



Primus Parsons Mason (1817-1892), born to free black parents, was an industrious local entrepreneur, landowner and businessman. A philanthropist, he left the majority of his money to found Springfield's first Home for Aged Men, an institution open to all races. Later, Winchester Square, where the four neighborhoods of Old Hill, Upper Hill, Bay and McKnight come together, was renamed Mason Square in his memory, and in 1989 the Winchester Square Branch Library was renamed the Mason Square Branch Library as well.



Annie's Reading Porch is a very special place for young children to sit and read, visit or play. A tribute to Annie Curran, the porch was introduced in April 2011.

Library Locations

A Brighter Future for Springfield Today

Central Library

220 State Street
(413) 263-6828

Brightwood Branch

(413) 263-6805
359 Plainfield Street

East Forest Park Branch

(413) 263-6836
122 Island Pond Road

East Springfield Branch

(413) 263-6840
21 Osborne Terrace

Forest Park Branch

(413) 263-6843
380 Belmont Avenue

Indian Orchard Branch

(413) 263-6846
44 Oak Street

Liberty Branch

(413) 263-6849
773 Liberty Street

Mason Square Branch

(413) 263-6853
765 State Street

Pine Point Branch

(413) 263-6855
204 Boston Road

Sixteen Acres Branch

(413) 263-6858
1187 Parker Street



SPRINGFIELD CITY LIBRARY:

**PART OF SPRINGFIELD'S HISTORY,
PART OF SPRINGFIELD'S FUTURE**

The Mason Square Branch

1943–present



765 State Street
Springfield MA 01109



Winchester Square Branch Facilities Make It 'Library of the Future'...

Springfield, Mass., Daily News, Tuesday, April 6, 1963



In 1943 the Winchester Square (now known as Mason Square) area of Springfield Massachusetts was a prosperous and diverse community, with thriving businesses, active churches, and excellent schools and colleges. Not surprising then, that in March of that year, library advocates pulled together and pushed for the establishment of a branch library in the area. On April 12 the Library leased space at 826 State Street, and an “agency” of the Springfield City Library opened on May 18. Growing from a deposit collection housed in a rented storefront to a library agency one month later, it soon became apparent that a full service library was necessary. (After only one month, book circulation was higher than at three older branches!) In the fall of 1950 neighborhood residents were concerned that their library might be closed due to budget issues so parents, children, and teachers from the area's seven schools worked together to keep Winchester Square from being without a branch library. They succeeded beyond their expectations and in May of 1951 the branch was relocated to a much larger space, 21 Catharine Street, with over 300 people visiting on the May 23 Opening Night.

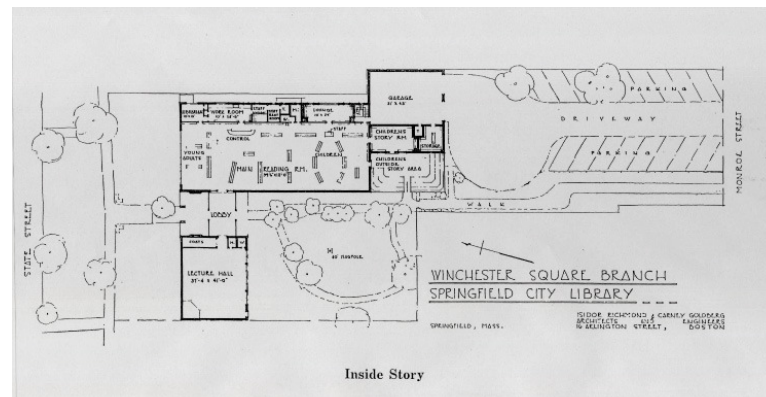
Often visiting this branch for books was an elderly neighborhood resident, Annie G. Curran. Annie was born in Springfield during the Civil War, was quite independent, even owning one of the earliest cars in the city, yet lived a simple life. She enjoyed sewing, listening

to the radio, and reading, especially about local and national current events. Outliving three husbands, and investing monies left to her, she stunned the City upon her death in April of 1952 by leaving



over one million dollars to establish and operate a full service branch library in the Winchester Square area, yet wanted no glory for herself. She did not want the new library named after her, but simply a “real full service library with meeting space”.

When it opened in September of 1955, at 765 State Street, the modern design made the new Winchester Square Branch Library a unique and inviting space for all ages, boasting an outdoor Reading Garden, children's outside story area, and spacious auditorium able to accommodate as many as 200 children to watch a movie. The main reading space included built-in ceiling speakers so patrons could listen to music as they browsed the book collections. The following year the Library's one-floor design was given an award by the Easter Seal Society, noting its lack of stairs, nice wide doors and easy-reach bookshelves as a “boon to handicapped and heart patients particularly.”



The Springfield Library and Museums Association operated all branches of the library system until February 2003 when the Library became a City Department. This building had been sold to the Urban League of Springfield in 2001 and the Community Room held the library, while the remainder of the building became the Urban League headquarters. The Library continued to serve residents, albeit on a much more limited basis. Still, the Mason Square Branch has been a vital part of this neighborhood since its inception. Residents have supported and steadfastly defended it, most recently working and planning while the eminent domain process played out. The City recovered ownership of 765 State Street allowing the library to again provide services in the entire building.

The Springfield Library Foundation, guardians of the Annie G. Curran Endowment, allocated \$1.5 million in the fall of 2010 to renovate and refurbish this building, and the “new” Mason Square Branch Library celebrated its grand reopening in April of 2011, fittingly during National Library Week.



The April 2011 ribbon cutting ceremony with Mayor Domenic J. Sarno, Library Foundation President Charles V. Ryan, City Councilors E. Henry Twiggs, Clodo Concepción, Kateri Walsh and many others.