

# Blue Hill Library Notes

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## “ANY BOOK, ANY TIME, FOR ANY PERSON” A BRIEF HISTORY

The Blue Hill Library’s logo is from an original bookplate designed by Jonathan Fisher over 200 years ago. He and some other gentlemen gathered in November of 1796 and affirmed the following:

*“Wishing to become acquainted with the customs and manners for the World, and every other useful knowledge, do hereby form ourselves into a Society, by the name of the Blue Hill Library. . .”*

For most of history, books have been expensive but they have also been the keys to educational and spiritual enlightenment. A person’s wealth and education could be measured by the number of books they possessed or had access to. The great universities of the world were great because of their vast libraries. The founding fathers of Blue Hill knew well the

value of books, but they also knew that it was prudent to share. And so the Blue Hill Library was born.

In 1849, with waning interest, the members voted to close the society and, for the next 20 years there was no library in Blue Hill. Perhaps the learned men of the town had amassed personal book collections and didn’t feel the need to borrow. The story could have ended there, but some enterprising women organized the Ladies’ Social Library of Blue Hill in 1868. They met on Thursdays from 1-3pm to exchange books and eat ice cream. Their club prospered and by 1895 the Social Library occupied two rooms in the new Town Hall.

At about that time, 16 year old Adelaide Pearson, who spent summers at her grandfather’s house in Blue Hill, decided that the Ladies’ Social Library could be improved with a card catalogue. Her father would not allow her to use her allowance, so she carved and sold wooden objects until she had the money to buy a cabinet. And then, she convinced her younger cousin

continued on other side

*“A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert.”—Andrew Carnegie, Industrialist & Philanthropist*

## THE ANNUAL FUND DRIVE: HOW WE KEEP THE DOORS OPEN

*The library is a treasured community resource, made possible by your tax-deductible donations.*

### Why?

The **Blue Hill Public Library** is an independent non-profit organization. It is “public” because our mission is to provide free access to information to everyone who seeks our services. About **20% of the library’s budget comes from four area towns**: Blue Hill, Surry, Sedgwick and Penobscot, with most of this money coming from Blue Hill.

**The rest comes from.....**

### Who?

**You!** 80% of our funding comes from **patrons** in the form of direct donations to our Annual Appeal, fees, fundraising events, gifts to the endowment and bequests. Your donation helps support library services for over 4,500 households from all the towns on the Peninsula.

### How Much?

We need to raise **\$132,000 from our Annual Appeal**. Sounds like a lot, but if we had \$1 for every patron visit we would raise close to \$115,000 in a year.

### What For?

- 1) Current and continuously **updated collections**
- 2) Courteous, **professional staff**
- 3) A comfortable, **well lit building**
- 4) Up-to-date **computers, software and Wi-Fi**
- 5) Educational & cultural **programs—over 300/year!**
- 6) Meeting space, digital services, and so much more!

### How?

**It’s easy to support the library!**

- Make a **direct donation** of any amount by cash, check, or credit card.
- **Become a 4-Seasons donor** and make automatic monthly payments
- Attend one of our **fundraisers**.
- Make an **in-kind donation** of goods or services.
- **Donate or buy books** from Friends of the Library
- Include the Blue Hill Public Library in **your legacy plans**.

**More info & to donate online:** [www.BHPL.net](http://www.BHPL.net)



to spend a summer cataloging the collections with her. This was the beginning of Pearson's lifelong passion for what would become the Blue Hill Public Library. After her grandmother left her the Blue Hill house and a small inheritance, she began to pay the salary for a librarian.

In the 1930s Adelaide Pearson and librarian, Anne Hinckley expanded the scope of the library. Their vision for the library was nothing short of cultural enlightenment for all members of the community. "Any book, any time, for any person, is our motto" declared Miss Pearson. And, yes, there were books, thousands of them, but there was so much more. They brought programs, lecturers, and artifacts from all over the world to Blue Hill. They bought a car and took their collections to schools, hospitals, barber shops—wherever people gathered. They had grown so completely out of their two rooms, that by 1938 they had 4,000 volumes more than they had room for.

So, at the height of the depression, these two ladies took on the challenge of building a permanent home for the library. They gave of themselves, they rallied the town, they wrote letters and sent telegrams, and they called in every favor from every person they knew or that had passed through Blue Hill. Their final coup was to secure funds from the Public Works Administration, part of the New Deal programs, to build the Blue Hill Public Library.

This library was built brick by brick, book by book, donation by donation. Each year of its existence, the Library has been funded in largest part by its patrons. Our generation is no different. In 2000 we had outgrown the original building and broke ground on a \$3.8 million dollar expansion and renovation, paid for by your friends and neighbors whose names adorn rooms, desks, elevator and tiles in the entryway. This is the building you enjoy today.

Next year, the Blue Hill Public Library celebrates its 75th anniversary at 5 Parker Point Road. All of us currently working at the library stand on the shoulders of women and men who possessed vision, commitment, passion, and a dedication to community service. Every book you check out was made possible, in part, by a bake sale 100 years ago. Every wifi connection was brought to you by the founding members of the Ladies' Social Library. Every meeting in the Howard Room echoes the first meeting of the Blue Hill Library Society in 1796. We might need to change Adelaide's motto slightly to include the digital collections—perhaps "Any information, any time, for any person," but it seems fairly certain that both Reverend Fisher and Miss Pearson would approve that the people of Blue Hill and the surrounding towns are still interested in the "customs and manners for the World, and every other useful knowledge."

—SHELLEY LATHAM

*"I think the health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture, and our concern for the future, can all be tested by how well we support our libraries."*

—Carl Sagan, Astronomer & Author

## THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF BLUE HILL?

It is not unusual for people to gasp or yelp the first time they see "Beefy," the bison head currently residing at the Blue Hill Library. First, it can be an unexpected shock to realize that a bison is staring at you as you climb the stairs and secondly, it is truly impressive how large Beefy is. Or was. "Where did he come from, and what is he doing here?" are the questions that follow. He is a local fellow, having been raised on Long Island in Blue Hill Bay. When it was decided that bison should no longer roam free on the island, the herd was sold and a few saved for posterity. The bison is on long-term loan from Rex Florian who felt that the library was the perfect place to host this wonderful piece of Blue Hill history.

The bison head is not the first artifact of taxidermy to grace the collections of the Blue Hill Public Library. It joins a small but dignified club that has included a loon, an armadillo and a small crocodile. Other items of natural history include: butterflies, conch shells, mineral specimens, a meteorite, petrified wood, and some fossil fragments.

Beefy has become the library's mascot, curiosity, and chief conversation starter. The kids adore him. In fact, one 2 1/2 year old patron has renamed BHPL the Bison Hill Public Library. We're pretty sure this never happened with the armadillo.



BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [WWW.BHPL.NET](http://WWW.BHPL.NET)

*where you can browse the collections, renew materials, request holds & interlibrary loan, view calendar, reserve rooms, register for events, download free music, subscribe to the newsletter and donate!*