



voted to give custody of the Franklin Library to the new association. This action occurred after the association petitioned the town for the books. Until 1861, members only could borrow books, but in that year the association voted to allow anyone who paid six cents per week per volume to take books from the library.

The association was active for several years, but the town report for the year ending February 28, 1873, notes that “. . . in time the amount of the annual assessment (\$1.00 per year or one payment of \$20.00 for life membership) being insufficient to pay necessary expenses and suitably replenish the library with such books as were required for full success of the association, a want of interest was manifest.” In other words, without enough money the library could not operate successfully.

As a result, the case of the Franklin Library was again brought before town meeting, and in November, 1871, the town voted to resume care of the library. It also voted for a board of trustees and for a sum of money for the selection and purchase of books. The 1872 town report indicated the first town expenditures for the library. In December, 1871, the Franklin Library Association voted to turn its books over to the use of the town “subject to be returned to the Association whenever they should desire.”

The following year several events came together to make the establishment of a partnership between the town and the Franklin Library Association possible. Dr. Oliver Dean, first president of the Franklin Library Association (F.L.A.), died and left twenty-five shares in the Boston and Albany Railroad to the association, “The income thereof only to be expended for books for the Association. . .” (Franklin Town Report, 1873, p. 35.) With a renewed interest in a public library in the town evident in the town meeting vote of 1871, together with the F.L.A.’s newly found wealth (\$250 income per year at the time), Franklin’s public library could be established on firmer ground. The next year the life members of the F.L.A. reorganized under a new Massachusetts law which had been passed at their instigation. The law allowed a town to appropriate money to a library corporation so long as the corporation permitted inhabitants of the town free access to and use of the library. (Franklin Town Report, 1873, pp. 32-35.)



*Oliver Dean.*

