

GALE FREE LIBRARY ~ DAMON MEMORIAL

The Gale Free Library has a storied history that began in 1888 when it was founded by Samuel Gale, and his wife Susan Damon Gale. The couple's generous donation of land and funding paved the way for the library's construction. The Damon Memorial building was dedicated on August 29, 1888, and the library officially opened to the public three months later. The Trustees still function under the original deed of gift which states, "In trust forever hereafter...a Free Public Library and Reading-room for the use and enjoyment of all the inhabitants for the time being of said town."

Mr. Gale was briefly a teacher in the Holden Center School and had required that the Damon Memorial be built to serve as both the town's library and high school. From 1888 to 1926, the town's high school was located in the building, with most classes being held in what is known today as the Children's Room. The architect, Stephen C. Earle of Worcester, was influenced by the Romanesque Revival style of architecture, and thus created the Damon Memorial building in that style. The building was named the Damon Memorial, after Susan Gale's family, the Damon's. The Gale Free Library was named in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Gale.

Initially housing a collection of approximately 2,500 books, the Gale Free Library quickly became a vital resource for the community. Over the years, the library underwent several expansions and renovations to accommodate the growing demands of its patrons. Notably, a new wing was added in the 1950s to expand the library's capacity. In the early 2000s, the library underwent a major renovation project, which included the construction of a modern three-story addition. This expansion significantly increased the library's offerings and introduced contemporary amenities and technology. The building is currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

