

A glance back

By Helen Breen

With an overwhelming "yea" by a capacity crowd at Town Meeting on April 25, the townspeople endorsed Article #20. This warrant approved the preliminary schematic plan for a new library, designed by William Rawn Associates, to be built on the site of the old Danforth House adjacent to Reedy Meadow Golf Course on Summer Street. The yes vote also gives the Lynnfield Library Trustees permission to apply for the next Massachusetts

Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) Construction Grant in 2017, which could cover between 40-60% of the cost. The question of local funding will only arise if the library wins the construction grant.

As the prospect of a new library looms on the horizon, let us pause and reflect on the history of libraries in Lynnfield as described in Marcia Wilson Wiswall's "Lynnfield, a heritage preserved, 1895-1976," and the Lynnfield Public Library website.

1795-1890 - A series of

at Lynnfield's Libraries



Lizzie Green enters the Library, originally Center School. That part of the library still serves as the Children's Room. (Photo by Roger Gerry, published in Warren H. Falls's "Lynnfield")



The Chipman House, located at 553 Salem St., served as South Lynnfield's first library. (Warren F. Falls photo)

small private libraries existed in Lynnfield, such as one at the home of Reverend Joseph Mottey at Centre Farm and a "Social Library" kept in various homes, one of which finally succumbed to fire destroying the collection.

1890 - Massachusetts offered \$100 to any town which would match that sum to start a free public library.

1892-1905 - Lynnfield's Library was housed in the "new Town Hall" built in 1892. Miss Lizzie Green, then 18, was appointed librarian and would serve in that capacity for an astonishing 65 years.

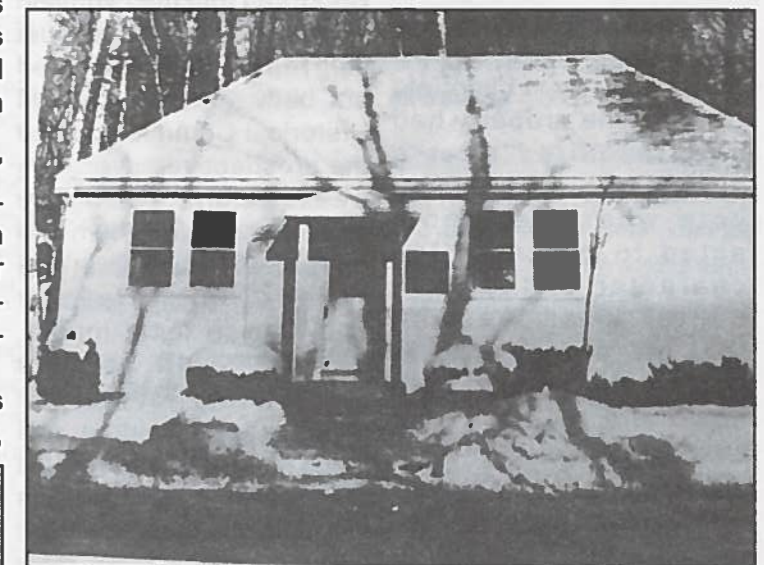
1905 - When the "new" Center School was built (present site of Center Village) on Main Street, the "old" Center School became the public library under Miss Green's direction.

1922 - A branch library was opened at 630 Salem St.,



Centre Library with proposed addition

Architect's plan for 1959 addition to the Lynnfield Library, which proved totally inadequate.



The South Lynnfield Branch Library on Salem Street, built in 1922, was closed in the early 1980s (from "Lynnfield, a heritage preserved, 1895-1976," editor Marcia Wilson Wiswall).

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now the office of the Lynnfield Water District. Before that a number of South Lynnfield residents housed the libraries in their own homes. At one point books were transferred weekly from the south end of town to the Center by a local grocer.

1950 – Finally, a furnace system and bathrooms were installed in the Center Library. Fortunately, Lizzie Green's home was next door (where the Center Congregational Church now stands) so she could run home as needed.

1959 – An addition of 700 square feet to the existing library proved totally inad-

equate as Lynnfield's population exploded.

1963 – At Town Meeting a request for \$232,995 to build and equip a new library was narrowly defeated. The next year it passed, eliminating the expense of a cupola and central air conditioning.

1967 – Another more spacious addition with a dramatic Palladian window was opened with much fanfare.

2016 – Now a half century later, a new Lynnfield Public Library is on the drawing boards, subject to the awarding of a construction grant and the approval of a future Town Meeting.