

July 10, 2014

Belmont Public Library

Celebrating Community, Library Heritage & the Historic 1928 Main Street Building

The 1833 Belmont Mill bell marked the work day start for generations of residents. With citizen leadership that historic structure and its original bell and tower was saved and rededicated for new community use in 1998. We thank Wallace Rhodes, Belmont Historical Society President for ringing the bell on this special occasion today to open the program. ☪

Welcome

Mary L. Charnley, Chairman — Library Trustees

Greetings from the Town of Belmont

Ruth Mooney, Chairman — Board of Selectmen

Remarks

Michael York, Director — New Hampshire State Library

Congratulations

Peter Michaud — New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources

Presentation of the National Register of Historic Places Plaque

Linda Frawley, Chairman — Heritage Commission

Special Anniversary Gift Announcement

Rebecca Albert, Belmont Public Library Director, with Denis Carignan and Pauline Murphy

Appreciation & Adjournment

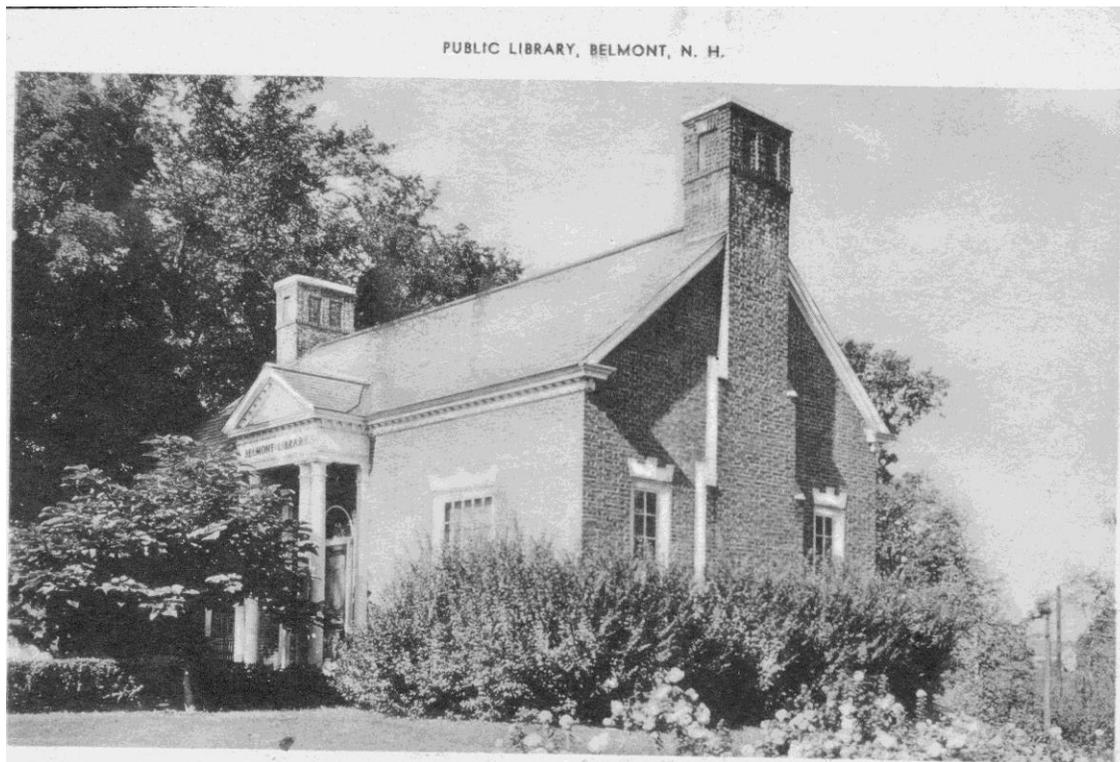
Chairman Charnley

All are invited to visit the Library, welcome Ms. Albert and meet Library Trustees and other community officials. Special exhibits include vintage Library photos, historic treasures and Belmont Mill painting by local artist Pauline Murphy. Heritage Commission members and the restoration team will be at the Bandstand to answer questions on that project, funded in part by the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program.

National Register of Historic Places distinction

The Belmont Public Library at 146 Main Street was nominated on August 12, 1985 for architectural significance “both as one of the best small public libraries in the Lakes Region, and as one of the region’s best examples of the Colonial Revival style.” Application research was conducted by David Ruell of Ashland for the Lakes Region Planning Commission. After approval of the New Hampshire Historic Preservation Officer, the library was entered in the National Register on September 12, 1985. Full nomination details are available on the National Park Service website:

<http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NRHP/Text/85002191.pdf>



Early Community Library History

Prepared by Wallace Rhodes

The first record of a library in Belmont Village dates to 1845 when Rev. Daniel Lancaster’s history mentions the recent establishment of “The Village Library” at Factory Village, as Belmont Village was then called. No further records of this institution have been preserved other than one book clearly labeled on the inside cover as belonging to *The Village Library*.

Gilmanton Mills Library was very likely the direct predecessor of the Belmont Public Library and existed at the mill presumably for the benefit of mill employees. Books have been preserved which bear labels of both Gilmanton Mills Library and Belmont Public Library.

The owners and managers of the Belmont Mill were clearly sponsors and benefactors of the library. When the Belmont Public Library was established in 1893, Amory Lawrence, principal owner of the mill, donated \$400 worth of books. And Moses Sargent, mill Superintendent became a library trustee. In 1896 the library moved to new quarters on the second floor of the newly constructed "Hose House" which was located on the site of the present library building.

In March of 1927, George and Walter Duffy, owners of Belmont Hosiery Company offered to construct and donate a new library building for the town. On February 8, 1928, citizens gathered for the formal dedication of the new library. The Duffys also purchased 100 new books for the library and established a trust fund to aid in the maintenance of the building.

Recent Belmont Public Library Notes

Prepared by Rebecca Albert

Over the years the 2400 square foot library has been a vital part of community life. Today there are 16,000 volumes, plus collections of audio books, other new media, computer access and programs for all aged residents.

The library has long served as a community meeting place, and public meetings including the Board of Selectmen were once held in the lower level "auditorium" which also housed Belmont Historical Society collections for a number of years. That area is now repurposed as a Children's Library and hosts a newly formed Teen Advisory Group, Lego Club, Preschool Story Hour and other well-attended activities including a Summer Reading Program.

Many of the original furnishing from 1928 are in use today, including library tables and recently repaired chairs. Several artifacts are featured including a clock made by Elisha Smith 3rd of Sanbornton, owned by a Belmont resident before 1900, and secured by Mr. Duffy for the library. It remains a focal point from the vestibule entry, next to the main circulation desk, in the same locations as 86 years ago.

Trustees report 1500 library patrons and more new informal visits, stopping by the library for local newspapers and coffee, since recent attention to organizing collections opened up the limited space. Resources are available during weekdays, including three evenings and Saturday mornings, for community convenience.

The spirit of this magnanimous gift still exists in this historic space today, and is reflected in commitment to service. The bronze plate inscription reads: *In recognition of the good citizenship of this community in past generation and to encourage the continuation and development of good citizenship in all succeeding generations, this library, with the exception of those books belonging to the original town library, together with a fund to assist in its maintenance, is given to the Town of Belmont.*

~ George Ernest Duffy, Walter Fred Duffy 1927



Thank you for joining us!

Library Trustees

Chairman, Mary Charnley • Marilynn Fowler • Diana Johnson

Belmont Board of Selectmen

Chairman, Ruth Mooney • Vice Chairman, Jon Pike • Ronald Cormier

Belmont Heritage Commission

Chairman, Linda Frawley • Vice Chairman, Wallace Rhodes • Secretary, Priscilla Annis
Shayne Duggan • Alyce Jewell • Vicki Donovan • Ronald Cormier, Representing Selectmen

Library Staff

Rebecca Albert • Katherine Bollenbach • Jenny Stevens • J'Lillian Duclos

www.belmontpubliclibrary.org

Very special thanks to Hannaford Supermarkets of Gilford for sponsoring event refreshments.