

TESTIMONIAL IN HONOR OF MARY E. HOBBS
LIBRARIAN OF PELHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

May 18, 1955

Written and read by Lucy Lyon Koehler

At first, in justice to all, I think it is in order to speak in limited detail at least, of this beautiful Library building, (mentioning the facts and figures that led to the construction following the four years 1892-1896 that a small library had been established and maintained in the old Town Hall that burned in 1906) - it all being a background to this pleasant occasion tonight.

So, to begin, let us review the progress of it:

In 1892, at Town Meeting, an appropriation was made to start a Library. The State of New Hampshire contributed \$100.00 for books to assist in starting a Library. In 1896 the town, instead of having a celebration for the One- Hundredth Anniversary of the incorporation of the Town, decided to build the present beautiful building. The Town appropriated \$4000.00, and approximately \$2500.00 was raised by public subscription. Many former townspeople, who had sought their livelihood elsewhere, donated the major portion of this public fund.

The late John M. Woods, of Somerville, donated the beautiful satinwood or southern hazel finish of this Memorial Room. The late Frank M. Woodbury gave the land upon which the building stands - also, some of the finish, as well as unlimited hours serving as a member of the building committee. The late Charles W. Hobbs, father of our Librarian, was chairman of the building committee. On its dedication on Wednesday, Dec. 2, 1896, he gave an interesting account of the committee's work and officially turned over the deed and key to Charles W. Seavey, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen.

The company then left the Library and went to the church for exercises. George S. Butler, with fitting remarks, introduced the speaker of the day, the Rev. Augustus Berry. The Grand Army Veteran took a prominent part and there were several other speakers. Mr. Edward Burnham, of Manchester Union, said that it was a pleasure to take part in anything that will endure. He then spoke of the position of the State of New Hampshire upon the matter of Public Libraries. "It is not generally known that this state has the distinction of having inaugurated the first public library in New England," (and continuing to quote Mr. Burnham) "and when we are comparing our state with our more polished and cultured neighbor, Massachusetts, it would be well to remember that fact." The day closed with a bountiful dinner served in the Town Hall.

Now, we can be justly proud of this Public Library Building and all

HAYES-GENOTER HISTORY AND GENEALOGY LIBRARY

that it includes. It is a great credit to the Town, the Townspeople who fostered the idea and all the others who made a success of the undertaking. They have the everlasting thanks of the community. Veritably, it will always stand monumental to the efforts and civic pride of our townspeople and to friends alike, of all generations involved - both past, present and future.

Naturally the environment afforded by such a Public Library as ours, is truly an incentive to decorum, trust and pride. In no less degree of pride and appreciation do we hold our own Miss Molly Hobbs, who during all these years of successful service as Librarian, has maintained the high moral caliber of this local institution, the Pelham Public Library. She has accomplished just what our forefathers intended and expected she would accomplish when she was first appointed in 1892. She has kept pace with modern literature of all classes ever since, and thus has ably advised and assisted in procuring additional volumes yearly. Familiar with books and authors, she has the aptitude to assist the patron invariably when his wishes are made known, surely a helpful accomplishment. She readily interprets the needs of school children in the selections of editions best suited to their studies or their pleasure reading.

Sixty-three years of service as Librarian- let us pause this while and reflect! What a long and faithful stewardship! Miss Molly Hobbs devoted and but a few years the senior in our Library- surely you are destined to continue your duties here for years ahead. So hope all of us!

Now Miss Molly, we would all most affectionately salute you on your birthday anniversary, which transpires tomorrow, May 19th., Good health, Good wishes, and may God bless you.

Please accept as a small token of our sincere regard this bouquet.