

## History of the Abbie Greenleaf Library

Franconia's library collection began with a donation of 100 books from Mrs. Annie Trumbell Slosson and W.C. Prime in 1850. The collection was housed in Burt's Store and later in the Town Hall next to the Post Office. By 1910 the collection had grown to 4336 books and was exceeding its space.

Charles H. Greenleaf who, according to Eva Stebbins Callender, "could discern the needs of the community" generously presented the town with the beautiful library building we have now in 1912. He named it the Abbie Greenleaf Library in honor of his first wife. The architect he chose was W.H. McLean. In 1912 the library consisted of three rooms: a reading room, a stack room and the central vestibule with circulation desk. Colonel Greenleaf was particular about all details of the building, providing stained glass windows and mahogany woodwork. The mosaic flooring is an outstanding feature. Mrs. Callender, who worked as a librarian when she wrote the history up to 1933, says the floors were copied from the marble room of the Massachusetts State House in Boston. Daisy Woodward, the first librarian, was responsible for lighting the candles and snuffing them out at closing time, probably for providing fires in the fireplaces too, as there was no electricity in the building at that time.

According to Mrs. Callender, the citizens of Franconia always supported their library well. Citizens of Franconia continue to vote financial support of their library, which accounts for a continuing quality collection for their use.

Another generous donation was made by a former trustee, Lucy K. Priest. This donation made in memory of her parents Harry W. and May M. Priest provided for the 1971 addition, which doubled the size of the building. A large stack room, a meeting room, new lavatory, utility room and side entrance were added. Recently Chauncy Blair, also a former trustee, established and generously supported the Jarvis Blair Fund for the advancement of technology at the library.

Miss Daisy Woodward was librarian for over 20 years into 1913. Her successor, Eva Aldrich Cummings was librarian for between 44 to 46 years. Kathryn V. Maybury was librarian for approximately ten years through 1968. After Mrs. Maybury, Virginia K. Grunhof was librarian for two years followed by Aurelia C. Hucksohl who was librarian through November of 1980.

In 1997 the town added a handicapped ramp and entrance to the rear of the building. An interior lift and handicapped lavatory were added in 1999 making

the building handicapped accessible as a result of generous individual and business donations.

**Amy Weadock Bahr**

**Library Director, 1980- 2001**