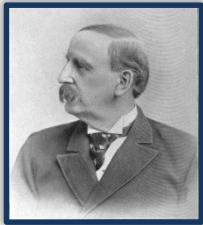




Stowell Library Fund

1916



George Stowell



Stowell Library
Cornish Flat, NH

Purpose:

Maintenance of Stowell Library

History:

In 1909, George Stowell informed the Town of Cornish that he would provide \$6000 for the construction of a Free Library, contingent on the Town providing suitable land. The land next to the existing Selectmen's Office was acquired from George H Bryant (1867-1932) using funds from the Foss Trust. The deed transfer took place on Feb 22, 1909 in time for acceptance of the promised gift by Mr. Stowell at the March 1910 Town Meeting. The Stowell Free Library building was dedicated October 1912. After Mr. Stowell's death in 1915, his will provided for an additional bequest of \$10,000 to the Stowell Library in Cornish, the income to be used for the acquisition of books and the maintenance of the building.

George Henry Stowell was born in Cornish in 1835, the son of Amasa and Betsy (Spaulding) Stowell. He grew up on a farm in east Cornish. His father died when he was 9 years old leaving a household of ten children. Stowell worked on farms in Cornish until age 18 when he moved to nearby Springfield, Vermont. Stowell, with partner Henry Harlow, manufactured gravestones on the Sugar River between 1855-1864. He moved into the hardware business in 1865. He sold the hardware business in 1902 to become one of four owners of the Monadnock Mills. He was director of the People's Bank in Claremont and owned commercial real estate in the city. His own mansion, which is now the Elks Club of Claremont, was at the corner of Pleasant and Summer Street. He married Sara E. Field in 1857 and their only child Clara married Col Arthur Putnam, publisher of the Claremont newspaper.

Prior to Stowell's Library gift, Cornish apparently had an informal social library. In 1894, Cornish accepted the plan outlined by NH Statute (1891) and began budgeting about \$50 a year for new books and \$10 to pay two acting librarians, who circulated books to residents from their individual depository. This loaning library system made New Hampshire one of the first states to offer public libraries.

John Dryfhout, 2019