

# Library growing pains are nothing new

The problem of adequate space in our libraries reached the acute stage in 1894 and in 1974 and it has again reached the point where something must be done. The Adams and MacKay Libraries and the Children's House have served the townspeople well in the past but the tremendous growth in the last few years has brought the need for expanded facilities.

It was in 1894 that Amos Francis Adams of Boston and Newton made his munificent gift of the library building on Boston Road.

Mr. Adams was a direct descendant of Lt. Thomas Adams, one of the original settlers of Chelmsford. At the presentation of the building to the town in May, 1895 he stated: "I will remember well the days that I spent here while a boy upon my father's farm; the limited opportunities for reading that I had, and the meager facilities for instruction that the common schools afforded in those days... If in those days there had been a public library in this town, I believe many of us might have been better and stronger men and women today."

The beneficence of two others — fourth cousins of Mr. Adams — made the establishment of the Adams Library possible without the expenditure of Town funds. J. Adams Bartlett, who lived in the house at 4 Bartlett St. and whose farm included the land bounded by Bartlett Street, Adams

## The way it was

By George A.  
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Avenue and Boston Road, donated the land on which the building stands. His brother, C.E.A. Bartlett, who lived across the street at 15 Bartlett St., paid for removing a gravel bank and grading the land.

The formal dedication began with a reception and tour of the new facilities. The news media reported that: "Shortly before 12 o'clock the invited guests and others holding dinner tickets formed in line under the direction of the marshal of the day, Hon. E. H. Shaw, and marched to the tent where dinner was served by the D.L. Page Company of Lowell. Plates were laid for 500.

The original building did not include the stairway or the rooms on the first and second floors on the Bartlett Street side. This addition, known as the George Memorial, was constructed in 1929. It was made possible by a gift from Mrs. Ora George Flint in memory of her father and mother who had been residents of Chelmsford.

The ground floor was designed as a meeting hall and was used by local groups until

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The space was needed by the library. The second floor, now the fine arts room, was the original museum of the Chelmsford Historical Society.

In 1974 the town purchased the former Scoboria property and made the Children's House and the Carriage House from it. This house had a connection with the original Adams Library since Mrs. Scoboria was a daughter of J. Adams Bartlett mentioned above.

The residents of North Chelmsford had organized their own subscription library in 1872 and had moved into a building on Gay Street six years later. In 1894 the town began assisting in the support of this library which continued to operate until 1948 when the Anna C. MacKay Memorial Library opened on Newfield Street. The building had been bequeathed to the town by Stewart MacKay, a former Selectman, in memory of his sister Anna.

A precedent has been established in the gifts of the Adams and MacKay Libraries and the George Memorial.

Do we not have any concerned citizens to continue these philanthropies?

*George A. Parkhurst is a Chelmsford historian whose family has lived in town since 1654.*