

## MERRICK PUBLIC LIBRARY

# DEDICATION

-est OF goo-

## ⇒ BANISTER ==



-- Brookfield, Mass. &--

EXERCISES AT TOWN HALL

THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 31, 1884

→ AT 7:30 O'CLOCK >>>



## **%CONTENTS**₩

Note,	e 4
Programme,	5
Presentation of Land: Mrs. Felton's Letter,	6
Presentation of Building: Mr. Banister's Remarks,	7
Remarks of Acceptance by Mr. Butterworth,	8
Address by Rev. Joshua Cott,	12
Appendix:—Note A.—Early Records of Brookfield Library Association,	28
Mr. Banister's Letter to Mr. Johnson,	31
Articles in Town Warrant and Acts Thereon,	32
Note B.—Original Letter of the Marquis Bernard de Marigny	33
Translation,	34
Dedication Hymn,	35
Present Board of Trustees,	36

## \*NOTE \*

00,000

IT was intended the following addresses should be published soon after their delivery, but, the death of Mr. Butterworth, who had the matter in charge, and the delay consequent upon the settlement of his affairs, prevented the MSS. from coming into the hands of the present committee until recently. But yet, it is believed that the historical sketches and sentiment merit a permanent form, even though more than a year has elapsed since the addresses were delivered. It has been thought desirable to place, in an Appendix, the letters of the donors, and other matters of interest.

Brookfield, July 1, 1885.

D. W. HODGKINS,

E. M. WHEELER,

L. H. R. GASS,

COMMITTEE.

### ≫ PROGRAMME №

00,000

BY BROOKFIELD BRASS BAND.

REV. J. S. BARROWS.

~ PRESENTATION OF LAND

~ PRESENTATION OF BUILDING

REMARKS OF ACCEPTANCE: DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING BY H. L. BUTTER WORTH,

President of Trustees, Merrick Public Library.

BY CHOIR.

DEDICATORY PRAYER \*\*\*\*

REV. H. H. WOUDE.

REV. JOSHUA COIT OF BOSTON.

Written for the Occasion by Rev. H. H. Woude.

## ₩ PRESENTATION OF THE LAND

MRS. FELTON'S LETTER

TO THE TRUSTEES OF MERRICK PUBLIC LIBRARY:

GENTLEMEN AND FRIENDS:—Having been apprised that Mr. WILLIAM A. BANISTER, of New York, has made to our town the offer to erect, at a cost of ten thousand dollars, a suitable building for the accommodation of the Library and Reading Room, I am prompted to offer to donate to the town, as a suitable site for the building, my lot at the corner of Banister Common and Lincoln Street, sixty feet front by one-hundred and twenty-four feet depth. I believe the site to be in every way adapted to the building likely to be erected, and centrally located to the wants and conveniences of our people.

In offering this, and for the purpose named, permit me to say, that I should give it freely and cheerfully as a tribute to the memory of my late husband, Hon. OLIVER C. FELTON, whose deep interest in the intellectual improvement and mental elevation of, especially, the young minds of our town, ceased not until he was called to a better home. His almost life-long association with the educational work of schools, and literary studies, makes it especially pleasant to me to add my effort, by this gift, to do him the honor of aiding to firmly establish an institution where those, who seek, may cultivate and improve these precious gifts of God, combined in mind and soul.

My earnest wish is that this proposition may be acceptable to Mr. Banister, the Board of Trustees, and all of my towns-people. Upon notice of its acceptance I shall at once convey the land, by proper deed, to the town.

With assurance of my love and interest in Brookfield, I am

Yours Very Truly,

NANCY S. R. FELTON.

Brookfield, November, 1882.

## ⇒ PRESENTATION OF BUILDING €

MR. BANISTER'S REMARKS

00,000

M. PRESIDENT:—I am most happy to be with you this evening, but cannot make a speech to you, for, in the school house the other side of the River, where I graduated over sixty years ago, oratory and speech-making were not taught, so I will read, with your permission; that I had contemplated making a bequest to the town, in behalf of the Library, and especially for a library building; but, on the whole, concluded that it would be better to appropriate the amount while living; and I am very glad I did so, as it now gives me pleasure to see the building completed and occupied, and also to be with you at this time to present, in person, "Memorial Hall" to the Town Library, founded by the late Judge Merrick.

And now, my friends, all I can possibly say on this occasion, is, that Brookfield being the place, not only of my own nativity, but that of the whole Banister family, so far as I have any knowledge, and in putting up this building, I felt that it would not only assure the residents of Brookfield that I had not forgotten the home of my birth, but that it would, at the same time, supply a much needed want, and should it be the means of encouraging a spirit of reading and improvement, I shall feel amply rewarded for the outlay, and I hope the people of Brookfield will not fail to avail themselves of the free use of the Library, which has been furnished for their special benefit and pleasure.

I have now merely to add that the building seems to be conveniently arranged, and, so far as I am concerned, is entirely satisfactory, and I hope it may also be to the Trustees and to the citizens of the town.

## \*ACCEPTANCE

#### REMARKS BY MR. H. L. BUTTERWORTH 6

President of Board of Trustees.

FOR our town, fortunate to claim as her citizens, those who perform the beneficent deeds these presentations denote, I do most gratefully accept the
substantial tokens now donated. We promise to preserve, carefully as time and
natural decay will permit, these precious endowments that now pass into our
charge. Though years of use may gradually wear away the structures reared by
hands and skill of man, the memories of those, whose generosity has been inspired to provide this land and "Memorial Hall," will outlive the material work
and forever abide with these people.

When landmarks of the present and structures of to-day shall have been removed and destroyed, the records of Merrick Public Library and of our town will give grateful evidence of this bounty, and reveal to all who seek, the appreciation of the citizens of this hour, and, perhaps, serve to infuse our successors to emulate, by their deeds of liberality, the worthy example of those who have gone before them.

With the name of Merrick, those of Felton and Banister will remain inscribed in Brookfield's annals as too sacred and precious to be forgotten, and closely interwoven in the town's future history will be the benefactions that created and perpetuate the Public Library and its Repository.

While this is not the first instance we have been called to acknowledge our great indebtedness to citizens who provide for us, perhaps never before have we experienced in so substantial a form the pleasure of receiving from the *living* such tokens of love and interest. I may safely say that most people, carefully analysing the merits and aims of these gifts, will readily admit that it requires the highest order of courage to withdraw and devote from the frugal earnings and savings

of years, sufficient moneys to provide land and erect this beautiful hall. This lesson is one that serves as an interesting study and many by copying, might make happy and well provided, a community, whose supplied need and appreciation, would make more pleasant and enjoyable, the declining years of the benefactors. For it can be truly said that no persons have watched with more pride and comfort the progress of this work, and rejoiced with more heartfelt pleasure at its completion, than have the donors. That this dedication hour is reached while they are living and still have hopes of witnessing some of the fruits of their efforts, seems to repay them fully for all outlay.

That we appreciate all that has been done for us, I need not say, for upon every countenance I can see the expression of thanks and gratitude, and I cannot make so plain to the givers, by words, how we cherish the gift, as will you when you enter and enjoy the privileges now provided.

To-morrow, and after, as we pass into the elegant and convenient halls, we resolve, that while we draw from the stores of knowledge upon the well stocked shelves, we also will profit from the example of benevolence and public spirit, and practice for the intellectual benefit and moral improvement of those who will be our successors.

MERRICK PUBLIC LIBRARY, for which this Hall has been erected, contains at the present time, 7,500 volumes, divided in the following classes:

Biography,	700 volumes.	French Literature, 80 volumes.
History,	650 " -	Fiction, 1600 "
Travels,	400 "	Juvenile, 500 "
Theology,	400 "	Reference, 150 "
Science,	250 "	Periodicals, 600 "
Useful Arts,	200 "	Public Documents, 500 "
Fine Arts,	100 "	Medical, 50 "
Poetry,	300 "	Law, 50 "
Rebellion,	70 "	
General Literature,	700 "	Total, 7,500 "
Miscellaneous, .	200 "	

These statistics of how the reading matter in the Library is divided, will be interesting to all, to show in what manner the selections have been kept "balanced up," and are, no doubt, as fresh to our own towns-people as to our visitors.

In the early autumn of 1882, Mr. Banister first communicated to one of our citizens his desire to erect, for Library uses, a substantial building in memory of his ancestors, who are all buried in this village cemetery. This wish was at once made known to the Trustees of Merrick Public Library and resulted in an interview in November of same year at Barre, Mass., between Mr. Banister and gentlemen representing the Trustees, where were made the formal arrangements for erecting the hall we dedicate this evening. The following day Mrs. Felton expressed her desire to donate the land site for the building, and, upon approval of the spot, she promptly deeded to the town the lot where the building now stands, as a tribute to the memory of the late Hon. Oliver C. Felton. The only restriction placed by Mr. Banister upon the town in making the gift, was, that he must be relieved of all care and anxiety in the selection of plan and the detail of building.

Of the plans submitted, that presented by Watt & Cutter of Boston, came nearest to ideas of Trustees, and was adopted after various changes and modifications, and Messrs. Watt & Cutter were employed as the superintending architects. January 13, 1883, proposals for building were solicited, and January 31, one year ago to-day, from eleven proposals, that of Levi Moody of Springfield, Mass., was accepted and the contract awarded to him that day.

In early Spring of 1883 ground was broken and the progress of building has since been steady towards completion. The work of the contractor has been faithfully performed. He has employed as foreman and workmen, the highest grade of skilled mechanics, and the work speaks for itself. It will bear your closest scrutiny. The structure is of a Queen Anne style of architecture and its beauty, within and without, redounds with great credit to the architects. "Banister Memorial Hall" fronts on Banister Common and the main part of the building is forty-one by thirty (41 x 30) feet, and is occupied for Reading Room,

Directors' Room, with Vestibule, Waiting Room and Toilet. The rear part is thirty-two by twenty-six (32 x 26) feet, and contains the Book and Reference Room, that are now shelved to a capacity of 15,000 volumes, with the provision of adding a Gallery, when necessity demands, that will accommodate 10,000 volumes more. Under the entire building is a roomy cellar with walls of split granite, laid up in cement.

The exterior is of brick manufactured in town, laid upon faced granite foundation. The brick work trimmed with Longmeadow brownstone, and the exterior is appropriately embellished with Terra Cotta work on ridges, chimney and front. The interior is finished in birch, in the finest manner; the shelves, cases and desks of the same wood, stuffed and polished to what is known as a "car finish." The plastering is laid upon the brick, and the walls are neatly tinted and frescoed. With a view to protection, an effort has been made to have the building fireproof, and, as constructed, while an inside blaze might do some damage, it would be difficult for fire to materially injure the structure itself. The Reading Room is supplied with the necessary conveniences for its purposes. It will be lighted clearly both day and evening.

To the minds of your Trustees the whole is as nearly perfect and satisfactory as need be. If it proves as nearly so to those who will enjoy its advantages, the donors will reap all they seek, and your Trustees will feel that even their trifling labors have not been in vain.

. Further enlargement upon the beauty, or description of its arrangements, is unnecessary. It is complete. It is a noble gift to Brookfield. It is ours! Ours to enjoy and be content with. We should be most thankful. I venture to assure the givers, that we are.

### \*ADDRESS\*

BY REV. JOSHUA COIT, OF BOSTON 6

-00'00'00-

"IN May, 1865, MR. WM. D. Lewis, Rev. E. I. Galvin, MR. Geo. W. Johnson and Rev. Joshua Corr casually met in MR. Corr's study and conversed, among other things, of the advantages which a public library would afford to the town of Brookfield." These are the first words in the records of the Secretary of Merrick Public Library. And by favor of the Trustees I am here to-night to continue that conversation; to show, in some measure, what growth has come to seed thoughts dropped in fruitful soil that day, to recount some of the advantages of which we doubtless spoke, and to set before you what has been done by kind friends of the town in their gifts, and what may be wrought by wise and diligent use of these gifts. The grand growth and goodly fruitage already enjoyed, as results of that May day morning talk, are but the beginning of what is yet to be. It is the peculiar glory of any permanent beneficence, like the Merrick and Banister gifts to this town, that it will, when rightly cared for and properly used, be a continually growing thing, pushing its roots deeper and spreading its boughs wider while time shall last.

I do not suppose anything remarkably brilliant was said that day when four of us talked of what a good thing a public library would be. We said, I presume, the simple natural things that suggest themselves when such a topic is started. But in some one mind and will at least there came the thought and purpose that this possible good should be a real good. And while, so far as my memory serves me, no one of the four were slack in the matter or indifferent, yet the most eager and earnest was the first named, Mr. Wm. D. Lewis, or Willy Lewis, as he was

often called in love and esteem. He passed away from mortal sight in a year and a month from that day, yet so rapidly did the project of a public library gain favor that before the day of his death the Library Association was so prosperous and gave such promise of permanence, that JUDGE MERRICK had signified to MR. Lewis his intention of a bequest. The first word that the Library Overseers had from Judge Merrick came by Mr. Lewis, and it was accompanied by a gift of \$100. We were told further that this bird in hand promised more that were still in the bush, for the Judge promised also to give some 200 volumes from his own library. Indeed I think he went so far as to go over his books one day with Mr. Lewis, to select such as would be suitable to give us. But, divided between the wish to give only such volumes as would be valuable, and the unwillingness to part with books that had become old friends, he, after some perplexity, determined to postpone the giving and make instead a bequest. And then, as his interest in our Library increased, through conversation with Mr. Lewis and others, his purpose enlarged so that instead of a bequest of books alone there was the handsome sum of \$10,000 added for a perpetual fund.

But I should speak of the earlier growth of the Library. The talk that May day morning settled, first, that a trial should be made of the general interest in the project. So the town was canvassed, and soon fifty-nine shares at \$5 were taken, one person taking five, twenty two each, and fourteen one each. In all there were thirty-five shareholders.\* In addition to the \$295 raised in this way, \$13 was received from Mr. Joseph Clifford and his son, the result of a concert given by them in aid of the Library Fund.

The Brookfield Library began to be with \$308 in hand and an annual tax of \$2 for the privilege of its use, which tax was paid by shareholders as well as others. It received at the outset an inheritance of some two hundred volumes that had been stored in Mr. Abraham Skinner's office, and that formerly belonged to a Library Association which had disappeared, and of which no records are known

<sup>\*</sup> SEE APPENDIX : Note A.

to exist. There were also a few volumes which remained from a Farmer's Library, which had been formed a few years before, but was lost by a fire, except such volumes as were "out" at the time. In October, 1865, the Library received a gift of \$100 from George Howe, Esq., of Boston, and shortly after \$250 from his brother, Jabez C. Howe, Esq. The attachment of these brothers to their old home was marked by other and much larger gifts, especially to the Congregational Church.

MRS. MARY J. HOLMES, in whose name and fame Brookfield rejoices, proud in being the place of her birth, gave to the Library a set of her works, which were so universally liked as soon to need duplicating. I wonder whether, as succeeding years have brought new volumes from her popular pen, she has remembered that her original gift was marked "to be continued with our next." If it was not so marked it ought to have been. With these and other gifts the Library so prospered that when it was absorbed in the Merrick Public Library it had some 800 volumes on the shelves, and what is more surprising, \$102.47 in its treasury. So much had grown in two years from that talk.

Then, in the Spring of 1867, came the bequest from Hon. PLINY MERRICK, who had been for a long time one of the Justices of the Supreme Court in this State. The fifth section of his will read as follows:

"Having always felt a strong attachment to the town of Brookfield, in which I was born and where I spent the early years of my life, and where the remains of my parents are entombed; and wishing to do something to promote the well being and prosperity of the inhabitants of the town in all time to come; I do hereby, to that end and for that purpose, give and bequeath to the said town of Brookfield, the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars, to be preserved and maintained, perpetually, as a Fund, to be denominated the 'Library Fund,' the interest and income of which shall be appropriated to the purchase, binding and repair of books, to constitute a Library for the free use of the inhabitants of the town, and the visitors thereto, subject only to such rules and regulations as the town shall, from time to time, make and prescribe. And I in like manner, give and

bequeath to said town, all my books which I shall own at my decease, except Law Books, to constitute a part of said Library. These two legacies of money and books, are upon the condition that the town shall, within nine months, next after the Probate allowance of this will, vote to accept the same upon and subject to the conditions herein contained. If the town should not so vote, the said legacies are to be wholly void and of no force or effect."

The town at its annual meeting in April, 1867, did so vote and received the legacies—some four hundred and fifty bound volumes, and one hundred and fifty magazines and unbound serials, and ten thousand dollars. This fund of \$10,000 has been wisely invested and yields now an annual income of \$750.00.

At this same town-meeting the town was notified of a gift from WILLIAM B. DRAPER, Esq., of New York—an other old Brookfield boy—of an antique mahogany secretary, a desk handsomely mounted in brass and with curious escutcheons and key holes, valuable in itself, and especially interesting from the fact that it once belonged to Louis XVI of France.\*

The old Library had been kept in Mr. Skinner's building, in a room under his office. Now the town took for the use of the Merrick Public Library, the lower story of the High School building.

Our Library has steadily grown, filling more and more alcoves and becoming more and more valuable with the lapse of years. It was soon felt that a Reading Room, supplied with good newspapers and current magazines, was desirable, and this was provided for by subscription and has been continued in connection with the Library.

There was, however, another want that began to cause some anxiety to the Trustees, and the many others who have felt, from the first, deep interest in the highest prosperity of the Library. That want was of a safe building in which to keep the books. The High School building has been regarded all along as only a temporary convenience. It was the best place to be had and has been sufficient

<sup>\*</sup> SEE APPENDIX : Note B.

all these years. It has not been burned up as the Skinner building, where the old Library was kept, was almost,-though I have a dim reccollection of one or two narrow escapes. Nor has it been blown down as the Methodist church on one side of it was, absolutely, and the Congregational church on the other side was to a very considerable degree. It has stood and stands to-day. Yet the books were really unsafe so long as they were there, and while JUDGE MERRICK wisely thought that the essential thing was to have books before having a place in which to keep books not in hand, and therefore furnished the jewel itself without a casket; yet the jewel was growing so bright and precious that the want of a casket began, years ago, to be felt by many. I remember well how some of us, with a pardonable curiosity, used to speculate on the probabilities that one and another wealthy citizen would provide in his will, for a Library building. There were several men to whom we were ready to vote the privilege by a large majority. And I am able to state with much positiveness, in regard to one gentleman who left no wife or child, that his failure in this respect, was not caused by any lack of definite suggestion, seasonably, and perhaps, unseasonably made, that it would be a very wise and handsome thing for him to leave in his will, another ten thousand to the town for a Library building, and so link his name for all time with that of JUDGE MERRICK and the Library. But in spite of the kindness of his friends, he let this golden opportunity go by unimproved, and left it to be grasped by another, more fortunate, who has come forward in his lifetime and is with us to-day.

We all rejoice, not only at his gift, so munificent, but at his presence. It is good to breathe the same air with, to be in the same room with a man who quietly hands over ten thousand dollars to his native town, that it may have a building for its Library that shall be first, safe and suitable, and also an architectural ornament to the town. I say we are all glad that he is with us to-night, and yet, to be honest, I am somewhat hampered by his presence, for it makes it a bit awkward to say what ought to be said. Still, if a man will do such things, he must bear the penalty of hearing them spoken of. And still, I do not feel altogether

at ease, and so decide to rule him out and consider him absent for a few moments. In fact I do not, at this moment see him and think he must be gone. So before he returns let me say, that WILLIAM A. BANISTER, ESQ., of New York, another old Brookfield boy, wishing, like Judge Merrick, to do something to promote the well-being and prosperity of the inhabitants of the town for all time to come, gave,—not waiting to bequeath—gave ten thousand dollars to the town for a Library building. By thus being his own executor, as it were, Mr. Banister enhances the value of his gift. "He gives twice who quickly gives," you know, and thus not only by hastening, many years we trust, the consummation of his generous thought, but also by ensuring the right and proper use of his money. In view of the frequent and tedious litigation over charitable provisions in wills, it seems strange that wealthy people do not more often carry out, themselves, in their own life-time, purposes of good, rather than leave them on paper merely, to be carried out after they are gone, by others, or, as not seldom happens, to be quarrelled over and not carried out.

The Banister purpose has solidified into brick and mortar and stone; has shaped itself into permanent, visible embodiment; has settled down on yonder Common as a beautiful resident of our goodly town, greeting every passer-by, even though a stranger, with the assurance that here

\* \* "books, the arts, the academes
That show, contain and nourish all the world,
Are honored and loved."

The Banister purpose has been executed. How many vague thoughts and intents of similar acts fail, for men are not as Spirits:

"Spirits, when they please,
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their æry purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfill."

Men's purposes of good too often æry, too often fail of execution.

The BANISTER purpose was executed, and to-night we dedicate the BANISTER MEMORIAL HALL—a tribute to ancestry and a gift to present and future generations. This building, familiar to you all who live here and have watched its rise with so much interest, from the laying of its foundation to the setting of its topmost stone, I need not describe. We who unfortuately, no longer dwell in the dear old town, or who with greater misfortune, have never lived here, whatever else we fail to see on the morrow, will fail not to look at and admire again, the new gem in Brookfield's diadem. And many of us, as we go to that corner of the Common, will call to mind the benignant smile of the courteous, kindly man who used to live there, in whose memory the lot of land on which the Hall stands, was given to the town. OLIVER C. FELTON, Esq., a gentleman of the old school of manners, dignified and urbane, fond of children,-a mark of a good man-deeply interested in the welfare of our town, especially in educational affairs, to the advancement of which he brought ripe experience and patient labor. He has left a name worthy to be added to the other two, MERRICK and BANIS-TER.

But we talked that May day morn, of the advantages which a Public Library would afford to the town of Brookfield, and I am to continue now that part of our conversation, in a brief discussion of the advantages of a Free Public Library to a community like this. The practical Yankee in the exercise of that common sense with which he is so richly endowed, asks often the old question, Cui bono? "What is the good of it?" or, as he usually puts the question: What is it good for? When any new thing comes under his eye, whether it be a religion or a rotary churn, a painting or a plaything, his first thought is; Well, what will this thing do? What is the value of it? And, when he has fairly taken the thing in, comprehended it in its length and breadth, if perchance he is competent for this, his judgment is apt to be a correct one. When you find cultivated and generous New Englanders, giving money by the tens of thousands, not alone in single instances, here and there, but in many, up and down our favored Commonwealths, to establish in the towns of their nativity, Free Public Libraries, you may be sure

they are not acting foolishly. Though the whistle they buy costs a pretty penny, yet it is worth the money, as the boarder told his landlady. He was very fond of butter and indulged that fondness so recklessly that she determined to expostulate with him in behalf of her margin of profit. One day she began:

"Did you know that butter was very high now?"

He said, "No, is it?"

She: "Yes it is. I get the best and that butter on your plate cost me seventy cents a pound."

He—taking a larger dab than ever—tasted it carefully, closing his eyes for the sake of undisturbed judgment, then smacked his lips, and finally said with great deliberation: "Well madam, its worth it."

So we, who have the Library and read the books, when reminded of the large outlay that our benefactors have made, all say: Gentlemen, it is worth it. That is, we have the general impression that it is quite worth while for such institutions to be established and liberally endowed. And any other old Brookfield boy, for the love he bears for his native town, should propose to put another ten thousand into this Library, I anot think objection would be made. But let us notice some particulars which warrant this general impression.

First, a Free Public Library gives to the town that possesses it, character; a character that commends that town to every visitor. The more intelligent the visitor the more favorable is the impression. You can see how this is by thinking of the parallel case of a man's house. Suppose you go into the home of a man who is a stranger to you, and you know nothing of his habits or tastes or character, but by some chance you are to be his guest for a month. You go to his home and find that he is absent, but you are welcomed and made free of the house. You find books in all the rooms, with fresh magazines and good newspapers, and in one room a well selected library of a thousand volumes. And you make up your mind at once that he is a gentleman of some culture and refinement, and that you shall get on well in his company. This may be a mistake. He may be a selfish boor; a learned pig. But if this proves to be the case you will be greatly

surprised. Well why? Because your experience, universal experience, has taught you to associate with the taste for good books, and the willingness to spend money for them, qualities and habits that make a man desirable for fellowship.

It is so with a town. Go into a strange town and where you find among its buildings, a Public Library, you are at once favorably impressed as to the character of the place. It does not actually prove anything, but you expect to find, and will be disappointed if you do not find, cultivated, intelligent, agreeable people among its citizens. The indication is not only that some wise, liberal man has been willing to spend money freely for the good of his townsmen, but further, that the character and habits of these townsmen are such as to warrant that expenditure. No one in his senses would think of founding a Free Public Library in an illiterate town.

Judge Merrick and Mr. Banister have not only made liberal gifts, but at the same time, paid high compliment to the people of Brookfield. If in any sense, it was an experiment at the first, these seventeen years have shown the compliment well deserved and the gift wise. It should be said here, to the credit of the town, that at no town-meeting since the acceptance of the gift of Judge Merrick in 1867, has there been any hesitancy in making such appropriations for the Library as the Trustees have recommended. No spasm of economy has ever hampered the free working of this beneficent institution, and I trust it never will, but that as the years roll on and renewed prosperity continues to be enjoyed, this Library will be more and more used, loved and fostered by the citizens of old Brookfield.

A Free Public Library gives character to a town in other ways than by this outward impression made upon a stranger, though this is of no slight importance in its bearing on the welfare of a place. Not seldom it decides the question of location by a man desiring to settle with his family in the country, for a summer or longer; or it is this which determines a man to return to the home of his childhood after he has been wavering in his mind between that and some other place which attracts him.

Further, a Free Public Library gives character to a town by its direct effect upon the environment of its citizens, especially the boys and girls. We have had in late years, much use made of this word, "Environment," and of the idea covered by it. It means literally, "the surroundings," and yet it covers more than that.

Some people say that a man's character depends largely upon the circumstances in which he is placed, and that if you could trace out accurately, and measure all the earthly influences, mental, moral, social, family, religious, etc., etc., that have affected a man from his birth, you would then know his whole character so thoroughly as to be able to account for all his moods and variations, and predict his actions. Now all that—all that about a man, goes to affect him—is what this word "environment" means.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES expressed this theory of environment very tersely when he said, "Take half a dozen babies born of the bluest blood of Beacon street, and half a dozen others born in Timbuctoo, and exchange them, mix these babies up; put the Boston half dozen in Timbuctoo and the savage six in Beacon street homes, and the result would be, that in a dozen years you could not pick out any of the twelve from among their comrades."

It always surprised me the acute Doctor forgot, for the nonce, his pronounced veneration for the Brahmin caste, and his faith in heredity. Yet, all the same, he brought out very sharply what we all feel to be true: that it makes an immense difference to any boy or girl, what sort of an atmosphere he or she breathes in childhood.

Now I say that in the environment of Brookfield's sons and daughters there is, after the churches and schools, no more healthy and helpful part, than the influence of this Library. It has been a happy thing that for so many years the Library and the High School have been under one roof, and I am glad that they are now not far apart, though both have moved to better quarters. The best use of the Library by the scholars of the High School is an important matter, deserving careful consideration by the Librarian as well as the School Teacher. In this

as in many other respects, Miss Martha J. W. Carkin, who was Librarian from 1871 till her death in 1881, set a good pattern for her successors to follow. Patient, cheerful and sensible, wise, kind and true, she put her knowledge of the books, diligently acquired at the service of all who came to the Library, and by her suggestions, helped many who knew not how to help themselves. She won a large place in the hearts of all this people who mourned her sudden death as a personal loss, and will long cherish her memory.

There is a danger of a mental and moral stagnation to which hard working people on the one hand, and idle people on the other, are alike exposed. When a man pursues day after day, an unvarying round of manual labor, and his wife is "on her feet" all day in the busy pursuit of household cares, they are both tired at night, and a good honest "tired" it is. When a man or woman does nothing, as a regular habit, all day but eat and try to amuse themselves, it is my belief that he or she is still more tired with a very empty, good-for-nothing sort of "tired" at that. Now if nothing occurs to break the monofony of the laborer's life, or dispel the ennui of the idler's existence, the one grows stupid and dull, and the other becomes insipid or flat. But something worthy does occur. There are all sorts of entertainments, some worthy, others unworthy. There is, except in the sleepiest of hollows, some kind of life and excitements outside of the duties and cares and labors of life.

The man "goes down town" and the woman, at least, has for a refuge, sewing societies, and she "drops in to the neighbors. And there are various and sundry things going on for the young people. The best change and variety, however, for those who have the wit to know and use it, is the book from the Library. It does not tax the already overtaxed body as do many other things to which people resort for an evening's relaxation. It gives new ideas and thoughts. It wakens and quickens the mind. The man or woman who reads for an hour or two in the evening, has on the morrow, something interesting to think over and talk about. So this putting a few thousand books within reach of every man, woman and child in town, has an effect upon their characters by changing in a very decided

manner their environment. It has given opportunities for culture to the whole people, such as formerly only few, and in some sense, none enjoy.

And when you have put opportunity for culture within reach of a people, you have ensured some benefit to all and great benefit to some. For whatever can happen, some day will happen. A saying which in material things, once had a striking illustration in Lowell. The Locks and Dam Company of that city were building a dam across the Merrimac river, and there arose a difference of opinion between the directors and Mr. Francis, the civil engineer in charge. He wanted to build the dam of a certain hight and strength, that it might be a sure defence against a possible flood. They thought that his well-meant precautions were excessive, and that the dam would be too costly, built as he wished. They were confident that the flood, against which he would protect them, would never occur. They looked up the record of the past, and showed that the river had never risen to such a hight, and were ready to assume that, therefore, it never would. He made careful calculation of the rainfall of the watershed, and declared that for absolute safety the dam and its guards must be thus and so, for, he said, whatever can happen some day will happen.

They were manufacturers and merchants only. He was a civil engineer of skill and experience. They dared not insist upon their judgment as against his, and let him have his way, which they called his folly. Time went on, and for many a year the laugh was on their side, but at last the rains descended, as he had said they might, and therefore one day would, the flood come that he predicted. For two days and nights great anxiety was felt, that even his precautions would not be sufficient, but they were. The city was saved, and he the one wise man was counted its Saviour.

I am not prepared to say it has not already happened—but if it has not it will—that some boy or girl, through the opportunity of this Library, will have the training of your schools so supplimented as to become a blessing to the world and an honor to the town of Brookfield. But the value of the Library does not need for its demonstration that any great literary man or woman shall be shown to have

been its direct product. It appears in all your homes, by every thoughtful reading, in all these wintry nights. And this influence is so quiet and gradual in its working that it comes and blesses, like most truly great things, without observation. You know the greatest, widest, most beneficent works of nature, are done quietly and without attracting much notice. If there is a thunderstorm, every one sees and notices-many are afraid. But the woods and the fields, now bare and brown, will in a few months be clothed in green array, resplendent in beauty. We shall all see and rejoice in the result, but whose eye will be keen enough to see the process? What does the storm accomplish in comparison with the sun, riding higher and shining longer day by day? The sun setting in motion the sap in thousands of tree trunks, stirring the hidden life of the grasses and plants and shrubs over broad meadows and hill-tops along the whole country side, sending its light and heat through all nature, works very gradually and in many respects imperceptibly. You can very seldom catch him in the act. The influence of good books circulating through a community like this is quiet and gradual, but if you, therefore, conclude that it is of little importance, you make a great mistake. It stirs the hidden life in many a mind and sets in motion the thoughts and brains of many readers who are thereby made of more value to themselves and the world.

This suggests another advantage of the Library to the town, which is to be seen in a tendency to broaden the minds, soften the manners and raise the intellectual standard of the people. Lives of great men not only remind us that we may make our lives sublime, but also have a positive effect upon our thoughts and the way of our own lives. Stirring tales of adventure not only quickens our pulses as we read the pages, but also waken into more eager action our own spirits which may be somewhat sluggish. History, with its record of what has been achieved by mighty men of old, with its tracings of the wonderful ways of God with all nations and peoples, with its lessons for all the experiences of life, not only gratifies the mind as one leisurely peruses it, but also broadens the outlook so that we learn to know and care for the wide interests of the great world around us; and are conversant with and concerned about other things than the petty affairs of

daily life in the small circle that comes under our personal observation. Poetry, catching the ear and training the imagination of the young, and holding fast with winning words her votaries in all these years, raises men to sympathy with loftiest thoughts and grandest themes. And the novel, picture of life, that has long since won its way into the most fastidious moral circles and needs no defence, what a store of instruction as well as interest does it bring to the household. How many hours does it beguile which were otherwise weary; with what fascination it holds those upon whom it fastens? And always, provided your novel is a good one—pure, clean and wholesome—it leaves you better or wiser for having read it.

If this were the time and place I could easily preach a sermon on the evil influences of bad books—dime novels and vile newspapers—which are doing so much to undermine and corrupt the youth of our day. But it would avail little if I should. This is a free country, as we are sometimes reminded, and up to or down to a certain line, which is very low, people have a right to print what they please and sell what they can, whether you and I and all good people like it or not. So I spare you the sermon, only saying this, that our best defence against bad reading is good reading, and that we are to defend our children, not so much by positive prohibition of the bad, as by fostering in them a relish for the good. This is much more practical and can be more easily done than some parents suppose. Yet it will not do itself. There is need of some thoughtful planning and indeed patient endeavor to bring it about. In its accomplishment you have a great ally in the Public Library.

It is not yet twenty years since that talk about a possible Public Library in Brookfield, and how much has already been wrought. We can see the books arranged in stately lines in their alcoves by the hundreds and thousands. We can see the beautiful Banister Memorial Hall. All this is so much in hand, as it were. But of all that has already gone into head and heart, no record has been possible. We may see by the figures of the Librarian, that so many books have been taken out each year. But what deep-seated, permanent effects have been wrought in Brookfield brains in these years, no one knows. By how much the average brain

of the Brookfield babies has been enlarged; who shall say? The hours of useful, helpful study, that have been spent by many of you, have surely had some effect, and that in the directions I have mentioned. The hours, and days, and weeks; yes, and months and years, when you add all together, that have been passed in communion with the best thoughts of the world's great thinkers, have had no small effect.

The influence of a Free Public Library is an increasing one, and, it should be added, a discriminating one. It does not fall on all alike, but rather on those who are prepared to receive it. In this way it becomes cumulative, giving mainly and most to those that have; illustrating thus again that Scripture, "To him that hath shall be given," which, while it has a strange, almost unjust sound, is yet constantly illustrated in the affairs of men and nature. The Library doors, swung wide open for all, are yet entered only by those who have the desire to enjoy its benefits. Its treasures are real and positive. Wisely, diligently used, it will add at an ever increasing rate to the capital of him who uses it. What you put on a boy's back, he will wear out, if he don't outgrow it; what you put in his purse, he will spend. What you put in the bank will be an uncertain reliance. But what you put in his head, will be a parmanent advantage, which no ordinary reverse can effect.

It is not twenty years since that talk. A period of twenty years is no inconsiderable part of an ordinary lifetime, but in these years this Library has but begun to be. Taken out of the swaddling clothes of the Skinner building, and the childhood's garb of the High School House, it has but just put on its "freedom suit," the Banister Hall. Now, first, it stands erect, and yet it is but in the very bloom of early manhood. The years to come, while time shall last, are its heritage. As the decades roll by, and the centuries pass on, still the Library will endure, and the possible greatest benefit to some, will be repeated again and again, and the certain great benefit to all will continue through all the ages.

Twenty years. Looking back for ten or a dozen periods of twenty years, we find these brooks and fields just being discovered and dwelt upon by white men.

Looking back five twenties we find the town, having made an honorable record during the Revolutionary war, rising to prominence among the towns of the County and the Commonwealth, and sending her sons not only to the great and general Court at Boston, but to the Congress of the United States. And as you come down to more recent twenties, you still find among the leading men in professional and mercantile pursuits, many names of Brookfield origin.

It is comparatively easy to look back and not always profitable, though always pleasant, when a town has such a goodly array of distinguished and successful sons as Brookfield can count on her roll. Let us rather look forward, since that is the direction in which dedications point. Look forward by the twenties and how bright the possibilities are. As successive generations pass upon and over the stage of active life, the hospitable doors of the Library will beckon them to come in and partake of the wisdom and wit of the ages, gathered for them through the beneficence of its founder and builders, who have added to the other good influences in the town, this one so wide and lasting. We know not, and cannot know, what will be the actual record of this beautiful town in the centuries to come. But beyond all doubt it will be brighter and better than it otherwise would have been, because of these men, who, with their strong attachment to their native town, have wished to do something to promote the well being of its inhabitants. They have done well their part. It is for you and those who come after you, to use wisely these gifts, and make the most of yourselves through them.

Fortunate Brookfield! May your sons be as plants grown up in their youth; your daughters as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace; your garners be full; your oxen be strong to labor. May there be no breaking in nor goingo ut; and no complaining in your streets. May you be that happy people, whose God is the Lord.

## \*APPENDIX\*

00:00-

#### -add Note A dda-

#### Early Records of the Brookfield Library Association

00000

WE promise to give the sums affixed to our names, to the Brookfield Library Association, for the purpose of making a Fund with which to found a Library. Said Association to be formed as soon as sufficient encouragement, by the assurance of Annual Subscriptions, is obtained. The understanding being, that the property of the Association is to be held in shares of Five Dollars each, and at least, the sum of Three Hundred Dollars is to be pledged, before any subscription becomes binding.

#### NAMES OF SHAREHOLDERS

EMMONS TWICHELL,
WM. D. LEWIS,
HENRY M. TWICHELL,
G. L. TWICHELL,
E. B. GERALD,
OTIS HAYDEN,
W. F. HAYDEN,
D. HUNT,
W. W. GOODELL,
EDWARD I. GALVIN,
GEO. W. JOHNSON,
JOSHUA COIT,
A. H. MOULTON,
AARON KIMBALL,

F. Howe,
Henry Mellen,
A. W. Reed,
Adrian Hibard,
A. C. Blanchard,
H. T. Bates,
C. M. Richardson,
S. R. Haven,
N. H. Morrill,
M. A. Stowell,
J. S. Montague,
W. A. Banister,
Samuel Moulton,
H. L. Butterworth,

TRISTAM BURGESS,
JOSEPH CLIFFORD,
J. B. GASS,
E. E. CHAPIN,
J. WARREN CHARLES,

G. W. Oakes, J. T. Rood, J. H. Rogers, Levi Sherman.

BROOKFIELD, July 24, 1865.

A<sup>T</sup> the last meeting of those interested in the formation of a Library Association in Brookfield, the Committee reported that \$310.00 had been subscribed, being \$10.00 more than the sum first specified as the Fund necessary to establish such an Association. It was voted that \$5.00 should be the price of a share, and the payment of \$10.00 should entitle the subscriber to hold two shares. It was also voted to solicit Annual Subscriptions of \$2.00 each, the Annual Subscribers not to have a vote in the business meetings of the Association.

#### NAMES OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIBERS

D. Hunt,
A. D. Parks,
John C. Gibbs,
C. H. Fairbanks,
G. E. Shumway,
Chas. H. Dixon, Jr.,
D. W. Goodell,
I. C. Turner,
J. T. Carpenter,
C. D. Smith,
A. N. Lamb,
F. Sibley.

J. Bartlett,
E. Hogan,
P. F. Johnson,
F. N. Marcy,
R. Litchfield,
A. L. Moulton,
F. E. Cadwell,
W. S. French,
J. M. Putnam,
Chas. B. Heath,
Joseph Gates,
A. A. Brigham,

WM. E. COOK,
C. E. ROGERS,
A. W. KELLEY,
THOMAS BELTIS,
J. M. BADGER,
J. L. RICE,
OSBORN GALLOP,
G. E. CUTLER,

EDWARD I. GALVIN,
W. W. CLARK,
S. BUTTERWORTH,
H. L. BUTTERWORTH,
J. WARREN CHARLES,
J. B. GASS,
W. A. DELAND,
C. A. SARGENT.

#### \_\_\_\_ Mr. Lanister's Letter to Mr. Johnson I.

BARRE, October 20, 1882.

GEO. W. JOHNSON, ESQUIRE:

DEAR SIR:—If the Trustees of MERRICK PUBLIC LIBRARY can erect a suitable building, and one that will give general satisfaction; wherever the Trustees may think best, at an expense not to exceed Ten Thousand Dollars, I will pay for it and present it to the Library, as an expression of my regard for the town of my birth, and, probable final resting place.

I should expect the Trustees to contract for the building, and to superintend the work, and should want the building to be put up the coming Spring and Summer, as it would give me pleasure to *look upon it completed* before my departure for that unknown land, which at my time of life, cannot be far off.

Very Truly Yours,

W. A. BANISTER.

In the above I have expressed a wish that the building should be put up, or contracted for at least, while I am living, for the reason that I may not instruct my executors to furnish the amount above stated.

W. A. B.

# Cown Action Begarding the Gifts Size

DOINGS under Articles XV and XVI of Warrant for Town Meeting held in Brookfield, Mass., April 2, 1883.

ARTICLE XV.—To see if the Town will vote to accept the gift of land, at the corner of Elm and Lincoln Streets in Center Village, from Mrs. N. S. R. Felton as a site for the new Library Building, and act thereon.

VOTED:—That the Town gratefully accept the donation of Site for Library Building, corner Lincoln and Elm Streets, and appoint the Library Trustees a Committee to convey to Mrs. N. S. R. Felton, the high appreciation with which the Town received the gift, and assure her that it will serve forever, a fitting monument upon the Town Records, and in the hearts of its inhabitants, to commemorate the life and many virtues of the donor's late honored husband, Hon. Oliver C. Felton.

A True Copy, Attest,

HIRAM P. GERALD, TOWN CLERK.

ARTICLE XVI.—To see if the Town will vote to accept the gift of a new Library Building from WILTIAM A. BANISTER, Esq., of New York, and act thereon.

VOTED:—That the Town gratefully accept and appreciate the proposed gift of a new Library Building from Wm. A. Banister, Esq., of New York, and direct a Commttee, to consist of Hon. George W. Johnson and the Library Trustees, to convey to the donor the thanks of the Town for his munificent generosity.

A True Copy, Attest,

HIRAM P. GERALD, TOWN CLERK.

### -0.250 Note B Febru

# Original Letter of Le Marquis Bernard De Marigny to Wm. B. Draper Concerning Desk,

N Velle Orléans, 16 Juni, 1863.

MON CHER M'DRAPER:

Je vous écris, pour vous témoigner toute ma reconnaissance pour l'amitié.

\* \* \* Je desire Mon cher, que vous ayez de moi un Souvenir, qui me rappellera quelques fois a votre immagination; Car New York on vous alles, était le lieu de votre residantes peutêtre que je ni vous reverai plus.

Veuilles mon cher et respectable ami, accepter un Bureau qui fesait parti de mobilie de Versaille, lorsque le Roi Louis XVI, l'ami des États Unis, occupait le Palais jusqu'au 12 Aout, 1792. Sa memoire sera toujours chere aux Americains, aussi de vous et votre famille.

En regardans le Gage de mon amitie, Penseres a le bon Roi et quelques fois a moi, le sera un dellassment d'immagination qui j'espoir sera agréable à vous et à votre famille.

Je suis Mon cher Monsieur et ami,

Votre affectioné et très Devoué,

LE MARQUIS, BERNARD DE MARIGNY.

A Monsieur Draper.

#### Translation of the Foregoing Letter.

00'00'00

NEW ORLEANS, June 16, 1863.

My DEAR MR. DRAPER :

I wish, my dear sir, that you may possess a "Souvenir" which will now and then remind you of me. As New York, where you are going, is the place of your residence, perhaps I may never see you again.

Will you, my dear and esteemed friend, accept a "writing desk," which made a part of the furniture of the Palace at Versailles, when King Louis XVI., the friend of the United States, occupied the palace, until the 12th August, 1792. His memory will be always dear to Americans, as also to yourself and family.

In looking upon this token of my regard, endeavor to think of this good King and sometimes of me. This may be a recreation of thought which I trust will always be agreeable to yourself and family.

I am, dear sir and friend,

Yours very affectionately and devotedly,

[Sgd.] THE MARQUIS BERNARD DE MARIGNY.

MR. DRAPER.

### \_\_\_\_ Dedication Hymn Iss.

#### WRITTEN FOR THE OCCASION BY REV. H. H. WOUDE.

Make the house\* thine own abode:
LORD, CREATOR, SAVIOR, KING.
Let each mind in sweet accord
'Wake to wisdom's witnessing.

Be this gift her gracious place
Where each day the mind is led
As t'a shrine whence mightiest thoughts
Flow; as from a fountain head.

Here, her gathered treasure, stored Here that wealth, dispensed be Shall uplift, refine, console Now and hence eternally.

Give the people willing minds,

Let no heart or tongue be mute;

Spirits of self sacrifice

'Wake, to prove his word, this truth.

All is his, the giver's, gifts
All, but symbols of his might;
Consecrate be everything
To his love and law and light.

<sup>\* 127</sup>th Ps. 1st V.

To the word his prophets spake,

To the songs his poet sings;

Hist'rys page and learning, wrought

Out the darkest realm of things.

Wisdom's search for life, for light, Scaling every height of thought; Rich experience, hero-hearts In all age have nobly bought.

All the earliest works of man,
All his latest here be found:
"All of Gop," let this prevail
That the whole be fitly crowned.

# -... Present Board of Library Trustees Ris-

H. D. FALES, PRESIDENT,
WASHINGTON TUFTS,
H. V. CROSBY, SECRETARY AND TREASURER,
DR. D. W. HODGKINS,
L. H. R. GASS,
E. M. WHEELER,