

Site of the Needham Branch Library



The commuter train passing the Branch Library in 1964

Needham's first library association was formed in 1796 as a private subscription library. Each member paid \$3.00 to join, with an annual fee of twenty-five cents to be put aside for additional books. Several other subscription libraries were formed in the following century, but it was not until 1888 that Needham Town Meeting voted to create a free public library, that was open to all without fee. The Library was housed in various town facilities, until the current site on Rosemary Street was finally built in 1916.

Library use grew rapidly, and in 1945 a small branch library was opened for two days per week in the Flax Building, at 1054 Great Plain Avenue. The Branch was convenient for those who had business in Needham Center, and was especially popular for its children's programs. In the 1960s, the main library closed for additions and remodeling, making the Branch the only library for a while. In 1985, facing a funding shortfall, the Library closed the Branch and the site returned to business use.