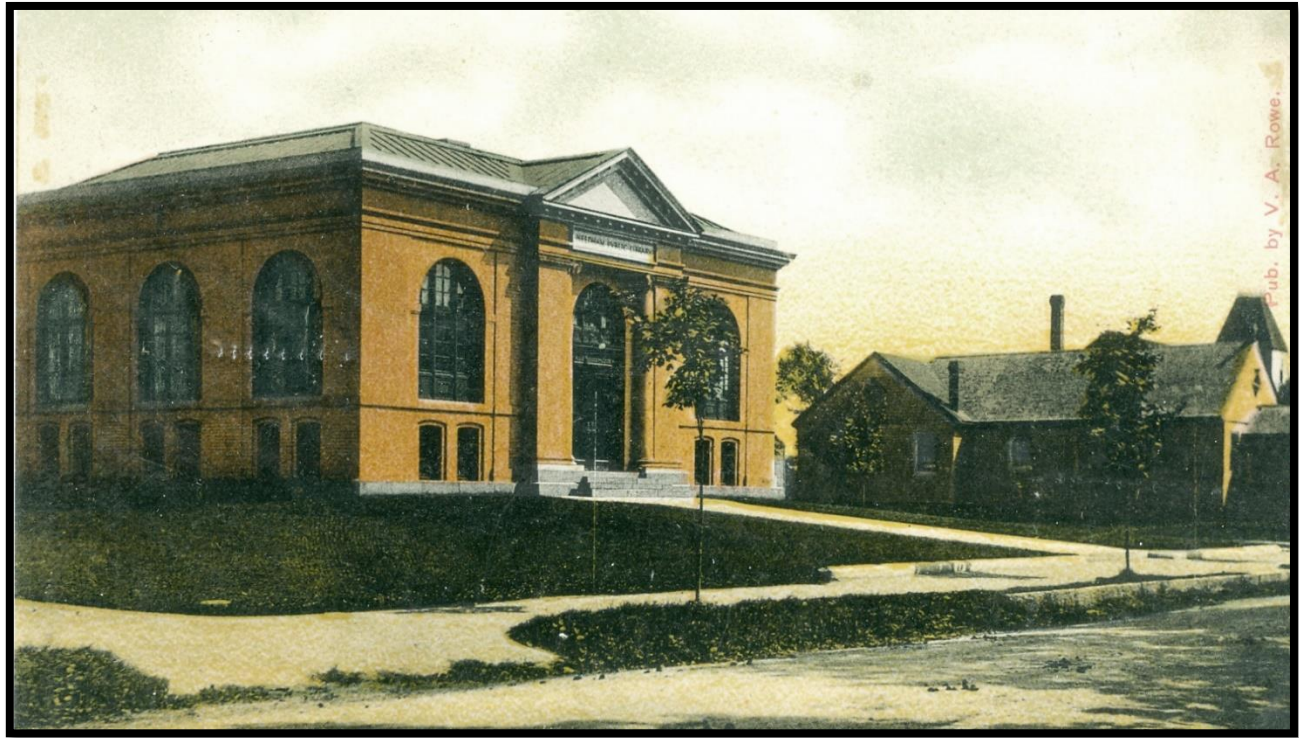


Site of the First Public Library



The Public Library, c. 1910. Christ Church (original location) and the tower of Moseley's mill are seen at right.

Needham's first Public Library building was built here in 1904. Needham had subscription libraries, open to those who could pay, since 1796. The first Free Library, open to the public, was established in 1888. This first library was small, and shared space in the attic of the grammar school for more than 15 years.

Proposals were made to build the Public Library its own building, but this effort stalled over expenditure in 1904. Needham manufacturer and philanthropist William Carter, and Andrew Carnegie (a self-educated man, and strong supporter of the free public library movement) built this library building on land donated by Carter. Residents of Needham Center, however, were not entirely pleased that the town's first Library was located in the Heights, so within 10 years the money was found to build the current Library. William Carter retained this building for use as a business office. It later became a bank, and was torn down in the 1930s when the block was redeveloped for its current retail use.