



In 1828 Doctor William Andrus Alcott who was the Sunday School Superintendent of the Congregational Church established the first library in the church. He founded the library with a gift of 20 books for his pupils to read. The library was housed in the church and supported by the church until 1839.

Dr. William Andrus Alcott was the cousin of Amos Bronson Alcott. He was an educator and medical doctor who graduated from Yale. He attended the West School on Spindle Hill Road and later taught at that school.



Dr. William Andrus Alcott and West School

Reverend Chapman was the pastor of the Congregational Church in 1839. He was a strong anti-slavery proponent, but not everyone agreed with his views. An anti-slavery meeting was scheduled in the church on December 12th. The night before the meeting, someone placed gunpowder with a slow wick in the church stove. Shortly after 9:00 p.m. an explosion was heard, but it wasn't until after midnight that flames were seen. In a very short time the church was reduced to ashes; gone were the

library and all the books. There was no library from 1839 through 1843.



In 1840 the Church dissolved its relationship with Reverend Chapman and began plans to build a new church. The new church was completed in 1843 and a new church library reopened with a donation of \$100 by Preserve Carter. The new church library was housed at the entrance of the new church.

They Supported the Church Library



Stephen Rogers



Amos Bronson Alcott

Reverend Stephen Rogers served as pastor of the Congregational Church from 1859 to 1863. During his time there he was a strong supporter of the church library. Before he retired because of illness, he donated 133 volumes to the library.

In 1873 the Church celebrated its 100th Anniversary. There was a two-day celebration on September 10th and 11th. Town leaders made book donations to the church library at this time. Amos Bronson Alcott who loved to read donated works by

the Concord authors: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

The Reverend George A. Furness served as pastor of the Church from 1912 to 1917. During his pastorate he expanded the number of books in the church library and built a storage container for the books. In 1915 during the pastorate of Reverend Furness, Beecher Memorial Parish House was presented to the townspeople and given into the custody of the Church.



The Beecher Memorial became the new home of the library. The library continued to grow for ten years while it was housed in Beecher Memorial.



Town Hall 1923

In 1924 the library became a municipal project and was moved to the Town Hall. It was housed in a room off the entryway. It remained there until 1957 when it was moved to the Center School.



In 1957 renovations were scheduled for the Town Hall. The library was moved to the basement of the Center School because the upper level of the building was used for town offices.



In 1959, when renovations at the Town Hall were completed the upper level of the Center School became the new home of the Wolcott Public Library. The library remained at this location until 1970 when the present library opened on Bound Line Road,

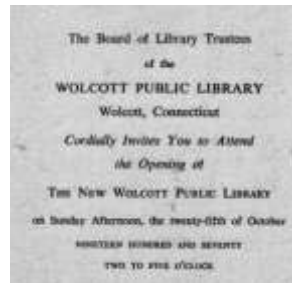
By 1966 library book circulation had peaked at 18,601 and library hours were increased to 32 hours per week. Space was becoming an issue so First Selectman Edward Bagley had the old vault in the Center School emptied to add floor space to the library. Also, a meeting was held with the State Librarian to discuss problems of inadequate space issues and the possibility of Federal Fund grants for a new library.



Finally a fifteen-member Library Building Committee was appointed with Alexander

Nole as the chairman. The committee worked diligently to help plan our new library, which came to fruition in two years.

The library was on the move for the last time. Volunteers agreed to help move books from the Center Street location to the new Bound Line Road site. The Center Street library closed on October 16, 1970 and on October 25, 1970 the new library was dedicated. The modern architectural design was a unique concept and had a book capacity of 55,000 books.



More than 1000 residents attended the dedication ceremony on that day. By 1972 the total number of borrowers had risen to 4,346.



In 1994 the Library's Children's Room was named for Alexander Nole whose 30 plus years of hard work and dedication helped to make this new library a reality. Today the library continues to offer the residents of Wolcott a variety of books, materials and programs.

The Book Journey

A History Of The Town Library In Wolcott, Connecticut From 1828 to 2015



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