

## At the Helm: Our Library Directors

In its one hundred plus year history, the Conway Public Library has employed only eight head librarians.

The first, Louise (Hamblen) Bates was born in Lovell, Maine in 1865, the daughter of Isaac and Sarah (Thompson) Hamblen. Along with her library duties, she taught music and cared for her widowed mother. Under her tenure (1902-1908) the library was open daily.

A few months after her mother's death in 1906, Louise surprised her friends and family by marrying Homer Bates, a laborer from Vermont. The ceremony was small and private with the bride's dress a gift from her brother, Samuel, a missionary to Japan.

Little is known of the couple's brief marriage. However, in 1910, Homer and Louise had a child named Homer Q., known as "Robin." Sadly, Robin lived only six months.

Louise spent the remaining years of her life with her brother Willis who was serving in a church in Ohio. In March of 1929 Louise (Hamblen) Bates was hospitalized due to a fall and soon after succumbed to pneumonia. She is buried in Conway Village with her parents and infant son.

The second, Louise (Hill) Allard, served as librarian during 1908.



*Alice S. Pollard*

Third librarian, Nina (Hiscock) Wade, was a Conway native, born in 1890 the daughter of Ora and Clara (Broughton) Hiscock. She was librarian from 1908 to 1914. Nina and her husband, Leland Wade, owned and operated Wade's Cabins.

Mrs. Wade, who died in 1977, was survived by two sons and two daughters. She was a member of The Lady's Circle, The Congregational Church, the Hospital Aid Society, and Elmwood Grange.

Conway Public Library longevity champion, Alice S. Pollard was born in Tamworth, NH on April 24, 1880, the daughter of Albert and Annie (Remick) Pollard. She attended elementary school in Tamworth and high school at the New Hampton Institute. The Pollard family moved to Conway when Alice was 20. Before becoming the Conway Public Library's fourth librarian, Miss Pollard ran a millinery business.

For the last twenty years of her life, Miss Pollard made her home with her niece, Anna Carroll. She is remembered as a friendly and helpful librarian, a position that she held for more than 40 years, from 1914 to 1954. By September of 1954, ill health had forced her retirement. She died in April of 1955 shortly before her

75th birthday.

In his tribute to her Ira Glackens said: "Hers was the kind of devotion to and interest in her work which too often go unmarked. The service she rendered the community was great and long enduring. We shall all miss her."



*Persis Berry*

Persis Berry was born in Berlin, NH in 1896, the daughter of Eugene and Rose (Leighton) Hill. She attended Berlin High School and graduated from Plymouth Normal School in 1916. After teaching school in northern New Hampshire for several years, she moved to Conway with her husband, Elverton "Bert" Berry, a game warden.

In Conway, she taught school, served as a receptionist at the Presidential Inn and worked at the Conway Public Library for over 20 years, retiring in 1969. Elverton and Persis Berry had two sons, James and Roger. Elverton died in 1952 and James died in 1984.

Mrs. Berry was a member of the Conway Woman's Club, the Conway Historical Society, Carroll County R.S.V.P, the Conway Cemetery Association, the Piscataqua Pioneers, the Plymouth State Alumni Association and the Conway Village Congregational Church. She passed away in 1993 at the age of 97.

The sixth library director was Margaret (Truby) Marschner. Born in Pennsylvania, she came to New



*Margaret Marschner*

Hampshire in 1969, when her husband Kenneth became the chemistry teacher at Kennett High School. With a degree in medical technology, she accepted a position at Memorial Hospital. The following year she combined it with librarianship at the Conway Public Library. Under her direction the library grew. First was a children's room, then a local history room, followed by a complete renovation the library's lower level. The catalog and collection were automated. Adult and children's programs, art shows, and book discussions all became part of the libraries services. Under Margaret's guidance the trustees pursued avenues of expansion creating the present building.

Margaret held the positions of chair of the Carroll County Cooperative of Libraries, the New Hampshire Automated Information System, and President of the New Hampshire Library Association.

Margaret and her husband Ken are the parents of two married daughters, Jennifer and Krista, and numerous grandchildren.

The seventh library director was Tara Thomas. She held the position from 2009 to 2012.

David Smolen, our current library director received his Masters of Library Science in 1999 at the University of Maryland and worked for sixteen years in various library positions: Special Collections Librarian at the New Hampshire Historical Society; Senior Reference Librarian at Leach Library in Londonderry, NH; and Head of Technical Services at the Manchester City Library in Manchester, NH. David's great desire to live and work in the Mt. Washington Valley (home to his wife's family), and his engaging personality combined to create a feeling on the Board that he is a good match for our library, its staff, and the community. David has been at the Conway Public Library since July, 2013.