

# Needham Free Public Library



The Proprietors of the Needham Library formed in 1796 as an association to provide the townspeople with books. Each member paid \$3.00 to join, and an annual fee of twenty-five cents. There were several other private or subscription libraries, open to those who could pay the fees.

In 1888 Town Meeting voted to establish a free public library, open to everyone and funded by the dog tax. The Free Public Library was first located in a rented room in the Moseley Building (#11), then moved to a larger space in the Emery Grover Building (#19), and then to the Town Hall. But clearly larger quarters were needed.

In 1903, William Carter and Andrew Carnegie donated the land and funds, and the Library was built on the corner of Mellen Street and Highland Avenue (Map 3, #7). The new building was not popular, and the residents of Needham Center continued to use the Town Hall rooms in preference to a library in the Heights. Finally, in 1915, the current Library was built when William Carter gave the town land on the “boundary” between the two villages, and everyone was satisfied with the location.