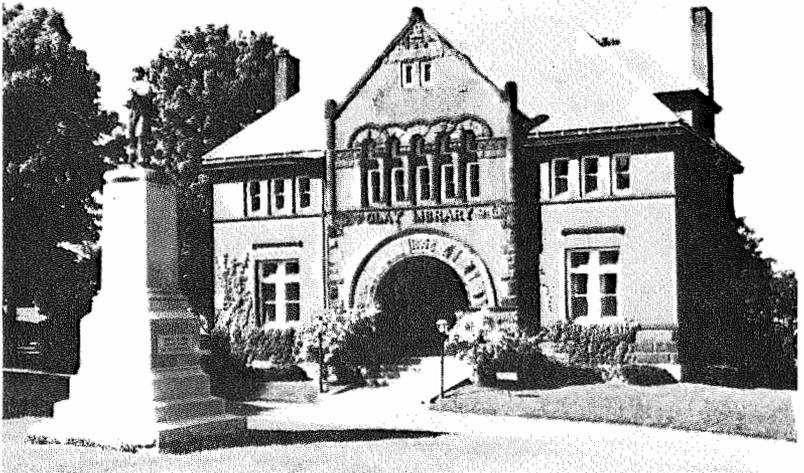


## CHAPTER XV

### THE JAFFREY PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Jaffrey Public Library has had many friends during its history whose claim to fame is written in the many trust funds left to the Library. It is better endowed than most libraries, with Jule Clinton Durant as its greatest benefactor. The present building was erected upon the bequest of Susan Bethiah Clay on land purchased from Dr. O. H. Bradley. It was dedicated in 1896, the occasion being a great moment in the life of the community. (See Volume I, pp. 471-472.)



THE CLAY LIBRARY

For many years the library occupied the first floor rooms only, with overflow books stored in bookcases in the trustees' room on the second floor. It now occupies the entire building. The town office, which for many years occupied a room on the second floor, was moved several years ago to a new municipal building erected for the purpose, a street and half a block away. Of simple but impressive architecture, the building stands at the rear of the spacious and well kept Library Lawn in the heart of the village and commands the attention of all who pass by.

An addition to the rear of the building was erected in 1960

by the late Delcie D. Bean in memory of his wife, Ellen Holden Bean. Well lighted and furnished, this memorial room is a sanctuary for undisturbed study and reading, and perpetuates Ellen Holden Bean's great love for the Library.

Endowment-wise, the Jaffrey Public Library is one of the most favored libraries. Its largest income is from the Jules Durant Fund, one third of the income which is designated for the support of the Library and two thirds for the support of the high school. In 1969 the library's share of this fund was \$8,334.68. Other older trust funds include the Susan B. Clay fund for the care of library grounds and books, part of the Joel Parker fund which in 1969 amounted to an income of \$455.81, and the Julia A. Bradley fund with an income the same year of \$117.17. Both of these incomes were designated for books.

During the past several years new trust funds have been created as follows:

Harrison T. Blaine	\$1,000.00
Eugene F. Boynton	18,400.00
Chrienheld Robinson	2,000.00
Frank E. Shedd	900.00
Clara L. Gilbert	1,500.00
Ellen H. Bean	393.00
Marion B. Whitney	5,000.00

The Jaffrey Library has also been the recipient of a number of gifts, the most recent of them a gift of \$500.00 from the Gladys Richardson estate in appreciation of services rendered by the library and librarian.

According to the will of Ralph E. Boynton, who died February 6, 1969, most of the income of his estate was left to Alice (Clarke) Dowd during her lifetime, after which the sum of \$30,000.00 is to be used for the construction of a Boynton wing to the present library building. He was for many years until his death a member of the Board of Library Trustees and was vitally concerned with its continued growth and increased facilities.

For most of its existence in the Clay Library Building, the librarians have been Jaffrey persons of unquestioned interest in serving the people of the town. Lucia B. Cutter became librarian in 1898 and continued until through 1918, and later served as a substitute librarian many times. Winifred M. Coolidge succeeded Lucia Cutter in 1919 and carried on until 1924. In 1925 Edna H. Wilkins was serving and during her librarianship, which lasted until 1932,

the interior of the library underwent changes, with the present desk arrangement substituted for the original wall-to-wall counter. In 1932 the late Lana M. Rich of the Board of Library Trustees entertained the idea of trained out-of-town librarians and for twelve years this experiment was tried out. The result was a constant turnover of librarians, as the following list indicates:

1932-1934 Constance Stone of Essex Junction, Vermont

1934-1937 Elizabeth Humphrey of Saratoga Spring, New York

1938-1941 Dorothy Brown of Gloucester, Massachusetts

1942-1944 Marjorie D. Baird of Ludlow, Massachusetts

In 1944 the Board of Library Trustees decided to appoint a Jaffrey resident, Evelyn H. Ruffle, as librarian and she has continued very acceptably to the present time. Her untiring interest and effort in creating a pleasant atmosphere and her choice of books and magazines for circulation and reference are matters of general approval and make the Jaffrey Public Library what it is today — one of the best small town libraries anywhere. A former school teacher, she was eminently qualified for the position, the longest in the history of the Library.

Circulation-wise, the Jaffrey Public Library has enjoyed a steady growth. Previous to the erection of the present building, the library was maintained on the second floor of the present Cournoyer Block on Main Street and annual appropriations were made for its support for some ten years before the present building became available. By 1893 it contained some 2,200 volumes. Sophia Slason served as librarian. By 1897, after the erection of the present Library Building, the number of volumes had increased to 2,300. In 1898 there were 2,584 volumes, as given in Lucia B. Cutter's first annual report as librarian. By 1932 the number had increased to 8,170, as indicated by Edna H. Wilkins, librarian, in her final report. The total circulation had climbed to 22,974, with an increase for the year of 3,824 volumes.

In her first report as librarian, Evelyn H. Ruffle reported the total number of volumes, as of February 1, 1944, as 12,382. The library was also subscribing to thirty-three periodicals. The combined circulation for 1944 was 13,716. The best barometer of the function of the Jaffrey Public Library in the community is the report of the librarian, Mrs. Ruffle, for the year 1969, as follows:

Volumes in the library, Jan. 1, 1969	18,591
Volumes discarded	219
Volumes acquired during the year	518

Adult fiction	191
Adult non-fiction	141
Juvenile fiction	127
Juvenile non-fiction	59
Volumes now in the library	18,891
Number of periodicals for which the library subscribes	70
Number of gift periodicals	10
Number of periodicals circulated	3,679
Number of books circulated	38,570
Adult fiction	14,548
Adult non-fiction	8,472
Juvenile fiction	10,500
Juvenile non-fiction	5,050
Total circulation	42,249

Throughout its history, the trustees of the Jaffrey Public Library have been persons with genuine interest in its maintenance, and redecoration projects have been carried on at intervals. Even as long ago as 1929, the interior underwent considerable changes. From July 22 to September 7 the library was closed for the installation of new book stacks. The librarian at that time, Edna H. Wilkins, who lived next door to the library, spent countless hours in keeping the library immaculate and in mending books. In her 1929 report she stated that she repaired 457 volumes that year. Today the immaculate appearance of the library rooms is enhanced by wall-to-wall carpeting.

The Jaffrey Public Library is in charge of five trustees, one originally from each of the five churches in the town. With only three churches left, the original stipulation is still carried on in practice with a former member of the First Universalist Church and of the First Baptist Church, serving on the board. The latter two churches are now merged in the United Church of Jaffrey. The present Board of Library Trustees includes Georgia L. Eaves, Helen B. Krause, Marion G. Symonds, Homer J. Belletete, and Charles H. Hamilton, M.D.