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It must have been at about the time of this committee's report that the library was kept in a home opposite the Union Street Cemetery. For in an address given at the Franklin Centennial, the Rev. Albert M. Richardson stated, “That library was kept, in my boyhood in my father's house, and to its perusal I was indebted for a taste for reading and a thirst for knowledge.” (Blake, p. 217) (According to Blake, Richardson was born in 1822, and town records indicate that his family lived across from the Union Street Cemetery.)

The next time the library appears in any town records is 1856. At the town meeting of that year, a committee which had been appointed to check into the Franklin Library found that the library was in “considerable disorder.” Apparently during some time between 1842 and 1856, the library had been stored in a barn. Ella C. Campbell, director of the Franklin Public Library in the 1880s and 1890s, said that the Benjamin Franklin books had been kept in her father's barn at one time, according to Peirce. (Peirce, p. 30) In addition, in *Looking Backward 1909*, Laura Matilda (Blake) Rockwood wrote that the books were stored in her father's barn when the Congregational minister's house was being renovated.

Measures to Improve the Library

In 1858 at the instigation of the Rev. William Makepeace Thayer, the Franklin Library Association was organized. Thayer was most concerned about the preservation of the Franklin books. In a February 8, 1858, letter to the *Boston Traveller*, Thayer says that he has just examined the library, “. . . which is now among the almost forgotten things of this town. . .” And he ends the letter with the statement, “For some years past the library has been neglected to a degree that is really dishonorable to the town. Some of the volumes are missing, and very few people appear to set much value upon it . . . It is lamentable that it is so. If some towns possessed it, they would rear a beautiful edifice in which the books might be preserved, and make it the nucleus of a large collections of works.” In 1859, the town

