



Acton Libraries Timeline

Key:

Acton Libraries

West Acton Citizens' Library

Acton Memorial Library



1883

A group of West Acton residents founded the Citizens' Library Association of West Acton. One month later they open in a room above the old Post Office on Massachusetts Ave.

1884

Clara H. Nash is elected the first Librarian and library membership is set at \$1 annually.



1888

William Allan Wilde buys land from John Fletcher for \$2,500 to be used as the site for a memorial library, in memory of patriotic Acton citizens who fought in the Civil War.

MALDEN, Sept. 10, 1890.
Luther Conant, Esq., President Acton Memorial Library, Acton, Mass.—Dear Sir:—The Malden friends of William A. Wilde, who enjoyed the privilege of being present on the occasion of the dedication of your library and building, have procured a portrait of Mr. Wilde. This they ask your board to accept and hang upon the walls of your library, as a testimonial of their respect for its subject and a recognition of the hearty and graceful welcome that they received from your people on the beautiful day which we remember with pleasure.
Yours with respect,
MALDEN FRIENDS.

1890

Acton Memorial Library opens and Ida A. Hale serves as the first Librarian, 1890-1897.



1894

Founding member of the Citizens' Library, Phineas Wetherbee dies and bequeaths his house to the Library Association to be the permanent home of Citizens' Library.

1902

Citizens' Library gets its first card catalog and AML gets electric lights! Arthur Fuller Davis becomes the AML's third Librarian and works there for 43 years. Several of his paintings & etchings are on view at the present day AML.



1915

A traveling library is established and used to transport items between libraries, marking the beginning of Citizens' and Memorial Library's long relationship.

ASSABET VALLEY BEACON

A FRIEND INDEED
It all started four years ago when the Parent Teachers' Association asked Mrs. Margaret Richter to do a survey of the public and school libraries in Acton, reporting on their facilities and their needs. Among the suggestions that were included in the resulting ten page report was one from Miss Marie Sullivan of the State Department of Education, Library Division - a suggestion that a Friends of the Library group be formed in Acton.



1938

Citizens' Library of West Acton becomes affiliated with Memorial Library, acting as a distribution point for books until 1962.

1962

The Friends of the Acton Libraries is founded and becomes instrumental in library advocacy for all of Acton's libraries.

- Thursday, September 16, 1965

1988 - 1989

Acton Memorial Library officially joins Minuteman Library Network in 1988. The library catalog goes online in 1989, giving patrons access to 600,000+ volumes in 26 area libraries.



1991

The AML Foundation is incorporated as a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising funds for the library to offset loss of revenue that had forced the library to close on Sundays & Fridays.

1998

The renovation and expansion project at Acton Memorial Library is completed, and the library moves from their temporary location at 222 Main St. back to 486 Main St. in February 1998.



2008

The Civil War exhibit, "Not Afraid to Go," opens to the public.

2020

The COVID-19 global pandemic forces both libraries to temporarily close their doors to the public on March 14th. The libraries focus shifts to online programs and services. By June, both libraries begin to reopen with curbside pickup.

2022

West Acton Citizens' Library joins the Minuteman Library Network, rekindling a partnership between the two libraries.

2023

The West Acton Citizens' Library begins operating as a branch in the direction of the Select Board, and the two libraries function as a single system.

2024

The Citizens' and Memorial trustee boards collaborate on strategic planning and policy review for both libraries.

