Hunt Club of \$30.50 and from Augustus P. Gardner of \$50, the Trustees had a total of \$135.33, with which to work.

The state's initial gift of books to the value of \$100 was felt insufficient to satisfy the wants of a town as large as Hamilton, so gifts of books were requested. By February 1892, there were 567 bound books and pamphlets, with the names of 30 donors listed.

On opening day, 22 people applied for cards and 20 books issued. The most popular book circulated that year was the 1888 novel "Phyllis," by the Duchess.



**Woodbury house** had a first-floor room with bookshelves and was directly accessible from the road. Photo, Hamilton Historical Society.



## Locations of Main and Branch Libraries

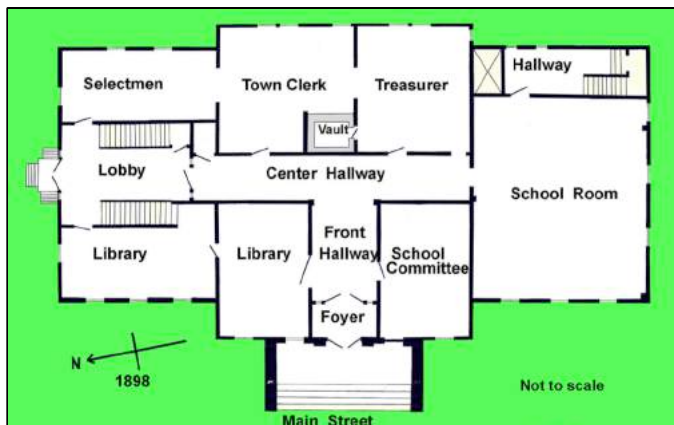
Dates	Where	Comments
1891-1898	588 Main St.	John Woodbury's house, now 588 Bay Road
1898-1952	Town hall	What is now the Town Clerk's office
1913-1919	Railroad Ave.	Branch library in Horace Andrews pharmacy in the Smith Block, now 52-56 Railroad Ave.
1919-1924	Railroad Ave.	Branch library in Wenham Grange building, now Antony & Dodge accounting business.
1924-1956	16 Main St.	Branch library in a store in the brick block, now Black Cow.
1952-1961	Town hall	What is now the Memorial Meeting Room
1956-1961	106 Railroad Ave.	Branch library in former Lamson School
1961-2000	299 Bay Rd.	Now the Hamilton Senior Center

### Locations

The room in John Woodbury's house continued to be the town library until 1898, when the library moved into the newly built town hall, on Bay Road. Just inside the front door, on the left, the library occupied 2 rooms (*now the Town Clerk's office*). One was a stack room and the other a delivery and reading room, including reference material.<sup>17</sup>

Often, the delivery/reading/reference room soon became greatly overcrowded. While a separate reading room, which might be open several afternoons and evenings of each week, seemed logical, this would involve extra expense.<sup>18</sup>

Then, in 1907, Miss H. Augusta Dodge of Hamilton donated \$1,000 for creating in the town hall a "free reading room, an adjunct of the public library ... to be called the Gail Hamilton Room." Her gift was in memory of her sister, Mary Abigail Dodge (1833-



**1898, library moved into the town hall**, on Main Street. Just inside the front door, on the left, the library occupied 2 rooms. Floor plan, J. Hauck, 2015

1896), who wrote under the name of Gail Hamilton.<sup>6</sup> The room across the hall from the library entrance was suggested as a site for the reading room.

However, the Hamilton Library Trustees questioned the wisdom of setting up another library room in the town hall. The School Committee occupied the room opposite the library. The Trustees put the proposed reading room on hold. Five years later, in 1912, they placed a brass plaque, reading "Gail Hamilton Reading Room," on the door of the existing library rooms. It was open to the public from 2 until 5 p.m., every day except Sunday.

By 1924, the library had outgrown its space in the town hall. With more room needed, the town allowed the library to use the schoolroom as "a reading and community room. The Trustees had the walls repainted with a terracotta dado and the upper part finished in a harmonizing color effect." Draperies, willow and cretoone, (*similar to chintz*) furniture were procured, all reflecting the same color scheme ... pictures were hung.

The room was much in demand for dancing, whist parties, club meetings and the Trustees felt it well warranted the expenditure entailed."<sup>7</sup> (\$335.80) (*It seems not much reading was done in this area*)

On March 18, 1934, the selectmen closed the library, for a complete renovation. They removed the stack room shelves and arranged them around the walls, with only one low stack in the center. The counter in the delivery room was taken out, thus opening up a beautiful archway that had been hidden for so long a time. The librarian's desk was moved to the delivery room and new shelves were installed. The interior walls were painted ivory and all shelves and woodwork white. New lights were installed. The effect was that of one long room. The library reopened on June 2.<sup>10</sup>



**Branch library** opened, in 1924, on the right end of the brick block building on Main Street. (*Now 16 Bay Road, now part of the Black Cow restaurant.*) Photo, Hamilton Historical Society

Another move for the library took place in 1952: it moved into the reading room, the former schoolroom. This occurred when town officials needed more space in the town hall for their offices. The library rooms became the town clerk's office.

The selectmen had new lighting installed in the former reading room.<sup>57</sup> The new location provided more space for bookshelves, most of which were transferred from the original library and a few new ones. To create different sections in the room, back-to-back bookcases formed a partial partition, from the middle of the south wall. Another short row of back-to-back bookcases divided the room's back end.<sup>74</sup>

The library's stay in the reading room was short. In March 1960, as once again town officials needed more office space. The town decided to have the library leave the building. Voters appropriated \$90,000 to build a new library further south on Main Street, next to the recently built fire and police station. The new central library opened in April 1961.<sup>20, 22, 61</sup>

While long gone from the town hall, some evidence of the former library remains.

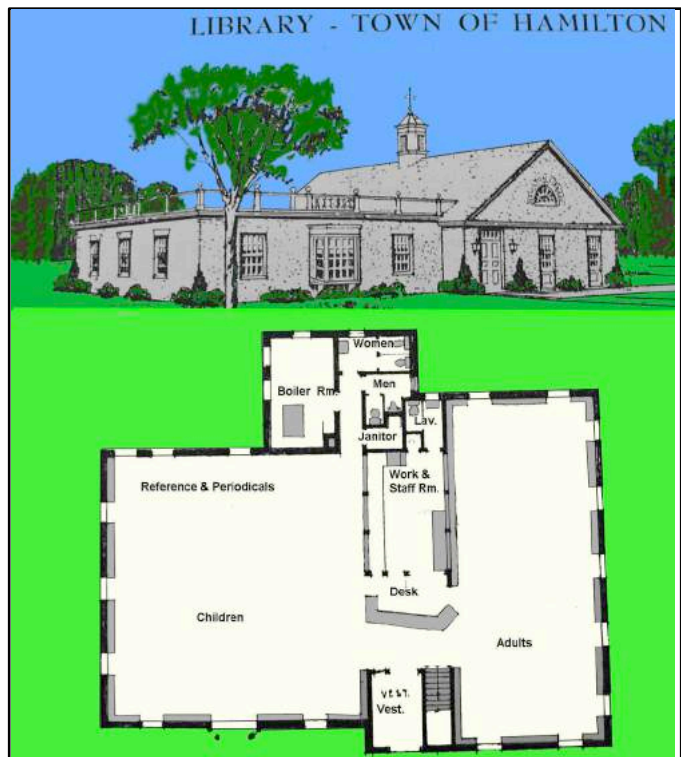
In 1916, the American Mechanics presented to the library a portrait of Alexander Hamilton, for whom, through the efforts of Dr. Manasseh Cutler, our town received its name. The painting still hangs at the front of the meeting room, behind the selectmen tables.<sup>5</sup>

Three years after the town hall opened, in 1901, a grand addition to the library was a grandfather clock.<sup>120</sup> A plaque on the front reads, "Presented to the Town of Hamilton by Marshall Kitteredge Abbott."<sup>7</sup> (Photo) One of the town's prominent citizens, Abbott was the first president of the Myopia Hunt Club. The clock, almost 10 feet tall (117 in.), has a face with a calendar and moon-phase wheel. The elaborately carved wood in the case is Santo Domingo (*West Indian*) mahogany (*Swietenia mahogani*).<sup>7</sup> Moved from the library in 1961: the clock now stands in the center hallway.

In 1961, the town built the new library at 299 Bay Road, on a 40,000-sq. ft. lot located between a recently-built fire house and the Winthrop Elementary School.<sup>22</sup> The lot has a 200-ft, frontage and is 200 ft. deep.

The new library building (*floor plan*) had one large room separated into 3 sections: a reception desk and work and staff area was in the center; a children's area and reference and periodicals section was to the left; an adults book section was on the right. An extension, at the back of the building, contained a boiler room, lavatories and janitor's room. A second floor, above the right side of the building, was vacant.<sup>41</sup>

The new library was, as expressed by the Library Trustees, "a dream-come-true. ... It made "possible a broadening of the scope of library service and will



New library, in 1961, at 299 Bay Rd., had a large room separated into 3 sections: a reception desk and work and staff area in the center; a children's area and reference and periodicals section to the left; an adults book section on the right. An extension, at the back of the building, contained a boiler room, lavatories and janitor's room. Floor plan, J. Hauck, 2016.

most certainly stimulate interest in books and reading" ... for the first time all the library resources were in one place.<sup>41</sup>

Trustees, in 1980, created the Gail Hamilton Room, on the second floor. Money from the H. Augusta Dodge Fund and the John Neary Fund covered all the costs.<sup>46</sup> In 19??, Jean Buckley, a library staff member and a well-known portrait artist, donated a portrait of Mary Abigail Dodge, to be hung in the room.



**Reception desk**, at left, with card file in front of the adult library section of the Bay Road library opened in 1961. Photo, Hamilton Historical Society

In 1983, the trustees provided more space for use by children, by moving a large (800 sq. ft.) portable classroom, from the Junior High School, to the rear of the library. Friends of the Hamilton Library provided funds for renovating the unit.<sup>47</sup>

At the time when fiscal restraints made an addition to the library impossible, this practical approach provided a much-needed children's facility at a fifth the cost of new construction. In 1985 the Children's Room was opened and dedicated as the Mary L. Reinhalter room, in honor of Mary L. Reinhalter, a trustee, founder of the Friends of Hamilton Library and leader of the children's room project.

The main library in the town hall was not the only place where library books were available. In order to make it easier for people in the south part of town to borrow books, the library established, in 1896, a book delivery station in Andrews's drug store in the Smith Block, on Railroad Avenue. The library sent a box of books people had requested.<sup>60</sup>

In 1913, Andrew's store (*where books could be taken every day except Sunday*) proved unsatisfactory, so space was taken in the Boston Store of Osgood J. Kimball, in the brick building on Bay Road. Hours were 2 to 8 PM, on Tuesdays and Saturdays, later to be changed to Wednesdays and Saturdays 3 to 5 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. Andrews and Kimball were paid for their services to the library and it is assumed had charge of the books, as in 1914 Mr. Kimball requested an assistant for the purpose.

Needing more space for books, in 1919, library trustees transferred, using a special appropriation of \$500, the reading room to the lower floor of the Hamilton and Wenham Grange building on Railroad Avenue, next to Osgood J. Kimball's lunchroom. (*Kimball's Palm Lunch so-called because of 2 palm trees at the entrance, occupied part of this building.*) This was where the Anthony & Dodge public accounting business is now, 75 Railroad Ave.<sup>4</sup>

The branch library had walls painted a soft green with cherry dado, and the electric fixtures, light oak furniture, shelving and other furnishings, are of the latest design. Beautiful carbon reproductions of Reading from Homer and the Roman Forum, adorn the walls. The reading room was open 2 afternoons and evenings every week, alternating with afternoons and evenings at the main library.<sup>28</sup>

The Railroad Avenue branch library lost all of its books, when the Grange building burned on Mar. 13, 1924. It was thought that the fire began in the kitchen of Kimball's restaurant.

A new branch library opened, the same year, with 1,200 books, in a room on the right hand side in the brick block building. (*16 Bay Road, now part of the Black Cow restaurant.*) The library room had a coal

pot-belly stove. The librarian, during cold winter months, sat close to the stove on a high chair beside a high desk.<sup>77</sup> In 1940, the Trustees questioned whether to put in oil, but it was deemed too expensive. Jennie S. Perley was the librarian, at this time.

In October 1956, the town learned, not wholly unexpected, that the branch library had to be removed from the Brick Block Building. At the time, Cynthia Wiggin was the librarian. The U. S. Postal Service wanted to enlarge the South Hamilton post office, located in an adjoining space. Investigations by the Trustees and the Selectmen revealed an almost complete lack of a suitable site for the branch library. However, library service was not curtailed, when a portion of the Lamson School was reopened. The southeast, first floor room was renovated.<sup>39</sup>

The library staff worked under rather trying conditions, in the wintertime. There was only a space heater, and all water had to be shut off in winter.

The school site was chosen by the town for the Housing Project for the Elderly, in 1959. This hastened the planning for a central, unified library.

The Trustees began calling for a "commodious, centrally located, single-unit library for Hamilton," as early as 1937.

In 1958, the town considered transferring the Lamson building to the Library Trustees and for them to raze the building and construct a new unified library building \$80,000 for construction. The project was tabled.<sup>40</sup>

A motion for a building on Bay Road was defeated in 1959; but in March of 1960, the town voted an appropriation of \$90,000. The new library opened, for public use, in April 1961.

The new library, centrally located on Bay Road, eliminated the need for a branch library.

The main library and the branch library were not the only locations where residents could borrow books.

As a result of the concept of regionalization of libraries, there were bi-weekly visits to Hamilton library (*back of building*) by the State-supported Regional Bookmobile. Begun in 1958, the service augmented made works available that were impossible for a small library to purchase.

For many years, beginning in 1910, there was a library in Asbury Grove, the L. B. Bates Library, at the north end of Lee Park. Rev. Lewis B. Bates was the first chaplain for The Grove and contributed a large number of books to start the library.<sup>5</sup>

The Grove library building had a single, open room with low bookcases lining the walls. The building, established for summer campers, was not winterized (*it still exists*).<sup>5</sup>



## Librarians

The first librarian, 1891, was Annie Woodbury. Miss Woodbury's salary was increased to \$50, the following year and, from then on, the library's appropriation was never lower than \$300.

However, when the new library opened in the town hall, 1898, she resigned. Grace (*Dane*) Stone took the position, at a yearly salary of \$100. She served until 1916, when she married Gustavus Kinsman.<sup>16</sup>

Percival Whipple, of Hamilton, left his boyhood recollection of Mrs. Stone and her sister, Addie (*Dane*) Safford, who was her assistant at the library. Addie would open up the library in the afternoon and young Percival would then take the horse and carriage and drive back to the North School ... then on the lot south of Oliver Wolcott, Jr.'s house on Bay Road ... to get Grace and bring her to the library. The sisters then lived at 965 Bay Road, and were both teachers at the North School.

In its 100 years of existence, the Hamilton Library had 9 librarians. Lydia L. Haraden was the longest serving, 34 years. When she began in 1919, the main library circulated about 4,000 books; 382 books were acquired. The Main Library was open Wednesday and Saturday from 3 to 5 and 7 to 9 p. m.<sup>29</sup>

In 1954, when Harden retired, as required by State law, the main library circulated 3,643 books and books and the branch library 6,572. The library was open Wednesday and Saturday, 3-5 and 7-9 p. m.<sup>63</sup>

Another long-time employee was Jennie S. Perley: she was the librarian at the branch library from 1919 to 1954.<sup>63</sup> A charter member of the Hamilton Mothers Club, Perley also was a director of Community Service, a member of the first town Scholarship Committee and numerous other organizations of town. For 36 years she was local correspondent for the Salem Evening News.<sup>54</sup>

During the final 18 years of the library's existence, Annette V. Janes was the librarian. She began at the library in 1966, during which time she provided a story hour series for 4 and 5 year olds, as well as a summer reading program for 4th and 5th graders. In 1976, she became the assistant librarian.<sup>67</sup> Janes expertly guided the library in its final transition to becoming part of the Hamilton-Wenham Library.

In Jane's final year, the library had 28,000 books, 80 magazine titles, 700 records, a bookmobile collection, which changed monthly, and the resources of the entire Eastern Regional Library system.<sup>70</sup>

In the fall of 2001, upon opening of new two-town library, the Hamilton Public Library disbanded. The last members were: Annette Janes, Director; Nancy Day, Elizabeth Craig-McCormack, Jeannine Curtis, Lisa LeJeune, Jean Buckley, Judith Carberry, Anna Appa, Diane Scott, Jean Wood, and Stevan Brown, custodian.<sup>66</sup>

## LIBRARIANS AND ASSISTANTS 1891-1991

Librarians	Years
Annie Woodbury	1891-1898
Grace Dane Stone	1898-1916
Annie Preston	1916-1919
Lydia L. Haraden	1919-1953
Louise Brown ( <i>Wenham</i> )	1953-1962
Charlotte Hughes	1962-1966
Elizabeth Moulton	1966-1968
Ruth Kite	1968-1979
Annette V. Janes	1979-1991
Assistant Librarians	
Addie Dane Safford	1898-1916
Jennie S. Perley	1919-1955
Cynthia Wiggin	1954-1958
Patricia Dillon ( <i>Beverly</i> )	1958-1958
Charlotte Hughes	1958-1962
Ethelyn Wetherbee	1962-1963
Helen Ashe ( <i>Danvers</i> )	1966-1976
Annette V. Janes	1976-1979
Diana G. Ward	1979-1986
Nancy L. Day	1986-1991
Circulation Desk	
Rose Richards	1954-1978
Doris Clarke	1954-1979

## Trustees

A Library Committee remained in charge of the library until 1893, when it was disbanded in order to secure the benefits of chapter 255 of the Acts of the General Court, May 6, 1892. By this legislation, the State established the Massachusetts Free Library Commission. The state Commission could disburse \$100, for books, to a public library in a town where the property valuation of the town did not exceed \$600,000.<sup>75</sup> The Massachusetts Free Public Library Commission was the first of its kind in the United States.<sup>76</sup>

A prerequisite of the state law was for the town having a Board of Library Trustees.<sup>29</sup> The first Hamilton Board of Trustee members were: Frank V. Wright, Otis F. Brown, and Augustus P. Gardner, each serving a one-year term.<sup>1</sup> This changed in 1911, when one trustee was elected each successive year to serve a 3-year term.

## HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEES, 1891-1991

Frank V. Wright	1891-1905
Otis F. Brown	1891-1893
Augustus P. Gardner	1891-1909
Arthur L. Devens	1895-1896
J. Martin Striley	1895-1896
Reginald C. Robbins	1894-1895
Jesse G. Nichols	1900-1907
W. C. Ware	1903-1907
George von L. Meyer	1903-1905
Lester E. Libby	1909-1910
Edwin A. Blake	1909-1910
Arthur W. Chandler	1918-1940
Robert B. Walsh	1919-1933
Francis C. Norton	1919-1920
Edward A. Underhill	1924-1932
Barbara M. Gage	1932-1934
Chester K. Knowles	1933-1937
Katherine P. Stride	1935-1942
John F. Neary	1940-1968
Rowland W. Payne	1942-1944
Beatrice B. Holmes	1944-1949
Sarah H. Trussell	1949-1975
Lawrence L. Leister	1968-1969
J. Roy Wolfskill	1969-1973
Melvin F. Reid	1950-1956
Janice P. Pulsifer	1956-1957
Clement F. Hayes	1960-1966
Jean Shackelford	1962-1967
Carolyn Lander	1967-1979
John E. Hartnett, Jr.	1972-1978
Blanche M. Day	1975-2000
Mary L. Reinhalter	1978-1985
Ann St. Germain	1979-2000
Dean Roberts	1985-1987
Pricilla B. Johnson	1987-1988
Donald P. Conwell	1988-1990
Alan D. Reid	1990-2000

The Board of Trustees has custody and management of the library and of all property owned by the town relating thereto and appoints the librarian. The Board expends all money raised or appropriated by the town for support and maintenance of the library. The Board also administers all money or property, which the town may receive by gift or bequest, in accordance with the provisions of the gift or bequest.<sup>79</sup>

Of the 37 people, who served as Library Trustees, 3 are of particular note, based on the length of their service.

John F. Neary served for 21 years (1948-1968). He was one of the early people calling for the consolidation of the main and branch libraries in a new building. His wife, Ann, served as a library volunteer for many years.

Arthur W. Chandler was a Library Trustee for 23 years (1918-1940). He has seen the library grow from its early years in the town hall and those of the branch library to its having more than 18,000 books.

Sarah H. Trussell was the longest serving Library Trustee, 27 years (1949-1975). Her service began when the library was in town hall selectmen's meeting room and lasted through the building of the library on Main Street (now Bay Road).

### Books

When the library opened in the town hall on Jul. 1, 1891, under the provisions of Chapter 347 of the Act of 1890, it received from the Free Public Library Commission \$100 worth of books.<sup>11</sup> Several people also donated books: George C. Creamer (100), M. K. Abbott (20) and Horace Burnham (30).<sup>59</sup>

A year later, the library had 567 bound volumes and quite a number of unbound magazines and periodicals. In 1892, the library had 1,248 bound volumes.<sup>2</sup>

In 1892, the library loaned 2,559 volumes. Of these 74% were fiction, 11% history, 7% travels, 3% biography, 3% general works, and magazines, periodicals, etc. 2%.<sup>2</sup>

In 1900, the library had 2,501 bound books, of which 189 were added that year. Book circulation was nearly 5,000, with 90% being fiction. Magazine circulation was just over 5,600.<sup>25</sup>

Surprisingly, the library did not have any of the books written by a well-known town author, Abigail Dodge (pen name *Gail Hamilton*).

In 1904, the Trustees "felt an omission in the lack in the Library" of the work of native author Gail Hamilton, so that nearly all her books were acquired. This, they said, is "the first opportunity which the youth of this town had to become familiar with all the writings of Miss Dodge."<sup>9</sup> (*Mary Abigail Dodge wrote*



**Gail Hamilton's personal library**, in 1904, was given to the Hamilton library in the town hall. This was the pen name of the popular local writer Mary Abigail Dodge. Photo, Hamilton Historical Society.

under the name of Gail Hamilton.) The library received many books from this Dodge family. For example it had Gail's own copy of Julia Perkins Cutler's "Life of Ephraim Cutler" (1890), the son of Manasseh Cutler, who was active in the early settlement of Ohio, c. 1800-1830, a book given to Gail by William Dawes of Ohio, and her copies of William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler's "Life, Journals and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler" (1888).

When the library opened in 1891, the trustees recognized "the lack of literature and the prevalence of fiction." They hoped that the next year's appropriation would enable them to purchase books that would "instruct as well as amuse, not only the youths, but the children."<sup>2</sup>

In the lists of books printed with the yearly reports for the years 1913-1914 were the popular series ... Boy Scouts, Bobbsey Twins, Ruth Fielding and The Rover Boys. In 1928, the Trustees still deplore the demand for fiction and "trust that the coming year will reflect a greater demand for literature, the reading of which will prove of some lasting education, benefit and carry out the fundamental purpose and ambition of every public library."<sup>11</sup>

The Trustees formed a Review and Reading Committee for good literature in 1936, with Mrs. Constance William, Mrs. Dorothy Bradford, Miss Barbara Gage, the Reverend William F. A. Stride, and William W. Bancroft as members. Another Reading Committee was set up in 1950 with the librarian, John Neary and Melvin Reid as members. They were later joined by: Mrs. Halsey Dewolfe, Mrs. Frank Pulsifer, Mrs. B. Grant Dodd, and Clement F. Hayes. This Committee served until 1954.

The availability of books and purchasing 2 copies of popular books and periodicals strained the relationship between the main and branch libraries were often strained. Books were interchanged, with duplication avoided, when possible, except for fiction.

### Services

The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a significant change in services provided by the library.

In 1966, the Board of Library Commissioners formed a comprehensive statewide program of regional library systems. It was designed to provide support services and resources of both materials and personnel for public libraries. The regional office at the Boston Public Library serves about 200 member libraries. These libraries were divided into 7 sub-regions, each of which served by a sub-regional center. The centers are located in Andover, Bridgewater, Falmouth, New Bedford, Quincy, Boston, and Wellesley. Each sub-regional library contracts to provide inter-library loans, reference services, and delivery service.

Continuing to meet the information needs of town residents, the library added other forms of communications, including audio and videotapes, and compact discs. Using these formats, people can listen and view books, movies, and music.

In 1973, the library began offering microfilm copies of the Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle. This was done through the cooperation of the publishers of the Chronicle and a commercial firm in Cambridge.<sup>45</sup> However, the library did not have the equipment to view the microfilm until 1985. The library purchased the equipment using donations from the publisher of the Hamilton/Wenham Chronicle and the Hamilton Historical Society.<sup>48</sup>

In 1988, the library began offering videotapes of a series of presentations called Times Past. Produced by William Heitz and Edmund Josephs, the tapes were interviews of prominent and interesting Hamilton and Wenham citizens.<sup>49</sup>

By 1992, the library had amassed 994 music tapes and 277 compact discs. Just 6 years later, there were 3,924 books on tape, 12,946 videos, 1,654 cds.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to the major problems of housing the main and branch libraries, the Trustees had some minor matters to attend to. For example, in 1937, they had to stop to the practice of various organizations in town of using the reading room as a "salesroom," and a year later they issued the statement that the Librarians were "too busy and that the practice of selling chances on handiwork should end."<sup>12</sup>

The signs of the times are reflected in the Trustees' reports.



A Works Progress Administration project, set up to relieve unemployment in the 1930's, provided card indexes for both libraries.

During World War II, in 1941-42, Company A and Company F of the 101st Field Artillery stationed at the Town Hall were very grateful for the use of library facilities, until they left in June 1942.

### Cataloging

In 1893, the library produced its first complete list of its books. At the time, the library had just under 600 bound books. Printing the list cost \$62, which a citizen paid.<sup>14</sup>

In subsequent years, the library printed supplements to the finding list, as the number of books grew much larger and printing of a full list was too expensive.

In 1902, the librarian instituted the Dewey decimal system for cataloging the library's nonfiction books, and provided a finding list with this information.<sup>24</sup>

However, it was not until 1923 that the rearrangement and classification of the nonfiction books under the Dewey system was completed. People coming to the library looking for books dealing with history, science, travel, could easily find what they wanted consulting the card system. Fiction books were rearranged and classified alphabetically by authors, in accord with the system approved by the American Library Association.<sup>30</sup>

In 1983, the library received a State grant for automating its books. Hamilton was the first library in Massachusetts to do this.<sup>78</sup> The town also approved funds for this project. The process involved tagging books with machine-readable bar codes for entering the information on the main computer.<sup>47</sup> The information modernized the way books were cataloged, processed, circulated and inventoried.

In 1983, the first books were circulated by computer, as Hamilton Library became a member of the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium (MLC), an automated library network. It consists of 24 full member libraries and 11 dial-up libraries. In addition, through data-link, all surrounding automated libraries can be accessed.

In 1992, part of the reference section was made ready to receive the public access terminals or PACS, which replaced the card catalog.<sup>52</sup>

### Circulation

Annual reports, from the beginning of the public library, showed steady increases in book circulation.

The circulation figures of the branch library usually exceeded those of the main library, by a ratio of 3 to one, probably because the center of population had shifted to South Hamilton from Hamilton Center, the older part of town, and because the branch library was easily accessible in the business center and near the post office. Eventually the hours at each Library were such that the book collections were available 4 days a week ... Wednesday and Saturday at the main library, and Tuesday and Friday at the Branch.

During WW2, circulation figures declined, likely because people were involved in activities attendant upon the war, fuller employment, and gas rationing.

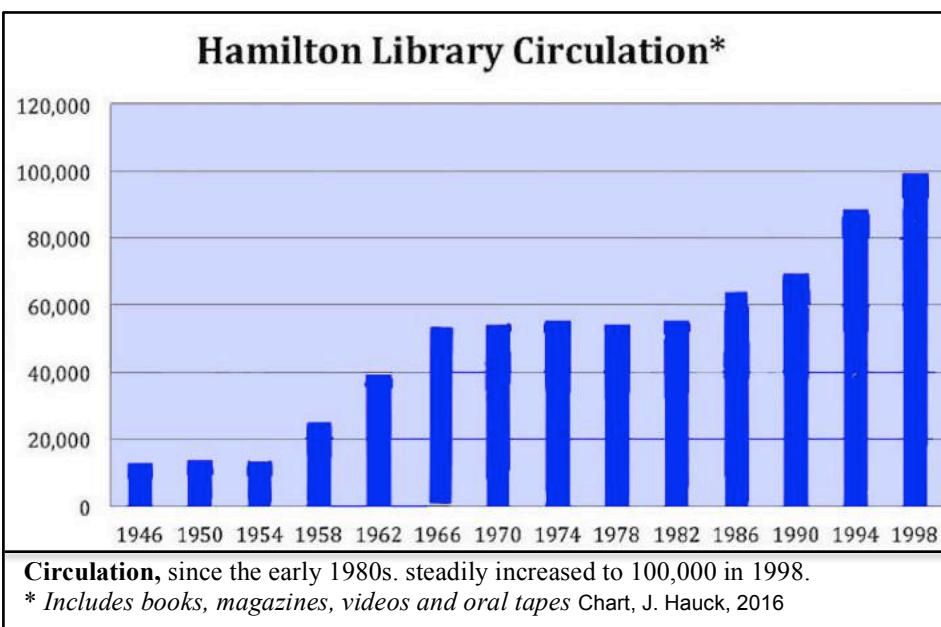
In 1949, the librarian reported an over-all 10% decline in book circulation, although withdrawals of periodicals showed a slight increase. The Trustees were at a loss to account for this reversal of the trend, and believed it might in part been caused by the popularity of television.<sup>36</sup>

Circulation declines occurred in the following years. However, in 1955, the librarian reported "a healthy increase in the number of patrons" at the branch library. The circulation at the main library increased by 30%, reaching nearly 8,000.<sup>69</sup>

The Library Trustees, in their 1957 report, called attention to the library's increasing circulation, saying it, "is fast nearing a crossroads in the conduct of its

library, if that library is to serve adequately the demonstrated needs of our town's citizens and students. Last year's over-all record breaking circulation total has been resoundingly surpassed, by approximately one third during the past year."<sup>64</sup>

There followed a steady circulation increase to the mid 1960s, when it leveled off through



the next two decades. In the mid 1980s, circulation began again to rapidly increase. In 1997, the library had a record circulation of 100,959 items, an amazing circulation for a small town with a population just under 7,700.<sup>54</sup>

### Members

At the end of its second year of operation, 1892, the number of persons holding library cards was 271, which was more than one-fourth of all the inhabitants of the town.<sup>14</sup>

In 1900, there were 863 library cards: the town's population was 1,614. Thus, more than half of the residents had library cards.<sup>23</sup>

In 1930, when Hamilton's population exceeded 2,000 for the first time, there were more than 600 library cards.

1961, the main library had 2,006 people borrowing books.<sup>22</sup> Hamilton's population was about 5,500.

When the library closed in 2001: Hamilton's population was 8,315.

### Finances

In its first full year (1898) of operation in the town hall, library expenses were about \$410. The money went for salary (\$104) and books and periodicals (\$230).<sup>16</sup>

During the next 2 decades, library costs steadily increased, and by 1920, library expenses were more than \$1,500. Of this, \$85 went to salaries, \$519 to book and periodical purchases; \$55 for maintenance and \$94 to purchase furniture.<sup>67</sup>

The town continued to support the library even during the recession years. In 1932, the library expenses were slightly under \$2,100. Of this, \$625 was for salaries; \$592 for books and periodicals; and \$352 for the branch library rent.<sup>68</sup>

In 1940, library expenses were \$2,453, which was not much more than they were in 1932. Of the total amount, \$1,100 went for books and periodicals, \$930 for salaries, and \$330 for rent.<sup>34</sup>

The following decade also did not see a significant increase in library expenses. In 1950, total library expenses were \$2,964. Salaries were \$1,040; \$1,092 went for books and periodicals; \$570 for the branch library rent; and \$250 for maintenance.<sup>37</sup>

In the last full year (1960) of the library, in the town hall and a branch library, total expenses were \$7,232: Salaries were \$4,277, and books and periodicals were \$2,363.<sup>41</sup>

The first year (1961) the library was in its new building on Bay Road, expenses totaled \$13,063.06. Salaries were \$6,031.32; maintenance \$3,331.99; \$1.950 interest on loan for building the library; other

expenses were \$2,431.47. The town received \$1,371 in state aid and \$900 in library fines.<sup>22</sup>

Interest from various funds goes toward library expenses. Library Trustees administer these funds.

Hannah Augusta Dodge (1830-1905), sister to Mary Abigail Dodge (*Gail Hamilton*) donated \$1,000. Both were born in Hamilton and lived together on Main Street. Hannah was a school teacher.

Dr. Justin Allen (1826-1908), the son of Ezekiel Allen, was born in Hamilton and grew up "over the river," in East Hamilton. He was a bachelor and a practicing physician in Topsfield for over 40 years. To the Hamilton Library, he donated \$500 for books.

Other library established funds are:

Dorothy Jones Fund (*established 1981*),

Bernice H. Mersereau Fund (*established 1975*),

Leon W. Bishop Fund (*established 1971*),

John Hartnett Jr. Fund (*established 1978*),

John F. and Ann Neary Fund (*established 1986*),

Anita Bruyere Fund (*established 1988*).

Donald F. Conwell, M.D. (*established 1990*)

Katlyn McCready Bird Educational Fund (1991), in memory of Katlyn M. Bird, infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey S. Bird. This was the first fund whose proceeds are to be used exclusively for children and young adults.

The total of all these funds, in 1991, was \$13,600. Yearly, the interest from these funds is used to purchase books for the library. However, with interest rates becoming very low with the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the interest from the funds is also very low.

Another source of funds for the library was the Friends of Hamilton Library, which was organized in 1968 by Mary L. Reinhalter.<sup>78</sup> The purpose of the organization was to maintain an association of persons interested in books and reading and to increase the facilities and services of the library, thereby enriching the cultural opportunities of the Town of Hamilton.

The Friends, through their volunteer work and fund-raising efforts, provided many facilities and programs that would not be possible within the library budget. Library furnishings donated by the Friends, included carpeting, drapes, and chairs in the reading areas. The Children's Room was completely equipped and furnished by the Friends. Membership dues, and proceeds from book, toy and bake sales were major sources of funding for the various endeavors of the Friends.<sup>78</sup>

The first president of the Friends was Mary L. Reinhalter. Following presidents were: Dorothy M. Lamson (1973), Priscilla B. Johnson (1976), Virginia F. Seavey (1979) and Jan H. Maddern (1989).

In 1988, Nancy L. Day, the Assistant Librarian, who also served as Young Adult Librarian formed a Junior Friends of Hamilton Library. This group welcomed the participation of boys and girls from fifth grade and up. The purpose of the group was to help with library projects and to become more involved with all aspects of the library. Each member donated at least one hour per month in the library. Their special projects included helping with the book, bake and toys sales, putting on puppet shows, plays, compiling a cookbook called "Glorious Goodies" and other things. Money earned was used to buy posters, supplies and craft materials, for the Children's room.

**School use**

As early as 1902-03, the Library Trustees recognized the importance of cooperating with the town's schools. They established a loan library for pupils at the West School, on the corner of Highland and Winthrop Streets.

In 1924, a school library was established in the high school principal's office. The manual training class made bookcases. <sup>7</sup> The library loaned books to the school library.

Also that year, at the request of the Superintendent of Schools, the library added a large number of new books particularly for children's reading. The School Superintendent provided a book list necessary to supplement the required reading in the various school courses. <sup>7</sup>

To encourage students to use the library and thereby establish habits of reading the best of literature, the school system adopted a course for giving school credit for home reading in grades 3 to 8. Teachers produced lists of books, suitable for the pupils of each grade. Pupils made oral reports on the books they read, followed by writing a short written report. The reading was done outside of school. At the end of the year, certificates were issued to pupils having read 10 books. For the reading of each additional 5 books, a gold seal was placed on the certificate. <sup>7</sup>

In 1934, the library had a broad range of reference books, including the recently added Comptons Encyclopaedia for the elementary grades and the World Book for use by both Junior and Senior pupils. <sup>71</sup> Major in the reference books occurred during the time (1968-1979) Ruth Kite was the Librarian. <sup>46</sup>

The library, in 1948, supplied more than 100 books for classroom reading. This was done in response to a request from the school system. <sup>72</sup>

In 1948 and in 1954, a formal program of book circulation in the elementary schools was carried on. There was good cooperation between the schools and public libraries, for special projects and school assignments.

The librarian began, in 1962, a program of Winthrop School children library visits to introduce them to procedures and advantages. The library has also loaned more than 100 books to the new Regional High School Library. <sup>73</sup>

In 1966, the librarian sent monthly selections of books to the Manasseh Cutler School to supplement classroom collections. Winthrop School teachers scheduled regular class visits for the purpose of book selection. <sup>43</sup>

**The End**

In 1995, Hamilton received a grant, from the Board of Library Commissioners for Planning and Design, to create a joint library with Wenham. Next, the town submitted a Letter of Intent for an Application Round II Building Grant, for a joint library with Wenham. <sup>53</sup>

Discussion began with Wenham for joining the Boards of Library Trustees and for merging the town libraries. Since this had never been done in Massachusetts, there were no guidelines and many issues needed to be resolved. <sup>53</sup>

The towns formed a Hamilton-Wenham Joint Library Committee, chaired by Scott Maddem. The Committee began to pursue answers agreeable to both towns. <sup>53</sup>

In November 2001, Hamilton's Public Library closed. Annette Janes' final Librarian's Report, began with, "We have served the town for 110 years. As the new century began, construction commenced on the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library, a joint effort of the two towns. Progress has gone well and the new joint library is expected to be ready in July of 2001." <sup>66</sup>

<b>Last Staff Members</b>	<b>Position</b>
Annette V. Janes	Director
Nancy L. Day	Ass't/YA librarian
Elizabeth Craig McCormack	Clerk
Lisa LeJeune	Reference Librarian
Jean M. Buckley	Technical Service
Jeanine F. Curtis	Library Assistant
Stevan Brown	Custodian
Judith Carberry	Children's Librarian
Anna Appa	Clerk
Diane Scott	Clerk
Jean Wood	Library Assistant
<b>Library Trustees</b>	
Alan Reid	Trustee
Ann St. Germain	Trustee
Blanche Day	Trustee



The final year was a busy year. The library had: 28,269 adult fiction and nonfiction books; 36,329 children's and young adult books were circulated. Also the library had: 509 music cassettes, 4,002 books on tape, 1,164 adult magazines, 46 children's magazines, 14,082 videos, 1,890 compact discs, 611 museum passes, 62 bookmobile loans, 3 cd-rom. 2,221 people used the library's computers for Internet access. There were 1,252 interlibrary loans, 102 Boston Public Library loans and the Hamilton library sent out 2,782 items delivered to 16,205 out-of-town borrowers. The total cost for operating was just under \$275,000.<sup>55</sup>

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