

EPSOM SOCIAL LIBRARY

adopted 1801

In 1999 a small pamphlet was delivered to the Epsom Public Library by a Pittsfield resident to be placed in the Epsom archives.

Prior to this, I do not believe anyone new of this Epsom Social Library. The information is great, and I think you will enjoy it!.

EPSOM

Social Library

RULES AND REGULATIONS

OF THE

Epsom Social Library

Adopted March 14, 1801.



Section 1. There shall be a meeting of the Proprietors of the said Social Library annually, on the Monday succeeding the annual town-meeting in March, at three of the clock in the afternoon, to be notified by an advertisement posted up on the day of holding said meeting, at the place where said meeting is holden, and at such other place or places as may be judged necessary.

[4] (page)

Sec. 2. There shall be chosen by ballot, annually, at the annual meeting of the Proprietors of said Social Library, or oftener if necessary, a President, two Directors, and a Librarian, who shall also be Treasurer and Clerk, and shall give bonds to the President and Directors to their satisfaction, for the faithful performance of his duty.

Sec. 3. The said Social Library shall always be kept within one mile of the meeting house in said Epsom.

Sec. 4. Each Proprietor shall exercise votes and enjoy privileges, in proportion to the number of shares which he holds.

Sec. 5. Every constitutional vote, passed by a majority of the members present at any regular meeting, shall be binding on all Proprietors; except the reversing, repealing, annulling, or altering any of the fundamental Rules or Constitution of said Society, which

[5]

shall not be done but by a major vote of all the Proprietors, or two thirds of those present.

Sec. 6. Each Proprietor shall pay to the Treasurer, annually, at the annual meeting, twenty-five cents on each share he holds, for the term of eight years, or till four dollars be paid on each share.

Sec. 7. In case any Proprietor shall die, without a particular transfer or assignment of his shares, it shall descend to his executor or administrator, and the President and Directors shall, on application therefore, deliver him a certificate of each share, in the form herein after prescribed, by his producing and filing with the Librarian the original certificate of the deceased.

Sec. 8. No person shall become hereafter a Proprietor by subscription, without the consent of the President and Directors, who shall prescribe the terms.

[6]

Sec. 9. Each Proprietor shall receive a certificate for each share, signed by the President and Directors, and countersigned by the Librarian, in the form following, to wit—*This may certify, that A.B. is entitled to one share in the Epsom Social Library, with all the privileges thereto belonging*; which certificate, when the share is transferred, shall be endorsed by the Proprietor and filed by the Librarian, and a new one issued as aforesaid to the purchaser.

Sec. 10. No book shall be taken out of the Library, till it has been covered with paper, parchment, or leather, and numbered on the back thereof; —and there shall be a certificate inserted in the following form, to wit—*This book belongs to the Epsom Social Library*; under which shall be inserted the number of the book, the price, and the time in which it shall be returned.

[7]

Sec. 11. The President and Directors shall meet annually, on the Thursday preceding the annual meeting of

the Society, and at any other time or times, when the President shall deem it necessary, who shall notify said meeting as he thinks proper.

Sec. 12. It shall be the duty of the President and Directors to call original meetings of the Proprietors, or on application, in writing, of one eighth part of the Society; to propose catalogues of books to the Proprietors at any legal meeting, and if approved of by a majority of the Proprietors present, to purchase the same for the use of said Society. The President and Directors shall determine all appeals from the sentence of the Librarian, respecting fines and forfeitures, and in general superintend and direct the prudentials of said Society.

[8]

Sec. 13. The Proprietors may, at any regular meeting, instruct the President and Directors respecting the appropriation of the funds.

Sec. 14. The Librarian shall keep an account of the books that shall be taken out of the Library, noting the time of taking and returning them, with their state when taken and returned, as also any fine or forfeiture that may be incurred; he shall collect all monies due to the Society, by assessment or otherwise, and pay them to the order of the President and Directors; and at each annual meeting, shall report the state of the treasury, by regular account of receipts and disbursements.

Sec. 15. The Library shall be open every Saturday, during two hours preceding sunset, when every Proprietor may take out one Folio, one Quarto, one Octavo, or two Duodecimos, upon each share; and in case he does not re-

[9]

turn each Folio and Quarto at the expiration of six weeks, and each Octavo or Duodecimo at the expiration of four weeks, he shall pay a fine of ten cents per volume, for every week he shall detain it after said term for returning the same is expired; and no book shall be taken out or returned at any other time, except at the pleasure of the Librarian.

Sec. 16. No person shall be at liberty to take out the same book more than twice successively, if any previous application shall have been made for the same; and if two or more persons shall apply for the same book, preference shall be given to the first applicant.

Sec. 17. If any Proprietor shall lend a book to any other person not residing in his family, he shall forfeit and pay a fine of fifty cents; for every blot of tallow or ink, ten cents; for every word he shall write, ten cents; for every leaf he shall tear, ten cents; and for folding

[10]

or turning down any leaf, four cents. And if any or all the before related fines shall amount to more than the prime cost of the book or books, then it shall be optional with the holder of the book or books, to retain the same and pay the cost thereof. Or replace the same with new ones. And if any person shall lose a book, he shall replace it, or pay the prime cost thereof; if he shall lose a book belonging to a set, he shall replace, or pay the value of the set and take the remainder.

Sec. 18. If any dispute shall arise between any Proprietor and the Librarian, he shall have an appeal to the President and Directors, who shall decide the same.

Sec. 19. In any Proprietor shall refuse to pay his assessment annually, for the increase of the Library, or any fines and forfeitures which he may have incurred in the opinion of the President and Di-

[11]

rectors, or neglect to replace or pay for any book or set lost or spoiled, he shall be punished with suspension of privilege, certified by the President and Directors to the Librarian, until the same be complied with; and if any Proprietor shall detain or withhold any book or books, with intent to cheat or defraud the Society of the same, the Librarian shall, with advice of the President and Directors, commence an action in his own name against such delinquent or offender, in any Court proper to try the same.

Sec. 20. All the transactions of the Society shall be entered at full length on the records of the Clerk, as also the name of each Proprietor, and a catalogue of the books belonging to said Library, which shall be open to the inspection of the Proprietors.

Sec. 21. It shall be the duty of the President and Directors, to see the fore-

[12]

going Rules and Regulations carried into execution, without any deviation from prejudice or partiality.

At the annual meeting of the Proprietors of the Epsom Social Library, holden March 21st, 1803, *Voted unanimously*, That the time for holding the books, as established by Sec. 15, of the foregoing Rules and Regulations, be repealed, and the time for holding the books be as follows: a Folio or Quarto twelve weeks, and Octavo or Duodecimo eight weeks.

CATALOGUE OF BOOKS

Belonging to the Epsom Social Library in 1803.

(# of) Vols.

Alexander's History of Woman, 2

Adams's View of Religions, 1

Addison's Evidences, - - 1

Afflicted Man's Companion, - 1

Busson's Natural History, - 1

Bellisarius, - - - 1

Brydone's Tour, - - - 1

Baxter's Call, - - - 1

Belknap's History of N. Hampshire, 3

_____ Biography, - - 2

Burgh's Dignity, - - - 1
Cook's Voyage, - - - 2
Cain and Abel, - - - 1
Cases of Conscience, - - 1
Davie's Sermons, - - - 2
Doddridge on Regeneration, - 1
_____ Rise and Progress, - 1
Dodd on Death, - - - 1
Damberger's Travels, - - 1
Elements on Morality, - - 1
Edwards on Redemption, - - 1
Erskine's Sermons, - - 1
_____ Sonnets, - - 1
Edwards on the Affections, - 1
Franklin's Life, - - - 1
Farmer's Letters, - - - 1
Foresters, - - - 1
Family Instructor, - - 1
Goldsmith's History of England, - 4
Hervey's Meditations, - - 1
_____ Dialogues, - - 1
Hutchinson's Massachusetts, - 2
Jefferson's Notes, - - - 1
Junius's Letters, - - - 1
Knox's Essays, - - - 2
Life of Christ, - - - 1
Letters from a Father to his son, - 1
Locke on the Understanding, - 3

Langdon on Revelation, - - 1

M'Ewen on the Types, - - 1

Milton's Works, - - - 1

Morse's Geography, - - 2

_____ Gazetteer, - - 1

Mason on Self-knowledge, - 1

Night Thoughts, - - - 1

Peter Pindar, - - - 1

_____ Evidences, - - - 1

Pope's Works, - - - 8

Prideaux's Connexion, - - 4

Rumford's Essays, - - 2

Rambler, - - - 2

Staunton's Embassy, - - 1

Spectator, - - - 8

Thomson's Seasons, - - 1

Watts's Lyric Poems, - - 1

_____ Essays, - - - 1

Williams's History of Vermont, - 1

Washington's Letters, - - 2

Wilberforce on Religion, - - 1

Willison on the Sacrament, - 1

NAMES OF THE PROPRIETORS.

Joseph BrownAaron Babb

Levi BrownDaniel Cilley

John Brown..... Edmund Chadwick

James Brown..... David Dickey

Jonathan Brown..... Jonathan Dolbur

Thomas Bickford..... John Dolbur
Thomas Babb..... Jeremiah Fogg
John Babb..... John Godfrey
Jeremiah Gordon..... Benjamin Moody
Ebenezer Haseltine..... James Menden
Levi Haynes..... Samuel Morrill
Elisha HaynesSamuel Osgood, jr.
Jeremiah HaynesDaniel Philbrick, jr.
Jonathan Locke..... Daniel Shaw
William Locke..... Andrew Sanborn
Francis Locke..... Josiah Sanborn
Samuel Locke..... Ira Sanborn
Samuel LearJoseph Sherburne
Joseph LawrenceRichard Tripp, jr.
Bickford LangJohn Tripp
James H. M'ClaryJohn Wallace
Michael M'Clary..... Samuel Wells

HISTORY OF THE Epsom Public Library

by Peg Daniels The year 1993 is the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of a public library in the Town of Epsom, New Hampshire. It all began at the Town Meeting of March 14, 1893, when some far-seeing citizens came to Town Meeting with an article for consideration.



The Moderator said, “Warrant Article Number Two-To see if the Town will raise and appropriate such sums of money as may be necessary to establish and maintain public libraries. “We can imagine the discussion that followed! “Well, those who want to waste time reading ought to pay for their own books, not expect the town to pay for them! Frills and fripperies, I’d say!” “It sure would be nice to have a library here, but just how can we finance this? “Fortunately, there was help to be had for towns that wanted libraries. Just two years earlier the State government had voted to donate one hundred dollars worth of books to any town establishing a library. Nevertheless, it was a big undertaking for a small community. In 1893 Epsom was a country town of about 800 population-farmers, shopkeepers, mill operators. The town boasted a thriving shoe factory, and a hotel on the Dover Road. The children attended one-room schools in the various sections of the town, and parents aspired to a good education for their children. So in the end the desire for better opportunities for the town and its citizens prevailed and the motion passed. The sum of \$25.00 was appropriated and State Aid in the form of a hundred dollars’ worth of books was accepted. It is interesting to note that the hundred dollars provided 105 books. The list of titles as recorded in the original accession book includes Celia Thaxter’s “Among the Isles of Shoals”; “The Sketch Book” by Washington Irving; “New Astronomy” by S.P. Langley; and for children, Charles Dickens’ “A Child’s History of England” and Anna Sewell’s “Black Beauty”. The Town Meeting also appointed three men to act as Library Trustees-J.H. Dolbeer, Warren Tripp and Roscoe Hill-who were authored to accept donations of books and money on behalf of the Town Library. On September 5, 1893, under the direction of those founding trustees, the Epsom Public Library opened officially at the store of George S. Warren, with Miss Elsie Warren as Librarian. Three hundred and four books were available and one hundred and sixty four library cards were soon issued. The Warren store stood upon the main road through Epsom, at the corner of what is now Route 4 and Ridgewood Circle. The Verdant Valley Landscaping service now occupies the property. However, the Warren store building was sold and moved in 1895, so the library was then moved to the home of Nathan Goss, with Mrs. Goss becoming the librarian. Her pay rate was \$25.00 per year. Epsom made good use of the collection, but longed for a BUILDING which would be the center of civic pride. We can imagine how those three Trustees wracked their brains for a solution. How could all that money be found? Fate stepped in with a fortuitous visit back to his native home in Epsom by John Dolbeer, as man who had achieved a fortune, Horatio-Alger style, through a combination of brains and luck. He was a first cousin of the father of Library Trustee J.H. Dolbeer, and he had spent his childhood in the New Rye section of Epsom in the house just beyond the church building. The Wead

family now owns the property. According to an account by Richard L. Williams in “The Loggers”, a Time-Life Book of the Old West Series, Dolbeer left the farming life as soon as he could because his inventive mind was intrigued by machinery. He worked in machine shops in Newmarket and Manchester, then in Chicopee, Mass. When the California gold fever broke out, Dolbeer, who was then 23 years old, left for the West, along with a friend, William Carson. Like most gold seekers, the two Easterners were due for disappointment. But both had worked in the woods and were able to enter the logging trade. Three years later they had made enough to buy interests in small sawmills and eventually became mill-owners themselves. The partnership worked out well-Carson was the logging boss and mill operator; Dolbeer’s contribution to the team was his continual development of problem-solving devices. Dolbeer’s crowning invention was the Dolbeer Steam Logging Machine, an upright wood-burning boiler with a stove-pipe on top which sat on heavy wooden skids and which powered a one-cylinder engine and a mechanism which hauled logs. It would be recorded as the greatest labor saver in the industry’s history. By the turn of the century, Dolbeer, now in his seventies, was a wealthy man with extensive investments in the California logging industry. According to Trustee J.H. Dolbeer, in the fall of 1900 there was a small building offered for sale that might be made serviceable for a library, so at the November election the Town appropriated \$300 with which to buy or build a library building. It so happened that the wealthy Mr. Dolbeer from San Francisco was attending that meeting. (Could it be possible that those three Trustees made it a point to get him there?)

At any rate, before he left for his home in California, John Dolbeer proposed to the Trustees that if the Town would build something that would be an honor and a credit to the Town, he would send them all the redwood lumber necessary for the finishing of it both inside and outside. What a stroke of good fortune! In no time at all land for the Library was deeded to the Town by Charles S. Hall, recorded as “a certain tract of land situated in said Epsom, bounded and described as follows, to wit: situated upon the Southerly side of the Turnpike opposite the Hotel at Gossville, to the top of the bank, being the lot upon which Epsom Public Library is to be built, the building being the center of the lot from East to West with nine feet each side of the building. “Fortunately, 25 years later Charles Hall’s descendants, Mr. And Mrs. George M. Hall, gave more of the land surrounding the building, allowing for the present parking area. Plans were submitted for Mr. Dolbeer’s approval and construction began in the Fall of 1901,



with some unavoidable delays along the way. At last, in August of 1902, nine years after the original establishment of a Library, the proud new building was ready to open. The sturdy one-story edifice, 24 x 30 feet, was built on granite slabs; records show the cost of labor and materials came to \$942.26. The exterior was probably left in the unfinished redwood siding at this time. The Library was to be opened officially during Epsom’s Old Home Week Old Home Day celebrations were major productions in those days! Here’s the account from the Concord Evening Monitor of Friday, August 22, 1902:Column heading-OLD HOME

DAYS. Headline, “ON BANKS OF SUNCOOK”-Epsom, August 21 “This historic town, which has been a leader among Old Home Week celebrations, Wednesday eclipsed its previous successful gatherings. Upon the arrival of the train from Manchester, the invited guests were seated in a carriage and the Epsom band escorted them to the grove on the banks of the Suncook River where a social hour was passed renewing old acquaintances.” “The program,

one of the best ever presented, was as follows: Band concert; prayer by Rev. J.M. Blue; address of welcome by Warren Tripp, president of the association; song by a quartet; address by Harry F. Lake of Pembroke; solo by Miss Eva Lawrence; paper on "Social Customs Fifty Years Ago" by Mrs. R.W. Heath; singing by the quartet; sketch of the old Epsom hills by H.A. Holmes; remarks by Gen. John B. Sanborn of St. Paul, John A. Lang of Roslindale, Mass., Prof. Frank E. Randell of Pittsfield, George H. Goodhue of Lynn, Mass., John Dowst of Manchester and Paran Philbrick of Concord. "The Library dedication was to be held the next day, probably on the Library lawn. But the weather refused to cooperate. The dedication exercises had to be held indoors at the Grand Army of the Republic Hall which was located on the second floor of the present Gossville General Store. Here's the account which appeared in the Manchester Union: "Epsom, August 23-In strong contrast with the beautiful Old Home day of Wednesday was the very disagreeable weather of Thursday afternoon for the dedication of the new and handsome library. Yet, notwithstanding the rain, quite a good number of citizens gathered in the G.A.R. hall to participate in the exercises." "Warren Tripp of the board of trustees presided. After the invocation by the Rev. J.M. Blue, J.H. Dolbeer of the building committee presented the deed of the land and the keys of the building to the selectmen." "In making the presentation he touchingly alluded to the recent death of John Dolbeer, to whom the town is indebted for the beautiful and convenient library building it now possesses." "The deed and keys were received in behalf of the town by Walter H. Tripp, chairman of the board of selectmen, in fitting words thanking the building committee for their faith and gratuitous service in superintending the construction of the building; and Mr. Tripp then presented the keys to Dr. Hill, chairman of the board of trustees." "Curtis B. Childs of Henniker was then introduced and he gave a fine address, speaking of men and women as being New Hampshire's chief article of export, and of the influence of the library in improving the quality of that article." "After the close of these exercises the people availed themselves of the privilege of visiting the library and expressed their delight at its beauty and convenience. "Just think how proud the people of Epsom of Epsom must have been! They had given contributions of labor, money and books to the project and now they had a real Library building. Constructed with Yankee thrift and practicability, the structure, which still serves the community a hundred years later, has its touches of elegance. The leaded windows and simple fanlight at the entry add beauty. The unique fireplace and mantel give stature to the main room. Apparently the mantel and facing were pre-cast, for in the February 1901 report of the Library Trustees it notes, "Paid William H. Thompson for labor building chimney, fireplace and piers, \$47.88; for mantel, \$24.00; for freight on same, \$1.65". The dream had become a reality. Mrs. Grace Snow was the first librarian, at an annual salary of \$25. Townspeople continued to donate books and money as years went by. The building as constructed in 1902 was originally in a dark wood finish- perhaps even the untreated redwood siding at first. Three years later, G.F. Batchelder was paid \$9.25 "for varnishing the outside of the library." The Trustees' Report of February 1907 noted that the coming of cold weather sooner than expected prevented a second coat of paint. But in 1908 the job was completed, at a cost of \$10.79. A photograph of that era shows the building with all surfaces in a dark color finish, including trim and porch pillars. No one knows when the Library's paint color was changed from dark to white. There is an undated picture showing it with the body of the building in dark paint but the window trim, corner posts and porch pillars painted white. This may have occurred in 1914 when the Town Report notes: "Painting library, \$42.38." Apparently the pro-white-paint faction proceeded by degrees. Eventually the advocates of white paint won out- John B. Yeaton doesn't recall the year the color was changed, but he DOES remember there were quite a few people who didn't think it was the

thing to do! This may have been in 1924 when the Town Report notes, “Building painted (\$100.00) and sign affixed. “Heating the library was a continual struggle. Built on granite slabs with no basement and used only once or twice a week, the building became an icebox in winter. The wood stove did its best, but the only adequately heated in the coldest months was the central room where the Librarian had he desk. The other rooms had to be closed off. And, too, expenses had to be kept in bound-note that wood, plus kerosene for the lamps, ran as high as two dollars for the year ending February, 1910!The three founding Trustees kept a firm hand on things. Each of those dedicated citizens served as Trustee for many years, until age or death caused their offices to be filled by other Epsom residents-men, of course. It wasn’t until 1923 that a woman, Helen M. Lombard, was elected Trustee. That must have caused quite a stir! It seems, however, that Mrs. Lombard was a woman who delighted in shaking up the town. The Lombards had moved here from Massachusetts, buying up the store at Short Falls corner. Mrs. Lombard was an accomplished classically trained musician who gave organ concerts all over the state, as well as playing for the church and directing the choir. She had an organ at the store which she played when business was slow. Behind her in a box might be an ailing chicken she was doctoring. She also handled the postmaster duties at the store, and managed to find time to be the Epsom correspondent for the newspaper. the Historical Society owns the scrapbooks she kept of all the Epsom news that was published, and these provide a wealth of information about life in the town in the 1920’s and 30’s.Helen Lombard encountered criticism for her cheerful lack of conformity to some norms of the day, particularly for her refusal to wear stockings when she went out in public. Phil Yeaton, who remembers her with affection and admiration, calls her “ a woman liberated before her time. “Branch libraries were established in various sections of town. One was set up in 1915 in the New Rye section in the home of Walter B. Wells, with Mrs. Sophronia Wells, Librarian. The Wells home is presently owned and being restored by Kyle Landt. The library continued to have a branch in this area for twenty-five years, until 1941. Mrs. Wells was the aunt of Nancy Claris, our present librarian.

Another branch library was in the Short Falls home of Nettie Batchelder, across from the general store. This home is now owned by the Weisenburger family. It must have been a busy corner, with a lot of activity



between the store and the branch library. Oh, yes, Nettie Batchelder was the great-aunt of our present librarian. The family tradition is carried on. Of course, all libraries have problems. The Trustees’ Report for 1915 stated sternly, “We wish to call the attention of parents to the damage being done books taken from the library, by careless handling by children, many volumes being badly soiled and torn, some of them nearly ruined.” “Children too

young to read books should not be allowed to handle them, and children old enough to read them will, if properly trained, neither soil not tear them. “In 1922 the library purchased a set of Thornton Burgess books, which are just as popular today as they were then. Of course, the town itself changed over the years. The sound of horse and wagon was supplanted by the chugging of passing autos. The highway was paved and the town needed a gas station and an auto repair shop. Local people sponsored fund-raising activities to provide more equipment and furnishings for the library-and the tradition continues to this day. Electric wiring was installed in the library in 1929. A couple of electric heaters made life a little easier for the hardy librarian who had been surviving the chilly drafts of winter swirling around her feet. But the

wood stove was still the main source of heat, right up until 1946. It is interesting to note that the population of Epsom stayed stable for many years, even decreasing from the population of 815 at the time the library was built in 1902, to a population of 756 fifty years later, in 1950. In 1935 the library began circulating 30 to 50 books to each school in the Gossville, Center and New Rye areas, changing the collection every three months. The program continued until 1953 when all the pupils were absorbed into the newly-built Epsom School on Black Hall Road. Phil Yeaton recalls a time during his childhood when his family's personal library was expanded in an unexpected way. It happened that his brother came down with scarlet fever, and in those days the entire family would be quarantined for several weeks during the run of such an infectious disease. The children had to do their lessons at home, and they read and reread the library books they had checked out before illness struck. Because of the germ-carrying nature of the books they'd handled, the library did not want them returned-much to the delight of the Yeaton children. Phil recalls seeing on a sunny day the family clotheslines draped with all the books, with the sunlight acting as a natural disinfectant for everything that couldn't be washed. Over the years the Epsom Woman's Club donated books, magazines, landscaping materials, and money to improve the library. The Woman's Club provided the Honor Roll containing the names of Epsom's war veterans and this was dedicated upon the library lawn May 30, 1945. The wooden Honor Roll remained there until it was replaced in 1964 by a stone monument given by the American Legion Post 112. The Library had its financial ups and downs through the years. Every year the library budget came before the Town Meeting; sometimes the Trustees had to fight tooth and nail to get the Town to vote enough money to keep the library running. People took the library for granted, forgetting the civic pride which had flourished when the building was first erected. Of course, it WAS expensive-note the Secretary's report of April 12, 1950, which states "The Treasurer reported extraordinary electric bills averaging \$4.00 per month"! Changes occurred. From the Secretary's minutes of December 1951: "Librarian reported number of books withdrawn by readers less this year than last year. The condition is in accord with recent years' records and is due in part to the State Bookmobile service to our schools; also, probably to the fact that radio and television are an effective substitute for general reading ." Mary (Steele) Frambach remembers the library during the 40's and 50's, when Marjorie Yeaton was librarian and when Mary worked at the library as a volunteer during her high school years. The library wasn't hushed and staid during the three hours of Saturdays' open hours, but lively with displays and programs for children and adults. At that time, the population was very adequately served by the library schedule. In the 1960's however, the population started to rise, and by 1970 there were nearly fifteen hundred residents. There were now over 5,000 books in the library, with not enough space to accommodate them. In 1970 the building was jacked up and a full basement was excavated, increasing the available space to 1560 square feet. Volunteers worked to clean out the excavated area and make it into a useable room. In 1971 a complete oil-burning furnace system was installed, allowing the entire building to be in use in all weather. Water and toilet facilities were installed in 1973. Work continued in the downstairs area through 1975 making it into a bright and useable space for reference books and for school-age children's books, and providing space, albeit limited, for study, activity and meetings. The expansion of the Library space occurred just in time. From 1970 to 1980 Epsom's population nearly doubled. Rising by 87%. Within the decade the library was again too small for the Town's needs. Then from 1980 to 1990 population increased another 31%. The Library's "open" hours expanded. The records over the years are full of notation of gifts received-books and equipment, and work done on the building by volunteers. In 1984 a group called The Friends of the Epsom Library was officially

organized and has continued ever since to support the Library program. Every year the Friends sponsor programs for adults and children: Richard Lederer appeared in 1984, Odds Bodkin in 1986, author Ernest Hebert in 1985, and two recent presentations to the community were the mystery theatre programs by a cast of local thespians. Children's programs sponsored by the Friends have included The Little Red Wagon, summer craft programs, story hours, family film programs, and numerous contests and parties. The Friends group runs money-raising projects in order to purchase library equipment not covered by the Town appropriation. A typewriter, revolving racks for paperback books, new bookshelves, and the copier were all given by this group. And above all, the Friends support the Librarian and Trustees with their time and work in numerous ways. On August 3, 1992, the Library celebrated the 90th Anniversary of the dedication of the building. Unlike the day 90 years earlier, sunny skies were in evidence, and townspeople gathered on the lawn to honor the memory of those whose planning and generosity allowed a small country town to achieve the structure on the Dover Road which continues to serve the community. A search of microfilm in the State Historical Library unearthed the newspaper accounts of the 1902 dedication ceremony, and the 1992 program was a re-creation of the original program. Bob Tripp's attic provided period clothing for the men who participated in the event. John Doehner played the part of Trustee J.H. Dolbeer, delivering the actual speech that Dolbeer made 90 years earlier. In a dramatic re-enactment of events that day. Doehner as Dolbeer then presented the deed and key to the library to Chairman of the Selectmen Walter Tripp, who was played by Bob Tripp, Walter's son. David Siress and Jay Hickey also took part, as did Pat Wilcox, Dorothy Duclos and Nancy Claris. The program was planned and researched by Library Trustee Peg Daniel, while a display of memorabilia was arranged by Mary Lou Norris. Guests enjoyed refreshments and a tour of the display. The Epsom Library has been blessed with devoted librarians, beginning with the hard-working women who set up the system in makeshift rooms, those who withstood the chilly drafts in the new building, and those of recent memory who gave so much of themselves to bring the advantages of reading a reference to all the people of Epsom. Many who read this in 1993 will remember Librarians Laura Bickford, Hester Bickford Pickard, Marjorie Yeaton and Phyllis LaClair. The present Librarian, Nancy Yeaton Claris, keeps the reading material current and exciting, welcomes newcomers to the community, plans programs, and manages to keep her calm nature while juggling countless details and requests amid a swirl of activity in crowded quarters. The Library in 1993 is open 27 hours a week. With such an active program, the Librarian would never be able to handle everything without the work of a group of dedicated volunteers. You'll find these helpful workers checking your books in and out, putting books back on the shelf, and filling in the card catalog. You'll find them typing, and sending out overdue notices, and entering information into the computer. You'll find them mending books, unpacking new books, and covering them with plastic, and generally attending to all the many jobs entailed in running a library. They're dependable and hardworking, and they do it because they love books! Well, a hundred years have passed since the library was started in Epsom. What's going on right now at the Library in 1993? Downstairs, there are books for school children and teenagers; many of the books are geared to helping students who need information for school projects. The Library has up-to-date encyclopedias; some of a specialized nature and the reference sections is frequently used by students and adults alike. The Librarian really enjoys a challenging request for information! The Epsom Historical Society and the Library have a wonderful collection of papers, books and pictures of early Epsom. The work of the late Mary Lou Norris, who collected, researched and annotated countless photographs made it possible to include those historical scenes in the

videotaped local histories which were a part of the June 1993 Infathon. The Library is proud to have on display a Rogers Group depicting Grant, Lincoln and Secretary of War Stanton. This was given by Ralph Towle in 1942 and the cast was restored to its original state as a gift by Dr. and Mrs. Sam Clark. The Shaker style table, which holds the Rogers group was a gift from the Epsom Historical Society and was made by local craftsman Neil English. Library patrons may borrow music-and-story cassettes for children, and there is an extensive selection of classics, folk music and show scores for all tastes. Each month the State Library loans us ten videos to circulate at no rental charge. During the tax preparation season the library has numerous forms which may be copied, along with booklets to aid in filling out those IRA forms. The Library has a few Large Print Books, and others can be ordered from the State Library. The Librarian can also assist in obtaining Talking Books. The Library's computer, which was obtained through the fund-raising efforts of an active library-user, Richard Leavitt, puts us in touch with the Inter-library Loan Program of the entire state, and almost any book required can be searched for and obtained from another library. More and more of our local records are being transferred onto the computer, and we are exploring new techniques of computerization. Borrowers can choose from forty magazines the Library subscribes to. Remember that volunteers will either bring books to shut-ins, or help with transportation to the library. A copier donated by the Friends group is available for public use. An informal book discussion group meets to share their impressions of books selected by the members, and there are story hours for pre-schoolers and a series of summer arts and crafts program for school children. For younger children, the library has books galore, puppets, puzzles and books on tape. The library has over twelve thousand books for the reading enjoyment of young and old. Newly published books arrive regularly, and the most current material is available, as well as old favorites and classics. What does the future hold for the Epsom Public Library as it enters its second century? It's apparent to anyone who comes to the Library that the need for more space both inside and out, is critical. Parking is a problem; there's no area in the building where one can sit and read or study, and every inch of space is FULL! In 1985 a committee studied the possibility of expanding on the present lot. However, proximity to a Town well forbids expansion to the east, parking takes up the west side of the lot, and there is a sheer drop-off onto wetlands behind the building. There's no place to build outward. Access to the present building by people with physical disabilities is impossible. If the present plans by the Department of Transportation go through, we will lose ten feet off the front of the Library lot in the proposed widening of Route 4. It's clear the Town has outgrown this building and needs an expanded facility. The Library now looks toward the hope of building a modern, efficient Library at the town Center location. The land was given to the Town in 1990 by Andrew Andreottola. A space needs committee is working to evolve plans for an attractive and efficient library building, while a fundraising committee is hard at work presenting a variety of money-raising activities to build up the expansion fund. One hundred years ago, Epsom's citizens felt the need for a library so deeply that they were willing to increase their town's budget by \$500 to erect a building. That was a lot of money in those days! That was a 15% increase over their regular appropriation for town expenses that year. (If we added 15% to our 1993 town budget of a million, one hundred thousand dollars, we would be setting aside over \$165,000 toward a new library.) So far, we haven't found a wealthy John Dolbeer to help us out-but we keep hoping! Meanwhile, despite cramped quarters, the Epsom Public Library continues to dispense cheerful service, introduce children to the joys of reading, provide reference material for students, serve as a social center, and provide hours of pleasure through books, cassettes and videos. And the wonderful thing is that it's available to everyone, at no charge!