

The Millicent Library
Annual Report, 1893

The Librarian presented the foll. report: -
Librarian's Report
Feb. 1, 1893 – Jan. 1, 1894.
[Don C. Stevens]

To the Trustees of the Millicent Library
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with pleasure that I lay before you my first annual report. Let me say in the first place before proceeding [sic] directly to the work of the library that in Nov. 1891 Mr. William E. Benjamin of New York and Mr. William L. R. Gifford of New Bedford began the selection of books. For two years additions were made as rapidly as possible, under the painstaking supervision of Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Gifford, so that when the library was thrown open to the public on Feb. 1st, 1893, there were on the shelves about 7000 carefully selected volumes.

Circulation. – the circulation of books for the past 11 months has been most satisfactory, far beyond expectations. A comparison of our work with that of other libraries, even in towns of five times our population, shows that we have issued as many books as they. It is gratifying to be able to report that the people from the first manifested a due appreciation.

With a population of about 3000 there are at least 1500 card holders or one card to every two individuals in town. While this is an exceptional record, we feel that there are many yet who have not become sufficiently interested to allow their names to be added to our list of patrons. Many of these we hope will come in during this year so that at the close of 1894 there will not be a family in Fairhaven but what is availing itself of the privileges of the institution. The library is for all, not only for the student and scholar, but for the general reader, for those who do not patronize it for the purpose of investigation and study, but for pleasure and recreation.

From the table it will be seen that about 81 per cent of the circulation has been fiction. The high percentage in this department is not peculiar to Fairhaven or the Millicent Library. It is almost universal experience, and is not as bad as some would have us believe. The cry that is often raised that there is too much light reading may be true, but at the same time who will say that the perusal of our best works of fiction will not pave the way to a desire for something more substantial. Let us believe that as time goes on the people will become more interested in other departments of the library, and that this love for light reading that now seems a hinderance [sic] to its larger usefulness may really be the stepping stone to something better.

Registration. There has been a steady growth in the list of applicants for cards, 1737 having been issued during the eleven month. Two hundred and fifty-nine are held by non-residents, many of whom are regular patrons. In all one hundred and eight cards have been given up, the causes being removal from town or the decease of the person holding the card. The interest manifested by the children in making application sometimes on the very day of their eleventh year has been not only amusing but gratifying.

Donations. – Since Feb. 1, 1893 we have added by gift 409 volumes. Among the more important may be mentioned the gift of Mr. Thomas Wilcox of New Bedford of forty-seven volumes of the Scientific American. This places the library in possession of a complete file of this valuable scientific journal down to the year 1891, with the exception of the first nine numbers of Vol. 1.

Mrs. M. H. Dexter and C. D. Waldron presented files of the Fairhaven Star. The best numbers in each set were selected. The volumes have been neatly bound in 1-2 sheep, and are valuable for preserving local and town history.

The late Bradford F. Duff of New York, expressed the wish, that, on his demise, his private library be given to this institution. Seventy-five of the one hundred and sixteen volumes have been placed in the trustees' room

without classification, and will be maintained as a separate library for consultation only in the room. The art books of this collection are much appreciated.

Dr. Robert Collyer of New York in May presented a set of his works, 7 vols.

Judge Francis W. Tappan, George H. Palmer and Mrs. Geo. Atwood have each made valuable contributions to our stock of books. Many others have shown a kindly interest, by the gift of one or more volumes.

The donations for the year have been received from nineteen individuals and five societies and governmental departments.

Books Added. – The books added since June 24th number about six hundred volumes. This number includes the donations mentioned before, with the exception of a few volumes recently presented which have not been accessioned. I have from time to time published lists of these books in the local paper and on leaflets that the public might get at the newest books.

It has been the aim to avoid all dangerous forms of literature so attractive to the young, yet so blighting in influence. The committee and librarian desire to place on the shelves only such books as have been stamped of real and permanent value, not forgetting that the rapid advance of knowledge in every department, particularly the progress in the arts and sciences demand that a library to be of such benefits must keep up with the best current literature and contemporary contributions from all quarters.

Binding. – Books are put in the market in these days in such poor bindings that they will not long stand the strain of even moderate use. During the eleven months I have sent to the binder 191 volumes. The work has been done in a satisfactory manner and at a reasonable price, at the establishment of Mr. Edwin Dews of New Bedford, with the exception of 12 volumes of the Finding list. The sum of \$96.90 was paid on this account. The binding of fourteen volumes of the “Fairhaven star;” five volumes of “Shoppell’s Modern Houses,” and several others, when the price paid was from \$1.00 to \$2.00 has brought the average up to about 50 cents per volume, whereas the average price, excluding these was about 23 cents per volume.

Reading Room. – The reading rooms has been open every day and evening during the eleven months since Feb. 1st, and the increasing number of readers of the daily papers and periodicals, attest that this part of the library is appreciated, and is interesting many. The library is a regular subscriber for ten dailies, thirty-seven weeklies, one fortnightly, thirty-five monthlies and two quarterlies making a total of eighty-five periodicals regularly received.

Sunday and Holidays. – The number of visitors on Sundays for the purpose of exchanging books or enjoying a quiet hour, has demonstrated the wisdom of that section of the by-laws that provides that “the same uniform shall apply during Sundays and holidays as on other days of the year.” Certainly those who come on Sunday to read or study in a quiet, orderly way, spend their time to more purpose than if they remained on the streets. One of our resident clergyman [sic] in a recent contribution to the Star came to the real truth of the matter when he said “We think and have from the first, that the library being open on Sundays is a benefit and has proved itself so. Surely church members would not neglect their service for the library, and those who would go there in church hours, might be those who would be on the street or at the shores for amusements, and would be obliged to behave themselves better than they might at church.”

The number of books issued on the forty-eight Sundays since Feb. 1st prove that people by reason of employment, unable to come on other day, avail themselves of this time to obtain their reading matter for the week.

The holidays of 1893 were Feb. 22, May 31, July 4, Nov. 30, Dec. 25. We issued 418 books or an average of 83 for each holiday.

317 books were issued on the Sundays of Feb.; 406 in March; 414 in April; 376 in May; 336 in June; 369 in July; 358 in Aug.; 323 in Sept.; 387 in Oct.; 401 in Nov.; and 612 in Dec., making a total of 4,294 for the Sundays since Feb. 1st and an average of 89 books for each day.

Fines Collected. – I collected in fines \$1.86 in Feb., \$5.86 in March, \$8.49 in April, \$11.69 in May, \$11.67 in June, \$12.00 in July, \$10.00 in Aug., \$9.90 in Sept., \$11.47 in Oct., \$11.46 in Nov., and \$12.10 in Dec., making a total for the eleven months of \$106.95.

The work which I have hastily reviewed proves that the library is no experiment. Its influence cannot be doubted it must be recognized as a permanent institution, and as an important factor in the educational system of Fairhaven. A free library is an extension of the public school system, and where facilities are not afforded for wise and extended reading in connections schools their usefulness is much impaired. A just appreciation of the value of such an institution as this to our town and vicinity will in the future give it a prominent place in the affections of the people.

Monthly Circulation of Books by Classes From Feb. 1, 1893 to Jan. 1, 1894.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	General works.	Philosophy.	Religion.	Sociology.	Philology.	Natural science.	Useful arts.	
Feb.	55	4	25	29	1	34	56	+
March	190	4	21	31	1	38	87	+
April	164	4	28	23	1	43	65	+
May	122	2	28	28	4	35	54	+
June	103	0	19	21	1	68	52	+
July	125	6	13	23	1	29	34	+
Aug.	105	4	24	20	3	30	35	+
Sept.	110	6	14	19	6	30	41	+
Oct.	115	12	20	21	2	22	47	+
Nov.	112	9	24	25	10	38	58	+
Dec.	101	13	37	26	3	30	105	+
	1302	64	253	266	33	407	634	

	7	8	9			
	Fine arts.	Literature.	History.	Biography.	Fiction.	Circulation by months.
Feb.	46	74	251	100	2359	3034
March	92	98	359	179	3606	4706
April	55	86	276	120	3138	4003
May	48	80	227	108	2822	3558
June	37	71	158	77	2567	3174
July	43	59	165	65	2847	3410
Aug.	32	53	157	68	3054	3585
Sept.	39	55	132	76	2884	3412
Oct.	42	73	151	73	2722	3310
Nov.	48	87	203	86	2758	3458
Dec.	89	89	292	127	3302	4210
	571	821	2371	1079	32059	

Total circulation, 11 months, 39,860.