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Secretary of the Commonwealth

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SHELBURNE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Shelburne Free Public Library for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March meeting. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the Shelburne Free Public Library in the National Register will help to protect this historically significant and architecturally unique community resource.”

In continuous use for more than 115 years, the Shelburne Free Public Library, 233 Shelburne Center Road, is located in the village of Shelburne Center, about one-eighth of a mile south of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway/MA Route 2. Constructed in 1898, this well-preserved building is built of local fieldstones with brownstone trim, augmented by flat river stones in the entry arch, window openings, and buttresses. It is the only example of Late Gothic Revival-style architecture rendered in fieldstone in the region. A series of residents constructed and guided the library, serving as builders, librarians, and trustees, adjusting the building, its collections, and its activities to meet the needs of its village community. The library’s main block is thought to have been built by George Burnham, a farmer and carpenter from nearby Greenfield.

In 1952, the creation of a low, fieldstone wing created more room to house children's books, along with a furnace to heat the building. During the 20th century the library also functioned as a community center, hosting talks, exhibits, and demonstrations, as well as children's activities, movies, and arts and crafts. Other sorts of events, less typical for a library, also took place here, such as a memorial service for librarian and trustee Eleanor Williams in 1957. Today, the library is well maintained and remains in active use, and has been brought up to date with technological advancements and broader services.

The Shelburne Free Public Library is one of six historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation's official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are more than 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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