

How Alstead got its public library

John Graves Shedd was born in Alstead Center in 1850. His family moved to Holden Hill in Langdon where he declared how he disliked farming and would never be a farmer. He clerked in the store of Timothy Tufts, and then moved on to a dry goods store in Rutland, Vermont. He moved once again to Chicago where he went to work for Marshall Field and Company as a stock boy making ten dollars a week. He eventually became the company's president in 1906.

Mr. Shedd married Mary Roenna Porter who had grown up on Alstead's River Street. Her father, Dr. Winslow B. Porter practiced medicine.

In 1909, Mr. Shedd hired Boston architects, McLean and Wright who designed a granite building resembling a Greek temple. Inside are Sienna marble columns which support the dome, mosaic floors, mahogany furniture, and marble mantle pieces.

Named in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Shedd's parents, the library was presented to the town on Old Home Day, August 25, 1910. Mr. Shedd specified that the library was for the use of both Alstead and Langdon residents.

Mr. Shedd also built the John G. Shedd Aquarium in Chicago whose shape resembles Alstead's library.