



GALE FORCE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF GALE FREE LIBRARY FGFL.ORG

Gale Free Library: Opening doors for 129 years.

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Editor's Note

Last spring we lost two staunch friends of the library. On March 16th, FGFL's president Roberta Bodwell passed away at age 74. Despite her chronic illness, Roberta had continued to preside over Friends meetings and was running her beloved Book Cellar until shortly before her death. Three weeks later, on April 6th, the library's longtime trustee and benefactor Elizabeth "Libby" Newell died at age 102. Serving on the board of trustees from 1951 to 1993, Lib saw the library through some of its most momentous changes, including its extensive renovation and addition project in the late 1980s. In August, the trustees dedicated a bench to Lib in the small park adjoining the library, inscribed with her watchwords: *learn, teach, serve*. And Roberta is memorialized with a plaque at the entrance to her pride and joy, The Book Cellar, which she founded in 2012. Both remarkable women are remembered in articles on this page.

Please Join or Renew Your Membership for 2018

If you received this issue by mail, please use the enclosed envelope to join FGFL or renew your membership for 2018. Membership dues are an important source of the Friends' support for the library, helping make Gale Free Library the finest library of its size in the commonwealth.

Roberta Bodwell: 1942–2017

BY SUSAN SCOTT
Director, Gale Free Library

THERE ARE TIMES IN OUR LIVES when we meet someone who is a born leader, who is inspiring and talented, yet authentically warm and friendly. Roberta Bodwell was one of those people. She led the Friends of Gale Free Library to do great things, among them creating The Book Cellar, a truly pleasant and well-organized bookstore that reflects Roberta's personality: tidy, colorful, unpredictable. In organizing the Friends to make the store a reality, she was like Judy Garland in those vintage musicals where the kids decide to put on a show. This was her show. But to my mind, her finest accomplishment was creating an atmosphere surrounding her projects that treated everyone as friends—not just Friends of the Library, but true friends. Her example taught me about being gracious and strong, giving and kind. She was a friend whom I will cherish always. Thank you, Roberta.

Below: Roberta in The Book Cellar.



Elizabeth Newell: 1914–2017

BY STAN HANEY

WHEN I RETIRED from Gale Free Library seven years ago, I left with few regrets. I felt like I had accomplished about all I could with twentieth-century librarianship and was ready to make way for others trained for the twenty-first. Most of those few regrets were minor things of no consequence, but there was one big exception: I never got to say goodbye to Lib Newell. Even now, as I type this, I am filled with regret.

Lib had been feeling poorly and had not been in the library much. I was caught up in tying up all the loose ends that were dangling after fourteen years in the job. One day became my last day, and I had not seen Lib for some months. I meant to write her one more letter of thanks ... but never got to it.

You see, I had written more "thank you" letters to Lib Newell than to any other person in my entire life. Lib was a fount of generosity to the library in terms of time and money.

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Keeping Time at Gale Free Library, Part Two

BY MARGARET WATSON

Editor's Note: In the last issue, Margaret Watson told the story of the magnificent clock visible on the library's tower. Now she goes inside to inspect the beautiful timepieces that adorn GFL's interior.

FOUR EXCEPTIONAL CLOCKS at Gale Free Library reflect the history of Holden's unique Damon Memorial, while keeping track of the passing time. These clocks vary in size and design. Each has its own story.

Adorning the mantel in the Reading Room is a lovely clock made of oak with a solid-brass dial plate. Samuel Gale specifically requested that a reading room be part of the Damon Memorial, which houses Gale Free Library. Today's Reading Room is furnished in the comfortable style that greeted the library's original visitors in 1888—the approximate date of this very special clock.

As a side note, directly overhead on the second floor in those days, students would have been quietly sitting through their daily lessons, since the town's high school occupied the upstairs until 1926. (See the 1888 Holden High School entrance exam, opposite.)

Made by Stowell and Co. of Boston, the mantel clock was donated in the 1890s by John Walter Holden, the brother-in-law of Addie Black Holden, Gale Free Library's first librarian, who served from 1888 to 1943. The nameplate acknowledges the gift of Walter J. Holden, as he

preferred to be known in later years. Nestled in the recessed arch over the dial is the inscription "Gale Free Library" in brass letters.

Take a closer look at this clock, which has a bonnet hood with crown molding, and is marvelously ornamented with carved feathers and various flowers, including roses. See if you can find the two bearded faces and bewigged heads. The clock strikes every fifteen minutes with a variation of the Westminster chimes.

A tall-case grandfather clock also graces the Reading Room. This stately timepiece, not quite a century old, is made of mahogany with elaborate carving. Of special interest is the face of the Moon above the dial, which peeks between two hemispheres of the Earth to indicate the lunar phase, revealing an alternating land- and seascape during the time around new Moon. Westminster chimes sound every fifteen minutes to announce the hours, half-hours, and quarter-hours. Four plated chimes, three cylindrical brass weights, and a round brass pendulum can be viewed through the clock's glass door.

Manufactured by Bigelow, Kennard, and Co., one of Boston's leading jewelers and clockmakers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the grandfather clock was a gift from Reliance Kendall (née Crocker), who was married to Edward Kendall. The latter was born in Holden but moved to Cambridge to start a prosperous boiler-manufacturing firm. His building—the Kendall Boiler and Tank Company—has been beautifully restored and is still to be found on Third Street in East Cambridge (although with a different use). Nearby Kendall Square is named after him. In retirement, the couple moved back to Holden and lived on what is now Kendall Road.

In the Children's Room, younger patrons may admire the Seth Thomas mantel clock over the fireplace. This device is constructed of oak and ornamented with carved shells and acorn feet. It has two dials, one for the minute and hour hands and a smaller dial that marks the seconds. It has a pleasant "tick"—the loudest of the four clocks reviewed here. A brass plate at the bottom identifies the donors: the Holden High School class of 1910, whose members spent many studious hours in this very room.



Above: Reading Room tall-case grandfather clock, circa 1930, with a detail of the phase of the Moon (in this case, waning gibbous).

Right: Reading Room mantel clock, circa 1890.



Could You Get into Holden High School?



Children's Room mantel clock, donated by the Holden High School class of 1910.

Our tour of the library's fine clocks closes with a visit to the Program Room, where the most modern of the four clocks hangs. This handsome battery-powered timepiece was handcrafted by Arnold M. Cook, who presented it to the library in 1981. Mr. Cook was the father of Joanne Cook Osterholm, an assistant librarian who became Gale Free Library's fourth director in 1984.

The Cook clock is rectangular with the dial and pendulum visible through the glass door. Carved spindles adorn the top and bottom. It has the ability to strike the hours but is not set to do so lest meetings held in this room be distracted! Although of relatively recent vintage, this clock tastefully complements the historic decor throughout Gale Free Library.

As gifts, the four clocks represent the gratitude and generosity of benefactors who once passed through the library's doors. Today's patrons—while checking the hour—should pause to admire these beautiful and useful creations.

Faculty and students of Holden High School, May 26, 1897. Principal Alonzo K. Learned is on the back row, far right. A large print of this photo hangs in the tower stairwell of Gale Free Library, next to the interior doorway to the old schoolroom, which is now the Children's Room.

CHUCK SKILLINGS, our correspondent at the Holden Historical Society, sent over the entrance examination for the preparatory year at Holden High School from 1888, the year the school opened on the second floor of the brand new Damon Memorial (with Gale Free Library occupying the first floor). Test your wits against the young scholars of 129 years ago. You may send in your answers and we'll tell you if you make the grade. Good luck! These questions represent about a third of the original test.

Geography

1. Define Horizon. What causes the change in seasons?
2. Upon what three conditions does climate depend? Is the sun nearer the earth in the summer or in the winter?
3. How would you go by water from St. Louis to Chicago?
4. In what continent are the highest mountains found? Take a cargo of goods from Boston, Mass., to Rio Janeiro. Of what would the cargo probably consist? What might be the return cargo?

Language

5. Correct as to capitals and punctuation:
mary will not lend me Her new bible said fannie because she says that Mothers old one is good enough for a little girl.
6. Write a sentence containing an attribute complement (predicate nominative or predicate adjective); an object complement (direct object).
7. Write from memory a stanza of poetry, attending carefully to capitals and punctuation.
8. Correct: He is not here, I don't think. | Will I get your book for you? I seen him do it. | Can I borrow a book? | You hadn't ought to go.

Arithmetic

9. Divide thirty-three thousandths by 100; by 10; by 5; by .005.
10. From 4 subtract one thousand one hundred thirteen hundred millionths.
11. A man bought a horse for \$250, and sold it for 12 ½% more than he gave for it; required the gain and the selling price.
12. $6\frac{4}{27} - \frac{2}{7}\frac{1}{5} = \text{what?}$





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Elizabeth Newell: 1914–2017 *from page 1*

I started at the library in 1996, so I missed out on Lib’s many contributions to the library addition. But I was aware that she had been named Massachusetts Library Trustee of the Year in 1993, so I knew that her work was substantial.

If I had to come up with a single word to describe Lib, the first one that comes to mind is “quality.” Lib had high standards, yet she had infinite patience with those who did not measure up. Perhaps this was a result of her many years of piano teaching. When I say “quality” it implies a level of perfectionism, but I contend there is a subtle difference. Perfectionism demands, where quality persuades. When Lib walked into the library, her infectious smile lit up the room; that was all it took to persuade me that what she had in mind was a good idea.

I was especially moved when she began her visit to the Reference Department by asking, “Stan, what could you use now that would make the Reference Department better?”

Besides “quality” the other word that comes to mind when I think of Lib is “citizen.” She was a good citizen in the truest sense of the word. She used her many resources to serve the Holden community in areas far beyond the library. Her biggest resource was not her Skidmore education or her generous pocketbook; it was her engaging manner and ubiquitous smile. I miss it.

Lib, I am sorry that I didn’t make the time to say goodbye. I will say it now. Goodbye sweet Lib, and may your memory never fade.

Stan Haney was Assistant Director of Gale Free Library from 1996 to 2010.

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Friends of Gale Free Library is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.



Nancy Richards, Local History Librarian at GFL, speaks at the dedication of the Elizabeth Newell bench, August 12, 2017.



THE BOOK CELLAR

HOLDEN’S USED BOOK STORE
IN THE BASEMENT
OF GALE FREE LIBRARY

