

# Cary Library Realized As Result Of Dr. George Cary Bequest, Gift Of Andrew Carnegie, Town Funds

Although the inspiration for what we now know as the Cary Library had its first beginning in the year 1850, it was not until the turn of the century that a free public library was finally established here that was to endure and grow.

The institution of which the Town of Houlton is justly proud and which has done incalculable good for the culture of its people over the past 60 years, owes its start to the persistence of a group of public spirited people who recognized the great good that a free public library could contribute to the life of a community and were determined to see their dream realized.

### UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS

But there were several false starts and unsuccessful attempts before any degree of permanent and useful status was acquired by the modern institution which so capably serves this town today.

The first stirrings of any interest in or need for a library were evident a couple of years after Houlton Academy opened its doors in 1848. It was in 1850 that the first principal of the school, Milton Welch, began agitating for the establishment of a library for the use of his students. He succeeded in arousing some interest among the townspeople

and he was also responsible for the formation of a literary club here that was called, The Forest Club.

This club purchased a number of the best books of the day and these were rented out to the members. The fate of this experiment could have been forecast quite readily. There was no money furnished with which to purchase new books so, when the original volumes had gone the rounds, interest flagged and the first nucleus of a library in Houlton was packed away where it would remain for almost two decades.

### SECOND EFFORT STARTED

It was 18 years later, in 1868,

before there was any revival of interest in a library in this community. Principal of the Academy at that time was Charles H. Fernald and it was he who organized the second effort to establish a library. For a time the attempt gave promise of being successful. The former members of The Forest Club agreed that the volumes that had been packed away for so long, could be brought out and put into use by the "Houlton Library and Literary Association and united with the Public Library now about to be established in Houlton village, kept in some suitable place, and held accessible for public use on terms as heretofore imposed."

In March, 1868 a petition was passed for the incorporation of the Library and Literary Association for the Town of Houlton. By the payment of one dollar, a person could become a member of the association; by paying five dollars, he or she could become a trustee.

### ORIGINAL TRUSTEES

The following were listed as original trustees: George Cary, Charles P. Tenney, James F. Holland, Jefferson Cary, G. B. Page,

Theodore Cary, Almon H. Fogg, J. H. Bradford, Ransom Norton, Hadley Fairfield, Jotham Donnell, Charles H. Fernald, J. C. Madigan, L. S. Strickland, D. Webber, Cyrus M. Powers, C. Herrin, N. Churchill and Robert Estey.

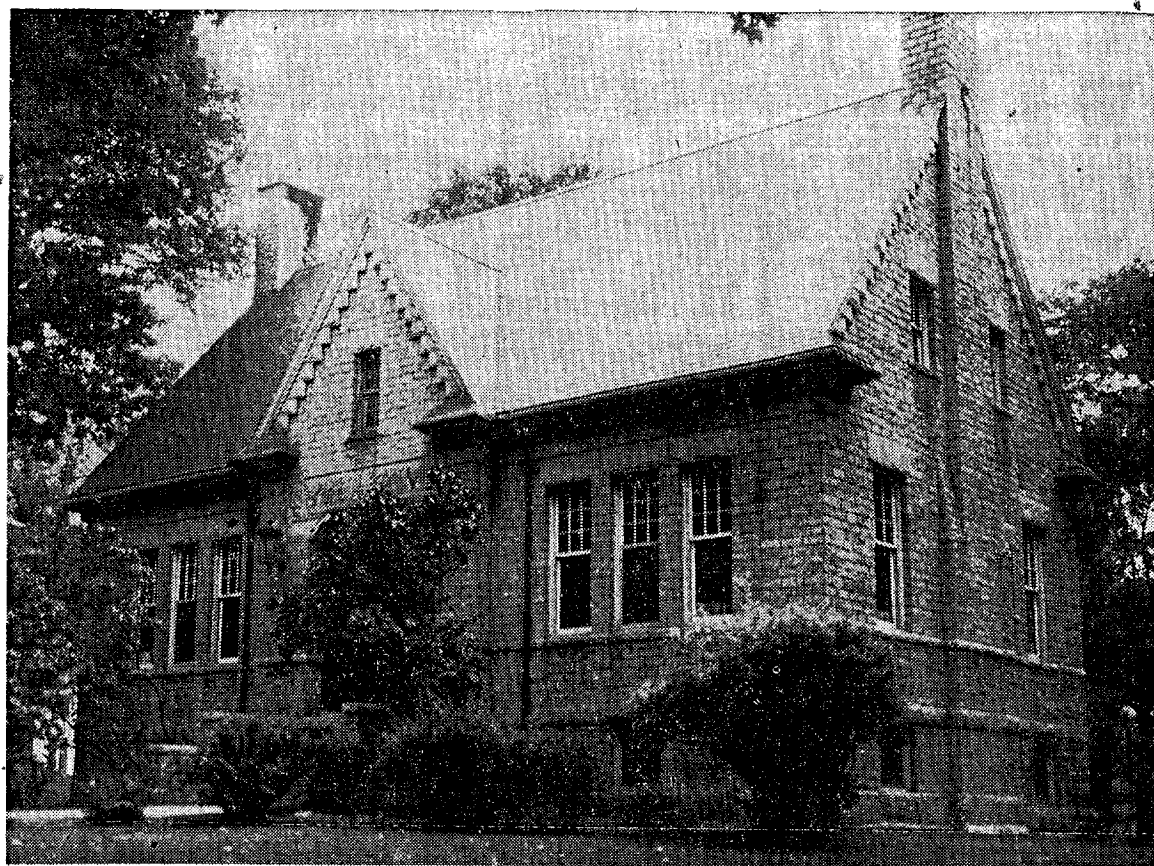
Jotham Donnell was elected president of the trustees. Theodore Cary, editor and publisher of the Aroostook Times, became vice president, J. F. Holland, secretary and George Cary, treasurer. The directors were Charles Fernald, Jefferson Cary and Almon H. Fogg.

Earlier in the year the trustees had held a meeting in the Congregational vestry at which arrangements were made for a course of lectures to be given for the benefit of the library. This resulted in \$150 for the treasury of the library fund.

### ACADEMY COOPERATES

A further library service to the community was also made available late in 1868 when the trustees of Houlton Academy con-

## Over 20,000 Volumes Now On Its Shelves



For well over half a century this beautiful community asset has been making substantial contributions to the culture and education of the people of this community. It has borne out every hope of its great benefactor, Dr. George Cary.

N. T. Dutton as vice president, C. S. Estes as secretary, John B. Madigan as treasurer and C. H. Percival, J. F. Holland and George Cary as directors. The books, which it is supposed had again been stored away, were collected, and a room was rented in the Fogg block for \$100 a year. Miss Abby Webber was appointed librarian and the library was made free to all.

Another ten years elapsed during which time there seems to have been no accepted use for the library. There is no record of it continuing to function and, although it is difficult to imagine such a state of affairs, there doesn't seem to have been any demand for library facilities.

### SEEK FREE LIBRARY

Then the Fact and Fiction Club and the Houlton Woman's Club manifested an interest and started a vigorous agitation for a free public library that would be aided by the town through a direct appropriation to buy books. It having been found impossible to

have been an unusually happy one for the Cary Library. Rev. Charles E. Owen, a former pastor of the First Baptist Church, here, was a member of a committee that had charge of the building of a new library in Waterville. That project had been substantially helped by the late Andrew J. Carnegie whose philanthropies were responsible for the erection of libraries in hundreds of communities across the nation.

Dr. Owen was constantly engaged in correspondence with Mr. Carnegie's secretary and he mentioned the plight of the public library in Houlton and its need for a building.

### PROMISED \$10,000

Prompt action followed. Through his secretary, Mr. Carnegie promised Houlton a gift of \$10,000 for its library fund.

The usual conditions were imposed which were that the town

furnish a building site and guarantee a certain sum for the maintenance of the library.

This benefaction could not have been better timed. It was about this time that part of a bequest to the Houlton Public Library by Dr. George Cary, who had died four years before, had become available. When James Archibald, then president of the trustees, was informed by Dr. Owen of the promised gift from Mr. Carnegie, a movement was soon underway to erect a suitable library building.

The Cary bequest totaled \$32,595.93 when the estate was finally fully settled. It was only one manifestation of the great affection for and interest in the people of his native town of Houlton held by Dr. Cary. Always lovingly remembered for his kindness and his help for the less fortunate, his bequest to the library "to be forever free to the citizens of Houlton" was the crowning gesture of his philanthropies.

### NO OTHER NAME

The naming of the library for

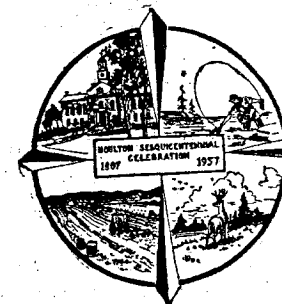
him could not have been otherwise in the light of his contribution to its realization, a living example of his love and thoughtfulness for his fellow man and his generosity in their behalf.

In no other manner can this quality in the character of the great benefactor of Cary Library be more eloquently shown than in the tenth paragraph in his will which included the library bequest provision.

It reads as follows: "I am interested in the welfare of the people of my native town and believe that that is best promoted by a general diffusion of knowledge and the study of literature. It seems to me especially desirable that good books should be within the reach of the poor, by which their condition is bettered and they receive the pleasure of reading which the rich may enjoy. To the poor of Houlton, whose kindness I have experienced and who have been my patrons for many years, I am under obligation. Therefore, that I may acknowledge the same, and may also pay some worthy tribute to the mem-

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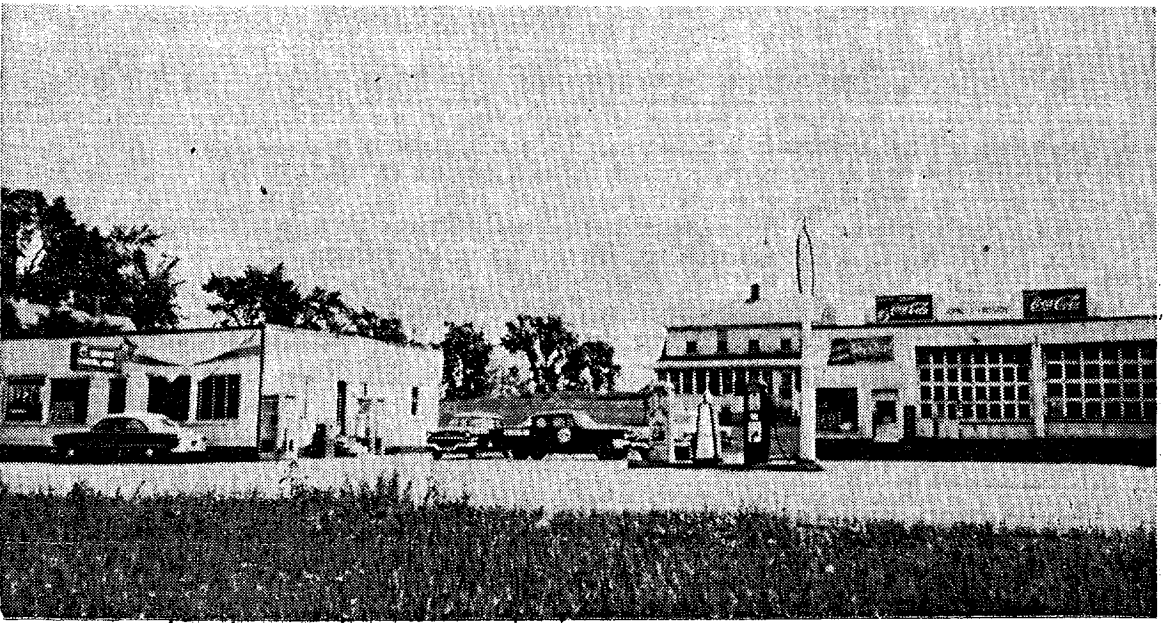
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tees of Houlton Academy consented that 'the books now kept in the Academy building in Houlton may be taken in charge by the association, kept in some suitable place with the library now about to be established in Houlton by said association; the same to be accessible for the use of scholars and the public generally on similar terms as heretofore imposed'.

This vote was signed by the seven trustees and Messrs. Jotham Donnell, Theodore Cary and B. L. Staples were appointed as a committee to take such security measures as would insure the return of the books when called for.

There is some confusion about the conflicting dates and events of 1868 having to do with the second attempt to make available library facilities for the citizens of Houlton. Subsequent events reveal that this effort, too, was not destined to set up an institution that would endure.

For the next eight years the progress of the library is shrouded in mystery. If records were kept during that period, they have disappeared. It was not until 1876 that we find a vote recorded of an action by the trustees. And this was merely to accept the resignation of Hadley Fairfield as librarian and elect Miss Julia O. Herrin as his successor.

**CHANGE OF LOCATION**

At that time also a change of location was decided upon and the trustees voted to transfer the library to the Page building, in rooms that had been formerly occupied by the Houlton Reform Club. The trustees added the cautious proviso that the action was contingent upon there being no rental charge.

The building in question was a low wooden structure on the site now occupied by the John Watson Company. The street floor was then occupied by a drug store owned by Page and Cary, both of whom were trustees of the library. It was also voted to pay the librarian "the annual outlay out of fees collected for rent of books, not to exceed the sum of \$25.

**ANOTHER VENTURE FAILED**

Again the library venture languished and died. The shelves contained the same volumes. Since no new ones were added, the people of the town naturally lost interest and the next decade is another blank period in Houlton's library history.

Then, in 1886 the Houlton Library Association was again revived. Charles P. Tenney became president of the association, with

having been found impossible to support a library here that was not free, this new trend of thinking on the matter aroused fresh interest.

Once more the books of the former libraries were collected. A room was rented over a local store and the town, at its annual meeting, appropriated the sum of \$300 which was to be expended to buy books and to pay expenses of keeping up the library. Miss Carrie S. Miller, who later became Mrs. J. D. Perry, was retained as librarian and the room was kept open for two hours every Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. Miss Carrie Miller was followed by Miss Hortense Miller and Miss Carrie Dunn.

**ON FIRM FOUNDATION**

This time the project appeared to be on a firm foundation of lasting public acceptance. At last the Cary Free Public Library as we know it today, seemed on its way to permanence. The determination of the citizens to have available for future generations the essential services of a library was at last crowned with success.

In 1903 it was noted that 27 books were presented to the library and 189 were purchased by the trustees, making a total of 1632 volumes then owned and on the shelves.

The year of 1903 appears to



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is our business*

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AN ACTIVE PART IN THE BUILDING OF

**HOULTON**

AS WE SALUTE ITS DISTINGUISHED  
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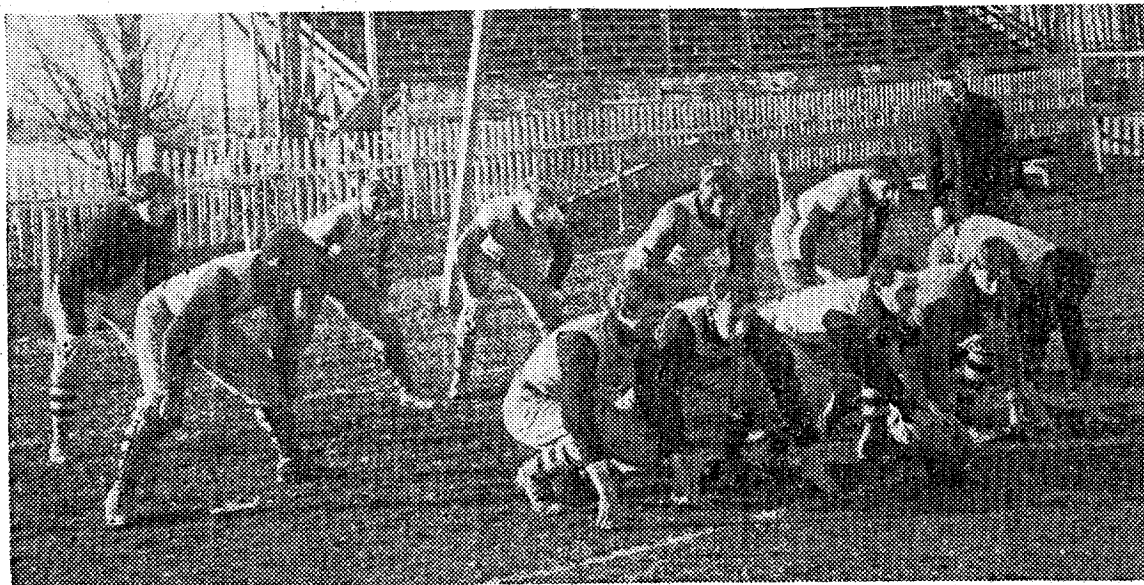


**WARD CABIN CO.**

*At the Airport*



# Houlton High School's First Football Team



These eleven men made up the first football team to represent Houlton High School. Although their first game was played in 1900, with Prin. Fred Burrill as a member of the squad, the following year the team was made up of all undergraduates of HHS. The line was composed of, left to right, Ludlow Corneilson, end, hands on knees, Harry Hallett, right tackle, crouching, Ham Flinton, right guard, Fred Doherty, center, Joe Donovan (Dr. J. A.), left guard, Ralph Nelson, left tackle and, rear of the tackle, hands on knees, John Donovan, end. The backfield was made up of, farthest left in the rear, George Burrill, right halfback, in front of Burrill, wearing a helmet, Murdoch B. McKay, fullback, Gus Clark, left halfback. Crouching behind the center is Arthur O. Putnam, quarterback.

or said trustees may use a part of said interest if they deem it best for the support of a free reading room for the inhabitants of Houlton in the Cary Library.

"... It is my desire that the Cary Library shall be established as soon as may be after my decease, by the town of Houlton, consistent with the judicious sale of my estate, as soon after my trustees have in the exercise of their discretion reduced said estate to money, the town has entitled itself to its benefits,— then they, my trustees, are authorized to turn it over to the town trustees, as heretofore provided. I will that all my printed books which are herein bequeathed to my trustees shall become a part of said library, and that the same shall not be sold."

Thus did the generous benefactor of the Cary Library so meticulously explain to his survivors in his native town, the use, for library purposes they were to make of his estate.

In addition to the residue of his estate, after other bequests had been complied with, Dr. Cary also left his very substantial

library to be added to the books of the library that was to bear his family name.

### BUILDING CREATED

The combined bequest of Dr. George Cary, who had passed to his reward Nov. 29, 1899, and the gift of the great philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie was destined, with the help of the town, to create the beautiful structure of granite that stands at the entrance of Monument Park and which has made its vast cultural and educational contributions to this town for the past half a century.

At the annual town meeting in March, 1903, a building committee was elected to have charge of the selection and purchase of a site for the Cary Library and of the construction of the building.

Three of Houlton's leading citizens of that day made up the committee. They were Albert A. Burleigh, a civil engineer of great repute and a high official and board member of the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad, who was to serve as chairman. John B. Madigan, then a prominent local attorney

in the firm of Madigan and Madigan later to be a judge of Maine's Supreme Judicial Court, was to be treasurer. John Watson, a prominent merchant, was the third member of the trio.

### MAIN STREET SITE

After looking over several sites the committee finally entered into negotiations with Mrs. John C. McIntire for property adjoining her home at the corner of Main and Kelloran streets. Arrangements were soon successfully concluded to purchase a lot for the library on Main street, the parcel chosen being a part of the Woodbury lot, so-called, the price of which was to be paid by the town of Houlton.

Later, it being considered the original tract was not adequate for the purpose, another parcel adjoining it on the east was added. The whole area then had a frontage of some 82 feet on Main street and extended back some eleven rods.

The price paid was \$1,500 for the first parcel and \$750 for the addition, making a total of \$2,250 for the entire library lot.

### CONVENIENT SITE

The site could not have been more convenient for those who would be using the libraries facilities nor could it have been more advantageously chosen to enhance the town's reputation for being one of the most beautiful in Maine. The committee must be highly commended for their selection and for their interest and determination that their town would have a building of which it would always be proud.

John G. Chadwick, the leading contractor in Houlton, in fact the only one in business at that time, was placed in charge of arranging for the construction of the building. The plans were drawn by John C. Stevens of Portland and the decorating contract was awarded to the New York Decorating Company of Houlton. This concern was made up of H. R. Davis, formerly of New York City, who had recently established a business in Houlton, and Fred L. Pullen, a capable Houlton painting contractor. The plumbing contract was awarded to Daniel E. Sheehan.

### REPORTS TO TOWN

The building and land was solely the result of the gift from Andrew J. Carnegie with the addition of some \$7,250 from the town. At the annual town meeting in March, 1905, John B. Madigan, treasurer of the committee, gave the report of its stewardship as follows:

Receipts:	
Hon. Andrew Carnegie	\$10,000.00
Town of Houlton	4,983.62
	<hr/>
	\$14,983.62
Expenses:	
John G. Chadwick, general contract and expenses	\$11,443.83
Daniel E. Sheehan, plumbing and heating	1,031.75
Electrical fixtures and hardware	273.82
John C. Stevens, architect	708.10
Double windows	71.10
Curtains	19.50
Furniture and Shelving	1,186.25
Electric wiring	94.04
Door and window screens	122.60
Coal	20.63
Freight & Trucking	9.90
Expressage	2.00
	<hr/>
	\$14,983.62
Cost of building lot	2,250.00
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Total	\$17,233.62

The dedicatory exercises of the newly completed building were in charge of John B. Madigan, Walter Cary and James Archibald. They were held in November, 1904.

Principal speaker for the occasion was Hon. Joseph Symonds of Portland, a classmate and life long friend of Dr. George Cary. In the course of his address of dedication he spoke in these words about his friend:

"The true record of such a life cannot be upon the printed page. Its real record is in grateful human hearts, in the growth and progress of all the good things of the community of which it dwells, in the smiles which, during all these years it has brought back to the saddened faces of the aged, for whom, at best, little of pleasure is left in this world, in the lives of little children whom it has aided and shielded and lifted to a better place of living than would otherwise have been possible for them, and in all the manifold gentle social influences which have flowed from it as it has pursued its way"

### ANNA BARNES, LIBRARIAN

First trustees elected by the town were Walter Cary, president; John B. Madigan, secretary; Thomas Putnam, treasurer; Albert A. Burleigh and James K. Plummer. Miss Anna Barnes entered upon her duties as the first librarian of the new library immediately after its dedication in 1904.

The service to the cultural advancement to the town began with 1,742 volumes. In 1906 the records reveal that 1,505 cards were issued to borrowers and 17,152 were loaned out during that year.

In 1910 the number of volumes had grown to 7,162 and the loans had climbed to 25,675. Ten years later the shelves contained almost double the number of volumes as in 1910. The count then was 13,058 and 45,742 individual loans of books was recorded for that year.

During these years Miss Barnes was a gracious and kindly custodian of the library's facilities to young and old. A disciplinarian who insisted on a quiet atmosphere in the reading rooms and the strict observance of the rules, she was always helpful and accommodating to patrons who required extra service.

### CONTRIBUTED MUCH

Miss Barnes contributed much to expanding the usefulness of the library for the people of Houlton and definitely left the stamp of her influence on the institution. For many years she was assisted by Miss Evelyn Pearce and Miss Jidafaunce Perry as assistant librarians.

After 23 years in office Miss Barnes sustained a serious hip injury and was forced to resign from her position in 1927. At that time Miss Pearce was named librarian.

In that year the number of volumes in the library had grown to 15,467 and during the year the loans amounted to 43,365.

### RECEIVED GIFTS

Over the preceding quarter of a century the library has been the beneficiary of many gifts of books, magazines and articles. These have included funds in the following names: Emma Drew, William H. Gray, Mary Alice Lane, Walter P. Mansur, Amanda L. Mayberry and Julia West.

When Miss Pearce became librarian, a position she was to occupy until 1949, when she was forced to resign because of ill health, she had as her assistants, Miss Lou Brown and Miss Ellen Newbegin. When Miss Pearce relinquished her duties, Miss Brown took over the responsibility of administering the library's affairs. Mrs. Roland Aichison was appointed to the staff at that time as an assistant. In 1955 Miss Brown resigned and Mrs. Aichison succeeded her. She is still in charge of the affairs of the institution with Mrs. Robert MacIlroy as her assistant.

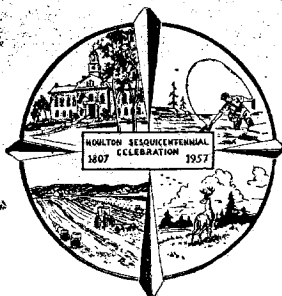
At the close of 1956 the number of volumes had increased to almost 25,000 and during that year the loans amounted to 42,607.

### CHANGES IN PERSONNEL

There have been changes in the personnel of the trustees over the years but the administration has been of the highest order with the result that the Cary Library is still today one of the finest cultural assets of which the Town of Houlton can boast.

As of the year of 1957, Leland O. Ludwig, Jr., is president of the board of trustees. Robert Williams is secretary and George Roach is treasurer. George B. Barnes and James C. Madigan complete the board.

... Best Wishes to HOULTON on this your 150th Birthday



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