



"proscript" children, yet I wasted my youthful ardor upon its martial pages, and learned to glory in war, which both reason and conscience have since taught me to consider almost universally a crime. (Mann, p. 13)

Horace Mann's recitation of the story of the founding of the library misstates the reason why Franklin's gift was books rather than a bell. This perhaps explains why Tharp and other writers have made the same mistake. The March 18, 1785, letter from Benjamin Franklin discussed previously shows that the Franklinites suggested a bell, and Franklin responded with an offer of books for a library.

Mann's father was treasurer of the library between 1802 and 1806. As treasurer Thomas Mann would have been in charge of collecting taxes and fines from the subscribers to the private part of the library. It would appear, then, that there was a strong family interest in reading.

In 1839 in his *Third Annual Report* as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, Horace Mann presented his ideas about public libraries. He saw the public libraries as necessary "adjuncts to public schools," a phrase bound to irritate today's public librarians who necessarily have a broader vision for public libraries. Public libraries were necessary Mann said ". . . for with no books to read, the power of reading will be useless. . . ." Mann proposed the ". . . establishment of a free circulating library in every school district of the state."

(Cremin p. 4)

A year after Horace Mann made this third annual report, Franklin's town meeting contained this article in the warrant: "To see if it be the minds of the town to take any measures to improve their library so that it may be of some benefit to the citizens as it was intended by the illustrious donor, or act or do anything respecting said library the town may think proper."

Two years later the committee reported to the town that the library "remained in pretty good condition" with the exception that about sixty volumes were missing. The total of sixty probably referred to both the Franklin books and the social library. There is no evidence that the town meeting decided to "take any measures to improve the library. . . or act or do anything respecting said library. . . ."

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