

Your Library's Life Story

The history of a public library in Argyle began in the early 19th century. It was an idea that took root in the hearts of a number of Argyle residents. People who loved to read and valued the printed word joined efforts to bring the pleasure of reading to their community.

Recorded certificates of incorporation for the purpose of creating public libraries indicate that in 1805 the intention existed to establish an Argyle Library at the home of Peleg Bragg. This home served also as a tavern, and stood at the corner of Main and Sheridan Streets, the present location of Stewart's.

In 1823 a certificate of incorporation was issued to the Argyle Social Library to be housed in the home of Joseph Rouse. Historic records list Rouse's home as an inn. It was located on the site of the former IGA store and parking lot.

At the turn of the 20th century, several reading circles were active in the town of Argyle. Books for one of these little reading circles were kept at the home of Dr. Stillman on East St. in Argyle village (the large house next to the former Grange Hall). Books were borrowed and returned informally. Other reading groups in the town operated in a similar manner.

By 1920, it became clear that the interest in reading could be better satisfied by establishing a library. The members of the Village Improvement Association (now the Argyle Improvement Association) were instrumental in this process, and the book collections of the reading groups became the basis for the library's holdings.

The office of the late Dr. Sill (the site of the Stone Arch Glassworks building) became the first home of Argyle Free Library. The provisional charter issued at that time became a permanent charter in 1974.

In 1927, Cora Breason Mott and Anna Breason Gilchrist donated to the Library Association the building in which the library is presently housed. This is one of the oldest buildings in the village.

During the 1950's Mrs. Ralph McGeoch appeared on the television program "Queen for a Day" to request assistance for the Argyle library. Her efforts resulted in a new sign, drapes and remodeling.

In 1958, the library became a charter member of the Southern Adirondack Library System, better known as SALS.

In 1964 the library's remodeling was completed. But by the 1990s it was clear that more space was needed. Construction on a wing was begun in 1994 and completed in 1995. A dedication of this new wing was held on June 11, 1995.

Over the years, Argyle Free Library has grown from one room, heated by a wood stove and lit by a kerosene lantern, into a fully automated library with children's programs, meeting space, DVDs, Internet access and Fax capability. Beyond the books on the shelves, the Argyle Free Library has access to the holdings of 57 libraries in two library systems. They are only a computer click away.

Throughout its history, the Argyle Free Library's steady growth has been a result of the community's appreciation for the benefits of reading. The people of Argyle have always held a commitment to the idea that **a strong community needs a vital public library**. They have always demonstrated a willingness to work hard to achieve and sustain that goal.

Today, more and more technological and social demands are placed upon libraries. **Argyle Free Library is again facing a need to expand so as to continue its tradition of quality service to the community.** Once again, as it has in the past, it will be turning to its community for support as it seeks to grow into this new century.

Argyle Free Library's history of service to the community is its foundation. **Its future is in your hands.**