

July 10th, 1933.

Robert S. Stranahan, Esq.,
1900 Main Street,
Springfield, Mass.

Dear Mr. Stranahan:

I have yours of the 6th inst., wherein you state Mr. Stranahan requested that before now he would receive a reply from us concerning fully the various questions presented in your letter of June 1st, and that he feels that the delay in responding indicates a lack of interest on the part of the town's people in the library project, and that he has asked you to write that unless you receive an answer like the 10th inst. a final answer satisfactory to him, that he will be obliged to abandon the project of building the library for North Hartford.

As you are undoubtedly aware, a definite answer to the many questions asked in your letter could not be given by an off-hand, and as stated in mine of June 6th it would necessitate taking the matter up with the proper authorities in the town. North Hartford is a farming community and the majority of its people are engaged in agriculture and were particularly so during this month and working approximately 12 hours per day, hence it has not been an easy matter to get the three members of the board of education, the two members of the board of finance, and the nine library directors together for a joint meeting to take action on this matter, but we did have a three hour meeting on Wednesday night, July 7th, the night before the day you wrote the ultimatum, and the contents of your letter was thoroughly discussed and I am answering the various questions in accordance with the wishes of the majority, to the best of my ability.

Before doing so, however, I wish to say a word on the question of alleged "acts of Co-operation," on the part of the people of the town and the so-called Dr. Stranahan has explained about. You may not know what has gone before, in fact I am not familiar with all the details, but the education and some of the library directors have a long file of correspondence which has passed between them and Mr. Stranahan during the past year. The first selection Alden S. Hill, with Mr. Bosley and Town Clerk Weeks, I believe, have made personal calls on Mr. Stranahan both at Springfield, Mass. and Westbrook, Conn. On July 23, 1933, after Mr. Stranahan had notified the authorities of the desire to erect a municipal library, the selection called the first special town meeting which was well attended and a committee was appointed to confer with Mr. Stranahan, the proposed site was discussed and provision made for title search of the same, the meeting adjourning to August 6th. On August 6th another special town meeting was held wherein it was voted to accept Mr. Stranahan's gift of a library. At this meeting I believe a set of plans was presented and discussed and the meeting then adjourned to August 20th. On August 20th another

July 10th, 1937.

special town meeting was held and a letter read from Mr. Atwater, also a report from the title searchers received and discussed, and an appropriation made for the surveying of the proposed library site. We even went so far also at this meeting to appoint an acting Librarian, May Countryman, now deceased, the meeting then adjourning to September 3rd. On September 3rd another special town meeting was held and a letter from Mr. Townsend, the then architect, also a letter from Mr. Atwater and the meeting was adjourned to September 17th. On September 17th another adjourned special town meeting was held wherein two further letters from Mr. Atwater were read wherein he expressed an entire change of mind and plan and the meeting was then adjourned to the annual town meeting October 5th. At the annual town meeting on October 5th it was voted to use the Town Green property as a site for the proposed library. Mr. Atwater at first was satisfied with the title of the Town to the proposed site, in fact the New Haven Attorney for Architect Townsend, Judge Arthur Chambers, had advised Mr. Townsend, who in turn had advised Mr. Atwater that the Town in his opinion had a fee simple estate. Thereafter Mr. Atwater informed us that he was not satisfied with the title and that he believed that the only way it could be cleared up would be by an Act of the State Legislature. At all these meetings the question of the library was freely discussed. In December last Mr. Atwater advised that he was abandoning the entire library project for the time being at least and this matter was discussed at a special town meeting held December 12, 1936, although it was not in the call of the meeting, and many of the persons present at said meeting were disappointed to learn of Mr. Atwater's decision.

Our State Legislature convenes in January, and while it was the opinion of the writer that the Town had absolute title to the land, it was his further opinion that if the title was defective that the proper procedure would be the bringing of an action in the Superior Court for this County requesting a declaratory judgment and quieting of title, etc. Inasmuch as Mr. Atwater had advised that the Legislature was the proper forum before which to proceed, wishing to cooperate with him in every respect, the writer went before the Legislature and presented a bill, spending one day at Hartford some 40 miles from New Haven, and at a later date in April spent another day before the Legislative Committee at a hearing on the bill which was also attended by a representative body of people from North Branford and the chairman of the committee informed me after the hearing had been closed that they would favorably report the bill if the Attorney General of the State ruled that they had authority to do so. The next day I received a letter from the Chairman of the Commission stating that the Attorney General had ruled that they had no authority to do so and suggested the withdrawal of the bill. We, therefore, after finding that the Legislature was not the proper place, as soon as possible prepared a complaint dated April 21st and returnable to the Superior Court on the first Tuesday of May. Before bringing this action a great deal of preliminary work was required in searching probate records and land records from 1765, publication of notice in the newspaper, examination of the authorities, and after the case

July 12th, 1937.

was returned to Court an argument on the same which finally terminated on June 1st in a favorable decision by said Court.

As you undoubtedly know, the fund which Mr. Atwater now has in his possession was created under the will of his uncle who died in 1911 and of whose estate his father was executor. I understand the fund was bequeathed to Mr. Atwater's father for the purpose of erecting a memorial to Mr. Atwater's grandfather in the event that his uncle had not done so before his death. His uncle did not erect the memorial during his lifetime. Mr. Atwater's uncle's estate was settled within a reasonable time and the fund was distributed to his father who died a few years later without having erected said memorial in accordance with the terms of the will aforesaid. I understand the fund then came into the possession of Mr. Atwater from his father's estate, and according to the correspondence received from Mr. Atwater it appears to have been administered by him for the past twenty years or so.

The Town to date hereof has expended approximately \$600.00 in endeavoring to further the library project for title searching, surveys, actions to settle title, and expense of special town meetings duly warned according to law.

So much for the alleged lack of co-operation and delay on the part of the people of North Branford, and it is submitted solely so that you may understand the situation from my angle, and not intended as a criticism of Mr. Atwater's position in the matter.

1. Erection and equipment of building.

So far as the allocation of \$8,000.00 for the erection of the library and its equipment with furniture and fixtures, and the remainder of \$25,000.00 being set aside as a permanent endowment fund, is concerned: It was the opinion of some persons present at the meeting that with the increasing building cost that a suitable library with furniture and fixtures could not be had for such a small sum as \$8,000.00. However the final plans and specifications may demonstrate to the contrary. It was, however, the opinion of the majority of those present that a minimum of \$20,000. ought to be set aside as the permanent endowment fund, if possible.

It was the unanimous opinion of the persons present that the architect's plans and specifications should be submitted to and approved by the Library Directors, also by the Board of Selectmen who by virtue of their office have general supervisory powers over town property and of course over public buildings such as this library structure would be. While I appreciate that in a way Mr. Atwater is furnishing the funds for the erection of the library yet I do not consider it as a gift from him individually as this fund was originally created by his uncle in a bequest to his father as hereinbefore referred to.

July 12th, 1937.

With reference to the question of the Library Board and a Library Committee being in existence, this matter has been fully explained, I understand, to Mr. Atwater in a letter written by Mrs. Doody of the Library Board. When the question first came up at a special town meeting, it was deemed advisable to have a committee appointed who would have authority to confer with Mr. Atwater relative to the proposed Library. This was done about a year ago. At the annual town meeting and election however held in October last 9 Library Directors were duly elected pursuant to the provisions of Sec. 1074 of the General Statutes of Conn. Rev. of 1930. It is the consensus of opinion that these duly elected Library Directors have replaced any committee that may have been merely appointed at a special town meeting, in fact the committee has ceased to function for all practical purposes since the election of the Library Directors. The names of the members of the Library Directors Board are as follows: Rev. F. J. Smith, Lucy Seibold and Edgar Johnson, for 3 years; Ruth J. Beers, Hazel S. Hill and A. Levey Harrison, for two years; and Alden J. Hill, Carrie M. Doody and Eleanor Rogers, for 1 year. This Board of Library Directors has duly organized and Carrie M. Doody is the Chairman.

With reference to keeping the building insured during its erection: I believe that it is a fact that the owner of land legally owns any structure thereon and therefore insurance companies ordinarily make the policy payable to the owner. However it may be possible to have a rider attached to the policy making it payable to Mr. Atwater as his interest may appear in the same manner as a mortgagee. If not, the Board of Selectmen, as agents for the Town, will be willing to enter into an agreement with Mr. Atwater to protect him in so far as any insurance money realized may be available to him for replacing the structure. I believe that this is a detail which we need spend little time on.

With reference to deeding over the site pending erection of the building: such a transfer of title would not be feasible and the desire of the people for the library it would seem should be sufficient security against any interference by the Town with the completion of the building after it has been started. The town itself is entirely solvent and in much better financial condition than many other towns in the State.

II. Acquisition of books for Library. It is correct that the State of Connecticut will contribute annually for the care, custody and distribution of books and for the future maintenance and increase of such library, a sum not to exceed the amount expended by the town for such purposes, said State appropriation not to exceed \$200.00. This appropriation would have to be divided between the proposed library and the one at Northford, so that \$100. is the maximum aid the Town may receive from the State toward the proposed library's maintenance under existing law. Sec. 1077 of the General Statutes of Conn. Rev. of 1930 is to this effect.

July 12th, 1937.

The law governing public libraries generally is found in the General Statutes of Conn. Sec. 1072 to 1086 inclusive. We feel that once the library becomes a reality that many public spirited citizens will contribute books to it or money for the purpose of the same. Of course at this time it would be quite premature to start solicitating along these lines, but if past performance is a guide to future action, the Town has shown an interest in the acquisition of books for its small library at Northford and will undoubtedly do so in the event one is erected in the other end of the Town. At this point may I inquire whether it is Mr. Atwater's intention that the original cost for books to stock the library shall be met by the Town over and above the public contributions above referred to? Furthermore, may any portion of the income from the endowment funds, if and when created, be used for the purchase of books?

III. Provision for expense of Maintenance and Operation.

With reference to the provision for maintenance and operation of the proposed library, if you will forward the proposed trust agreement I will take the matter up with the authorities. I feel, however, that it may be necessary to call a special town meeting to obtain legal authority for the execution of such a document, especially will this be true if the Town is to bind itself to contribute annually for the support of the library the difference between the total cost of operation and the income received from the endowment fund which he plans to create. As to the disposition of the fund in the event of the discontinuance of the library, we feel that a provision for another "Suitable Memorial," would be in order.

With reference to the historical collections, many such pieces have been loaned or given to Yale University by some of the older residents of the Town, and while there is no historical society in North Branford, there are undoubtedly some persons who have collections worthwhile housing in the library. However this was merely a suggestion and if it is the opinion of Mr. Atwater that this feature should be eliminated, probably the people will abide by his decision.

Finally, I cannot definitely commit the Town to the terms of a proposed trust agreement, but as hereinbefore stated, if you will forward same as is desired by Mr. Atwater, I will be glad to go over it, and if I feel that it is proper, having regard to our statute law, I will see that it is forthwith submitted to a special town meeting for action by the legal voters of the town.

IV. Supervision and Management of Library.

With reference to the supervision and management of the library, under the existing general law of Connecticut under which we must

SECRET

examined and had been found to be a
ready source of information. The
operation of the Library of Congress
and the provision of information
to the Library of Congress. The
of which is the only one of the
the form. It is not that the
which that they have been
a library in the form of a
to the Library of Congress. It is
on the form. The Library of Congress
is not a source of information. It is
a source of information.

The General was also required to hold the full rank of Major General, instead of being promoted to Major General as he was with

THE RESULTS OF THIS RESEARCH
APPEARING UNDER THE TITLE

failed to honor the terms of the one-half million dollar loan, and the one-half million dollar loan has gone into the hands of the creditor. The loan was made by the Government of the United States to the Government of the United States, and the Government of the United States is not responsible for the failure of the Government of the United States to honor the terms of the loan.

It was my intention to inform
you, and that the records
are in 7042137, I am

SECRET

1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 2680, 26