

# 51 Hanover (Etna) Town Library

100 Etna Road, Hanover, New Hampshire

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The Hanover Town Library, also called the Etna Library because of its physical location in the Village of Etna, is the town's first library building constructed at a time when there was great interest in small community libraries. The Etna Library is unique in that it is almost completely unaltered from the time of its construction in 1905 and has never faltered from its mission as a small community library.

Residing to the east of Etna Road, the library building is an integral part of the Etna Village area and is surrounded on three sides by a small hillside farm. In fact, the parcel that the building occupies was originally a part of the adjacent farm.

While the first collection of books was gathered in 1801, forming the first town library, it went through several iterations and locations around Etna. When the New Hampshire Library Act of 1891 provided grant monies to enhance the book collection, the need for a permanent and "right-sized" structure became apparent. In a March 1898 Town Meeting "The Hanover Free Library" was established with the election of three library trustees.

At the annual Town Meeting, held in March of 1905, voters gave approval to raise an additional \$600.00 to be combined with the previous appropriations made by the Selectmen and various donations of the citizenry, for the construction of a new library building. Library trustees were also instructed to have a fireproof vault built, in connection with the new building, for the proper storage and preservation of Town documents.

Fortunately, the board of trustees didn't have to look far for the architectural plans and drawings for the building since one of their own was Robert E. Fletcher, a noted professor of engineering at Dartmouth College. The facility's 50 foot x 80 foot building lot had been purchased two years earlier in 1903 for \$50.00.

Architecturally, the Etna Library was representative of the interest and growth in community libraries and a good example of a building type from the turn of the century. The single story brick building measures 33 feet 10 inches wide by 27 feet 10 inches deep, not including a small extension from the rear wall that was originally constructed as a vault for town documents and records. The windows are tall, narrow, wood double hung units set into the building, enclosed in pairs with a wide center mullion, and a small fixed single pane unit is located directly above the operable sash, typical for the period. A small portico of simple classical design provides definition to and protection for the front entrance. Tuscan columns support an entablature and cornice of wood construction all resting on a granite base.

The library was added to the National Register of Historic places in 1997.

## **Sources**

Barrett, Jr. , Frank J. "Hanover (Etna) Town Library." *Connecticut River Joint Commission, Inc.* Connecticut River Joint Commission, Inc., March 1, 1996. Web. Accessed, February 20, 2013, S. Mendonca.

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[http://www.hanovernh.org/Pages/Hanovernh\\_Library/index](http://www.hanovernh.org/Pages/Hanovernh_Library/index)