

88 Alice M. Ward Library (Jacob's Stand)

27 Park Street, Canaan, Vermont



Few public libraries exude the rich history of our country like the Alice M. Ward Memorial Library, also known as Jacobs Stand, in Canaan, Vermont. During its lifetime, the building has served as a tannery, stagecoach station, post office and stop on the Underground Railroad.

Fernanda C. Jacobs of Warren, Vermont built the inn or “stand” in 1846, after moving to Canaan to establish a tannery. Jacobs Stand was the northern most stage route stop in the United States on the Franklin, NH to Montreal, Canada route, as well as an overnight accommodation on the

Canaan to Lancaster, NH stage route. At the time stage coaches were replacing horseback riders for the mail service, and passenger rider service was becoming more popular with the invention of the Concord stagecoach, a more comfortable swing motion coach invented by the Abbot Downing Company in Concord, NH.

Personally, Jacobs was an ardent Republican and involved in the antislavery movement. It is said that this building was used as the most northerly station on the Connecticut River route of the Underground Railroad to aid runaway slaves in their attempts to reach the safety of Canada. From 1849 to 1854 the building also served as the Canaan post office. After 1888, the building was converted into a private residence and physician’s medical practice for Dr. Artemas Ward and his wife, Alice. Additions to the building included gable dormers and a hip-roofed barn.

This neo-Palladian temple style building is very unique for its time, coming a few decades after Jeffersonian Classicism was popular, but many years before the neo-Classical Revival. The building displays beautiful architecture, with a columned porch, an arched bay in the center, and recessed second floor balcony.

In 1930, the will of Alice M. Ward bequeathed the building and property to the Town of Canaan to be used as a public library. Since then, the building has been used as both a residence and as a library, which was named the Alice M. Ward Memorial Library and is still in use today.

Sources:

Hodgdon, Allen D. “Alice M. Ward Library (Jacob’s Stand) National Register Nomination Information.” Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. 1980. Web. Accessed 13 June 2013.

<http://www.crjc.org/heritage/V27-9.htm>