

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE HOLLIS SOCIAL LIBRARY BUILDING



Hollis Social Library Building (left) and the Hollis Congregational Church, from the south side of the Hollis Common, circa 1913.

This past August 24, 2010 marked the 100 year anniversary of the Hollis Social Library Building. Although the “Hollis Library” is one of the oldest libraries in New Hampshire, the building itself did not exist until its construction until 1910, when the library outgrew its space in the Hollis Congregational Church.

First opened in 1799 as a membership association and then becoming the Hollis Library Association in 1851, the “Library” was sold to the Town in 1879 for one dollar, becoming one of the first public libraries in the State of NH. Gathering the remaining original library books from the Burge residence, where they had been stored for a period of time, the Association continued to add to that collection, which was located in the Congregational Church vestry. When the Town Hall was built in 1886, the church space used as the “Selectmen’s Room,” was also utilized until that too became over-crowded. At that time, the original charter granted to the library was over 100 years old, and the Association members decided that the time had come to construct a library building to house the growing collection of books, magazines, and periodicals.

On June 14, 1909, Franklin Worcester, a Library Association member, upon raising \$13,500 for the construction of the library building, generously donated the lot of land in the center of Town for the placement of the building. The architectural firm of Magee & Rowe of Boston, Massachusetts was hired to create the plan for the building; a Library Building Committee was

selected, and construction started. The Board of Library Trustees was created, and Mr. Worcester served as the first chairman of the Board of Library Trustees, which dedicated the building to the Town on August 24, 1910.

The building itself is an excellent example of the "Classical Revival" style of architecture, with an Ionic portico and the copper dome. In 1993, an addition added 4000 square feet to the building, to accommodate the growing collections, and shortly thereafter, additional services and materials begun to be offered, such as free Internet services, and programs for children and adults.

The Hollis Social Library is considered by many to be one of the best investments made by the Town. For the past hundred years, parents have brought their children to the building, to nurture an interest in learning and reading. Under the guidance of the many librarians that have worked under its roof, the Townspeople have been able to research, learn, and satisfy their intellectual curiosity on many topics and subjects. The generosity of the first Board of Trustees, who made the Library Building a reality, must be looked upon with the highest respect and appreciation for their gifts, which continue to benefit the Town of Hollis.