

Transcribed from Ena Cane's edited draft.

To: The Librarian in the year 2071
S. WHITE DICKINSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Dear Successor to this post a century from now:

I wish I could bequeathe [sic] to you this April, 1971, with sunlight pouring the east windows of the Main Room, burnishing jonquils and forsythia branches and the bright jackets of new books, spreading yellow squares on the floor, stirring a sleepy wasp into drunken flight: but what I'd like most to leave you of our "now" is Whately today, small enough so this little library can serve the whole community.

The big libraries have information banks, computerized and stored for instant retrieval. It is efficient – and impersonal. We are too small for this sophistication. Here everyone is someone known; often children and their parents, young people or old sitting in the littlest chairs, knowing from the first which corner of the children's room is their's [sic].

Books overflow our shelves and are piled on window ledges in the stacks . . . when you read this, I hope they'll be weeded and leave space for your collection. By then, perhaps you will have done away with books, those private islands of delight. Will you have batteries of micro-readers in this sun-filled room? When someone asks about the Nixon years of questions 1970's concern with ecology, will you set up a tape and micro fiche to answer them?

This is the possibility that makes me wish for you this same state of books on every shelf, of periodicals' invitation on the tables, and the long view across the valley to Sunderland's church spire and Mount Sugarloaf.

I wish for you bobolinks swinging on the tall grass behind the library in June, and the October smoldering blaze of maples on the hill, and the fairy-tale landscape under snow.

Now on this April day, just two hundred years after Governor Hutchinson approved the town's incorporation as Whately, I wish for you the same high peace and joy as I have found here. I wish the town will be the way it was in 1771 and is today, filled with Mortons, Dickinsons, Graves, Whites, Fields and Bardwells with white houses, and Chestnut Plain Road lined with the maple trees that stirred old Fred Bardwell so.

Beyond this little library, wars rage, greed reigns and lust for power battens on both. In Whately there is peace and children and the songs of robins.

Sincerely Your predecessor in 1971,