

A Proud Day for Northboro
The Gale Memorial Library Dedicated in Presence of Townspeople
(Worcester Telegram, June 18, 1895)

Natives Gather from Many Places to do Honor to Cyrus Gale and His Generosity

Seldom in the history of small towns is there an event of greater interest to all the people than the dedication of public libraries. Happily through the forethought of one of Northboro's citizens this event has been made possible in Northboro, and on Wednesday, June 12, the new and handsome granite structure was duly dedicated and presented to the town.

Northboro is in all respects a typical New England town. Grand old trees line the streets and spread their arching branches in all directions. The site selected for the new library is an especially attractive one and is made doubly attractive by its charming surroundings. Almost in the heart of the village and within a few rods of the home of the donor it stands, just far enough from the street to make it in perfect accord with one's ideas of the fitness of things and yet not too far away to make it inconvenient for those who will in the present and years hence make their daily pilgrimages to this delightful literary home.

Mr. Cyrus Gale who has given this library building to Northboro is one of the most unpretentious citizens of the town. He never indulges in any bluster about what he is going to do or about what he has done. He simply makes up his mind to do something and after consulting a few of his friends he proceeds to carry out his designs.

His father, the late Hon. Cyrus Gale, during the latter part of his life showed much interest in the public library and it was largely through his donations that the town now possesses its most valuable collection of from 8000 to 9000 volumes of the choicest literature. Mr. Gale, desiring to perpetuate the memory of his father in the minds and hearts of the people where he had spent his best days determined to erect a building suitable for a public library and present it to the town as a memorial building.

With this idea in view he informed some of his friends that he proposed to donate the town \$10,000 towards a building for the above purpose but previous to the call for a town meeting he determined to increase the amount to \$15,000 and finally he gave the committee to whom the building was entrusted carte blanche authority to proceed without regard to cost.

The committee selected by Mr. Gale consisted of Samuel Wood, G.F. Sargent, H. H. Cook, Miss Ellen Williams and Mrs. L.G. Wood. A.P. Cutting of Worcester was selected as architect and the contract was awarded to Cutting & Bardwell of Worcester.

Work on the building was begun in August, 1894. The foundation is Fitchburg block granite four feet in width laid in Portland cement. The material of which the building is built is pink granite from Milford quarries laid in 'coarse ashlar.

The view given above represents its exterior appearance better than any description we could give. It is 46x60 feet; 26 feet in height from top of foundation to cornice. On either side of the granite steps are two pilasters with moulded bases surmounted by curved capitals, supporting a gable upon the face of which is cut scroll work enclosing a Grecian lamp. Back of the pilasters are polished red Braintree granite columns, surmounted by handsomely wrought capitals.

The roof is covered with black slate from Monson, Me., the rear by a flat roof of asphalt roofing, the centre being broken by a copper skylight 20 x 20 feet.

The open porch at the entrance is faced with English enameled brick in old gold tints with a large flagstone for ceiling. The entrance to the vestibule is through double oaken doors, the floor of which is laid in Italian mosaic. From here you pass into the spacious rotunda, 16 feet in diameter and 16 feet in height, fronting which is the delivery counter, in circular form with bent glass windows, and like all the rest of the interior finish is of quartered oak, moulded panels and carved brackets, all made to conform to the style and finish of the wainscot. The rotunda is topped by a domed ceiling having oak ribs, supported at the base by an oak cornice extending around the rotunda.

At the left of the rotunda you enter the librarian's room through a massive doorway. This room is 12x14.3 and is connected with the reference room by a sliding door. On the right of the rotunda is the reading room 15.6x30.6, which is furnished with oak chairs, tables and a magazine rack.

The library is 36.6x26 with the "Davis alcove" (in honor of the late Isaac Davis L.L.D.) 7x14, is entered from both the reading and librarian's rooms. The skylights, which cover nearly all the roof in the rear where the stack room is located, the light from which is softened and subdued by a ground glass ceiling. As now stacked, this room will hold conveniently 25,000 volumes, and when double stacked will hold twice the quantity. All the shelves are adjustable.

From the stack room a staircase leads to a large basement, well lighted and ventilated, with concrete floor.

The building is plastered throughout with cement on expanded metal lath. In the angle of the walls and ceiling of each room is a beautifully wrought stucco cornice with dentil finish. The rooms are all finished in the best quartered oak and the floors are of the same material, with the exception of the stack room, which is of hard pine.

The ceilings are in water colors and the walls are painted in lead and oil, stippled, all being done with artistic taste as to harmony and appropriateness. In the frescoing of the ceiling the bands of gold were put on with genuine gold leaf.

Fireplaces laid in mottled Pompeian brick with glazed tiled hearths, each surmounted by a beautiful mantel with heavy plate glass bevelled mirrors.

In the rotundary has been placed a circular seat of oak with a raised carved back, panelled ends and turned spindles. A beautifully carved desk adorns the librarian's room, and marble wash bowls and toilets have been provided.

The arched transoms of stained glass over the large windows in front and doors at the sides were designed especially for the building and add much to the fine effect of the exterior. All the windows are of the finest plate glass, and with the large skylight makes the light in the rooms as perfect as it is possible to have them. The trimmings of doors, windows, etc., are of the finest solid brass, made to order. The building is wired throughout for electricity.

A niche has been left in the rotunda where is proposed to place the bust of ex Governor Davis, better known as "honest John" and a native of the town.

Every detail, even to the making of screens in quartered oak, providing a lift from the basement to the stack room where the books are to be unpacked, and other minor matters have been carefully looked after and provided for by the committee. After an inspection of the building not a single defect appears, not a want unsupplied.

The entire work on the building has been done under the supervision of the town and a member of the firm of Cutting, Bardwell & Co. of Worcester, the builders. The committee speak in the highest terms of their confidence in Mr. Cutting's ability to do a good job and an honest one, and this piece of work will surely stand as a model of excellent taste and thorough workmanship.

Mr. McAuliffe of Worcester, the designer and sculptor, is also entitled great credit for the faithfulness with which he performed his work.

A large part of the inside finish was done by the Trudeau Brothers of this town and a more satisfactory piece of work was never accomplished by carpenters. They proved themselves far beyond the ordinary workmen, as the work of the interior of the building is of the most difficult character and none but experience would attempt it.

The grading about the building was done by Mr. Kane of Fitchburg, a gentleman who has had large experience in this kind of work.

Too much cannot be said in praise of the labors of the committee to whom was entrusted this important work. No one can doubt that much time has been expended by them in carrying through to completion an undertaking involving so many details of large and small importance but none the less necessary. Often they have found themselves hesitating in making suggestions which they felt were needed, but which would, if made, considerably increase expense of the building, but in every case where such additional improvements were suggested, Mr. Gale has cheerfully assented and has never refused anything that has been asked for.

Notwithstanding the amount first suggested to be donated has more than tripled, the fact that the building is entirely satisfactory to the committee and to the town to whom he has presented it is sufficient assurance to Mr. Gale that his work has been well done.

A better day could not have been asked for than was Wednesday. Townspeople gathered from the farthest boundaries of the town, former residents came from far and near and gathered at the library building to renew old ties and express their delight at the beautiful memorial to the memory of Northboro's honored son.

In the vestibule of the library building hung two portraits which attracted the attention of all. One of these was that of Cyrus Gale the donor, hung there by his nieces without his knowledge and the other was that of Hon. Cyrus Gale taken at the age of 90.

Nothing but praise for the building and its donor was heard from the crowds which filled every room.

Soon after 1 o'clock the special guests of Mr. and Mrs. Gale were entertained at a banquet in the vestry of the Congregational church about 170 being present.

It was but little after the appointed time – 2:15 – when the dedicatory exercises in the town hall opened. The following program was observed, George A. Mirick calling to order:

Prayer	Rev. Joseph H. Allen
Overture	Bird's orchestra
Presentation of Building	Cyrus Gale
Acceptance	Principal Howard
Dedicatory Address	Rev. Benjamin H. Bailey
	Music
Addresses	Rev. Joseph H. Allen
	Samuel S. Green
	Edwin P. Seaver
	John C. Wyman
	Andrew McFarlain Davis
	Dr. Henry J. Barnes
“America”	All Singing

Mr. Allen, who took the place of Rev. E. L. Chute—unavoidably absent—made especial reference to “the wise and good men who have gone before us” in the opening prayer.

George A. Mirick, superintendent of schools, presided and introduced the speakers in the most felicitous manner possible with some appropos reference for each of them. After the overture by Bird's orchestra of Marlboro, Mr. Mirick read the following from Mr. Gale.

To the Citizens of Northboro:

I now transfer to you this library building and lands in accordance with the offer made and accepted some months ago. It has been erected by me as a memorial of my father, the late Cyrus Gale, who was well known to you as an upright, public spirited man who enjoyed the confidence of the community during his long and useful life. May this building prove to be a useful and convenient place for our public library, enjoyed by all, young and old, now and in future years. I take pleasure in delivering to you this deed and keys.

Hearty applause rang out at the conclusion of the reading, to be repeated again and again as the succeeding speakers referred to the characteristics of the donor of the building.

As the applause died away, N.G. Howard, principal of the high school, advanced and accepted the deed and keys on behalf of the town officials. He referred to the many gifts to the town of Mr. Gale and his generous father and said that those who come after them will reap the benefit of the schools they have benefitted and of this library especially.

Mr. Mirick then introduced the orator of the day, Rev. Benj. H. Bailey of Malden, but a son of Northboro.

Mr. Bailey's address will appear in full in tomorrow's issue.

The address was closely followed by the audience and the good points were appreciatively applauded.

After a selection by the orchestra Mr. Mirick introduced Rev. Joseph H. Allen of Harvard College. Some of the thoughts that came to Mr. Allen in his brief speech were that the incident spoken of by Mr. Bailey of the 60 girls in the "projections" as it was known, formed one of the prettiest scenes of country life that he ever knew of.

The value of a gift is in the use that we make of it. The library will be a beautiful gathering place for the people of the town, a place where they can keep in touch with the great events of the world. He told of an incident of his own boyhood when he with his father called on Captain Brigham who was at the taking of Louisburg in the French and Indian war and then briefly touched on the events that have occurred since that old man was a boy.

Samuel S. Green, librarian of the Worcester public library, was introduced as one who was interested in any place where a good book is to be found and not as a native of Northboro. Mr. Green extended the congratulations of the city of Worcester and as a member of the free public library commission the congratulations of the state and thanks to the donor.

He referred to the fact that there are now but 24 towns in the state, or less than 2 per cent, that have not access to a public library, only one of these being in Worcester county. He

spoke at some length on the mission of the library and made an earnest defence of the novel, particularly the historical novel.

Edwin P. Seaver, superintendent of the Boston public schools and a native of Northboro was the next speaker. He referred to the Boston public library as being no greater or better than the one dedicated here today. They are identical as expressing the same spirit – the spirit of the young women who sewed straw. Her children bless the old town for two things: for having been well taught in the schools and for some good reading.

The chief function of the school will soon be recognized as preparing children to read books. He referred to the “Worcester plan” as the solution of a pretty embarrassing question. He showed by illustrations the lessening value of the textbook as it is removed from the library.

John C. Wyman of Valley Falls was received with applause and he kept the audience in the best of humor by his fund of anecdote and reminiscence. He compared the library to the reservoirs along the Blackstone, where the manufacturers store up the water to be drawn on in time of need and also to a system of irrigation where the stored up waters are let loose over an arid country, making it fruitful and productive.

Mr. Mirick called attention to the bust of Governor Davis and the portrait of Isaac Davis that adorned the room and introduced Andrew MacFarlain Davis, son of the governor.

Mr. Davis paid a feeling tribute to the members of his family who lived in Northboro in years past and regretted that there are none now living in the town to respond to the name of Davis and the sentiment that called him to his feet. He then read extracts from the correspondence of his father, showing the esteem in which he was held by the prominent men of his time.

Dr. Henry J. Barnes was the last speaker. He voiced the gratitude of the townspeople for the princely gift and compared it to a bank, where all might draw according to their abilities.

The orchestra then rendered “America” and the entire audience rose and sang the first verse after which the people who had filled the hall to the number of over 800 departed to their homes.

He would have been a hypercritical man indeed who would not have conceded that the exercises from beginning to end had not been of the most satisfactory nature – to the generous donor with the hearty gratitude of his townspeople uppermost on everyone’s tongue, the people themselves happy in the possession of a memorial to a generous fellow citizen and his equally munificent son, and both giver and receivers with the joy of reunion with the best of the sons of the town in spirit and in flesh, for who shall say that those who have honored the good old town in the past and who have gone on to their reward were not cognizant of the added glory that has come to Northboro through the generosity and public spirit of Cyrus Gale?

Beside the speakers there were seated on the platform the selectmen, the library trustees, Rev. Fr. Achim of St. Rose church.

Mr. Gale and his wife sat in the front of the hall but not upon the platform.

The stage was handsomely decorated with flowers and green and the national colors suspended in the rear.

All of the committees can feel that their work has been done well. In addition to the building committee named above, the following reception committee was much in evidence during the day: George F. Sargent, H. H. Cook, E.W. Wood, H.A. Jewett M.D., Samuel Wood, Miss Ellen Williams, Mrs. Lucretia G. Wood.

There were represented among the invited guests people from the following places: Boston, West Newton, Marlboro, Concord, Acton, Malden, Worcester, Uxbridge, Wellesley, Southboro, Hudson, Nantasket, etc.

Among the invited guests of Mr. And Mrs. Gale were the following: Colonel Stoddard, Mrs. Frank Allen, Mr. and Mrs. Taft, Mrs. Harlon, H.S. Nourse, J.F. Wood, Mr. and Mrs. E.W. Wood, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. E. Davis, Mrs. Olive Valentine, Mr. and Mrs. E.S. Corey, Mr. and Mrs. N.C. Whittaker, Mr. and Mrs. Howard, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hosmer, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. McIntire, Mr. and Mrs. Seaver, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. D. Davis, F.K. Winsor, Mrs. Baker, Dr. J.M. Stanley, Samuel D. Green, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Wood, Mrs. I.G. Hale, Susie H. Hubbard, Miss Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Richardson, Dr. and Mrs. H.J. Barnes, Miss Emma Barnes, Rev. and Mrs. E.L. Chute, J.H. Allen, Mr. and Mrs. George H. Eager, Dr. Albert Wood and family, Hon. Joseph Ray, Miss Ray, Mr. and Mrs. B.W. Nourse, Mr. and Mrs. J.B. Bancroft, Miss Bancroft, Maria D. Ford, Mrs. Bradford, Mr. and Mrs. William Wheeler, Frank E. Seaver, Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Allen, Miss Anna Fairbanks, Miss Ellen Williams, Miss Emma Whitney, Dr. H.A. Jewett, Edward Harrington, George D. Davis, L.M. Davis, Mary C. Reed, Colonel and Mrs. J.C., Wyman, Mr. Bowen, Miss Bowen, Dr. and Mrs. J.H. Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Seaver, Mr. and Mrs. Stratton, Mr. and Mrs. E.W. Chapin, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Stone, Miss Stone, Mr. and Mrs. J.L. Stone, Mr. and Mrs. C.G. Stone, Mr. and Mrs. John Bailey, Mr. and Mrs. Henry H. Cook, Miss Anna M. Seaver, G. F. Sargent, Mr. And Mrs. Seth Emery, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Patrick, Miss Laura Eager, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin P. Seaver, George A Mirick and ladies, Mr. and Mrs. George B. Cutting, Mr. and Mrs. A.P. Cutting, Mr. Spaulding, Horace Warren, James T. Lincoln, Frank Corey, Mr. Ashley, George L. Chesboro.
