Dear Citizen of Concord,

We are pleased to send you this Annual Report from the Concord Free Public Library Corporation for fiscal year 2016–2017.

Once again we are delighted to report an increase in our annual appeal participation in both donors and dollars. We are extremely grateful for this strong support of the Library since we believe it reflects donors’ recognition of the Library as a significant cultural and intellectual center for people in our community. The Library Corporation contributed over $650,000 to the Library in FY 2016–2017 for buildings and grounds; Special Collections exhibitions, programs, and acquisitions; insurance; security; equipment; books and materials; and scholarships.

One of the highlights of Special Collections this year was the acquisition of almost 500 pages of original manuscripts by Louisa May Alcott. As the largest collection of Alcott’s working manuscripts (showing her process), it will be a significant resource for scholars. In the gallery, the exhibition Picturing Emerson: A Selection of Lifetime Portraits of Ralph Waldo Emerson coincided with the publication of Picturing Emerson: An Iconography by Joel Myerson and our own Curator of Special Collections, Leslie Perrin Wilson.

We have seen significant increases in program attendance for all age groups, including adults, teens, and children. The Library is bustling with activity, and we are constantly looking for ways to accommodate more people and more programs. While people continue to use the Library in traditional ways, people are increasingly using the Library in new ways. People want social spaces as well as quiet spaces. People want more areas to meet, collaborate, and learn. Teens want more space to call their own. Families want spaces where children can engage in both quiet and lively activities. Patrons want to use a wide range of technology throughout the Library. To meet all of these needs, we are actively working on plans informed by our long-range plan and community input. We look forward to sharing our plans with you as they develop and will continue to include the town in our planning process.

A few people may still be questioning the relevance of libraries in today’s world. But the vast majority understands that the role of libraries and the mission of our Library is perhaps more important than ever in a democratic society. It is a place for civic discourse, for quiet reflection, for active thought, for reading and writing, for gathering, for learning, and for entertainment—a hub, a forum, a commons, a sanctuary.

Wishing you a happy and fulfilling new year,

Sherry Forman Litwack
President, CFPL Corporation

Support for the Library is support for the community. Your generosity to the Concord Free Public Library Corporation is an affirmation that CFPL is critical to the lives of all Concordians. As stewards for the Library, the Library Corporation spends over $650,000 per year to preserve, maintain and improve both the Main Library and the Fowler branch. Gifts to the Annual Fund directly support the purchase of new books, updates to technology, Special Collections, exhibits, the preservation and care of the buildings and grounds, scholarships and more.

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Key elements of the plan include: the Children’s Library, a kid-friendly space for activities and quiet time, with outdoor access and family restrooms; new meeting rooms for local groups and organizations; a large, flexible-use space for Library programs and collaboration during open times and after-hours; a teen zone designed to accommodate hanging out, homework, and team projects; the Hub, a central location for finding information and new materials; the Commons, where patrons can enjoy coffee and conversation, with views of the lawn and the Children’s Library; and expanded space for Special Collections and research, enhancing access to historical town documents and artifacts that represent one of the nation’s most comprehensive community archives—a resource for both scholars and local residents.

Renovation also would enable the relocation of currently inaccessible books, and improve the HVAC system. In addition, we are exploring technological enhancements to support patrons on-site and online—for example, mobile devices for use throughout the Library, interactive introductions to the collections, or podcasts featuring our guest speakers.

Libraries today play a critical role as bulwarks of democracy, discourse, and community life. This initiative will ensure that CFPL can continue to sustain our town’s civic life for generations to come.

We invite you to imagine the possibilities, inquire about our progress, and stay tuned for more updates!
Library Director’s Report

2016–2017 brought many successes for the Concord Free Public Library (CFPL). Among the year’s highlights include the launch of a new website with responsive design at concordlibrary.org. Clear navigational features of the site facilitate access to the growing collection of digital media and training resources, as well as historical documents pertaining to Concord. The 200th anniversary of Henry David Thoreau’s birth resulted in a record-breaking 250+ attendees at the exhibition opening of “Concord, which is my Rome”: Henry Thoreau and His Home Town. During the spring, Library staff led book discussions and programs based on Thoreau’s essay Walking. Families marked the anniversary with a literary train trip between Concord and Fitchburg complete with blackberry ice cream, a Story Walk, and nature crafts. This special event was made possible by collaboration between CFPL, Fitchburg Public Library, Concord Museum, and the Mass Center for the Book.

Programming for children remains among one of the Library’s most important roles and participation. In the 2017 “Build a Better World” summer reading program increased with 321 children reading 223,846 minutes over the course of the summer. The creative and dedicated children’s librarians also offered a fall series entitled, “101 Picture Books CFPL Loves” for ages birth to 5 years with special story times featuring the titles. Teen attendance at the Library remains high due in part to a new weekly Girls Who Code club for girls in grades 6-12, which strives to close the gender gap in technology, while teaching computing skills. In response to an interest by parents in coding opportunities for younger children, CFPL launched “Tech Tuesdays” on early release days with instructors from Empow Studios offering workshops on topics from Lego robotics to 3D design skills. Other popular programs have included monthly cookbook, literary, and mystery book discussions.

CFPL also enhanced its technology offerings through the purchase of a new 3D printer, additional self-checkout machines with an e-commerce payment option and new laptops for borrowing within the Library. On a snowy April 1st CFPL hosted a Technology Fair which 100+ residents attended to learn more about wireless hotspots, telescopes, 3D printer, and STEAM resources as well as databases and downloadable and streaming media. This fall a technology consultant assisted us by leading focus groups related to technology planning to help inform future initiatives and training opportunities.

Partnership with the League of Women Voters of Concord–Carlisle has enabled the Library to support voter education by providing a display of historic materials about the League’s work for women and a professor at Harvard University. She is also the author of Well-behaved Women Seldom Make History. We sponsor the Sing-a-long with Ed Morgan programs, CCHS Student Study Day, and the Author Series. Our “Friday Flicks at Fowler” film series shows a variety of perspectives and ideas from around the world. We sponsor several programs in the Concord Festival of Authors. In the winter of 2017 “Music from the Library” celebrated its 20th anniversary season of presenting world class artists in the intimate acoustics of the Main Library Rotunda. Once again, we welcomed capacity audiences to our free concerts. The season opened in February with an extraordinary concert by the Borromeo String Quartet, followed by a reception hosted by Rebecca Purcell, to whom we extend special thanks. Anastasia Seifedinova gave an exquisite piano recital in March and the season concluded in a jazzy way in April with the Eric Hofferber Quintet, whose performance was designated the Hans Poppel concert in honor of one of our founding Music Committee members. Special thanks to Robert Levers, who designed the 20th anniversary logo, in addition to designing the program booklet covers, and to the other members of the music committee, Marilyn Bone Kloss, Marcia Marlow, and Sally Sanford. Our thanks also to the entire Library staff who assist these concerts in so many ways and especially to Warner Wood, who has so ably helped us transform the Rotunda into a concert space and return it back to proper form afterwards for 20 years. We look forward to another great season in 2018.

The “Poetry at the Library” series hosted Josh Bell, author of Alma’s Theory and No Planets Strike; three-term U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky who read from his newest book of poems, At the Foundling Hospital; and Poet-translator Eleanor Goodman who read her own poems and her award-winning translations of contemporary Chinese poets.
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS REPORT

In 2016–2017, the staff of the William Munroe Special Collections designed, prepared, installed, publicized, and planned accompanying programs for two major gallery exhibitions: Picturing Emerson (March–May 2017) and "Concord, which is my Rome": Henry Thoreau and His Home Town (July–October 2017). The former celebrated the publication of a comprehensive Emerson iconography by Joel Myerson and CPPL curator Leslie Perrin Wilson. Margaret Emerson Bancroft, Myerson, and Wilson all spoke at the opening on March 24. Wilson presented three curator's gallery talks during the run of the exhibition, and, in April, Meghan Murray (Emerson Umbrella artist-in-residence) delivered a related talk on the challenges and rewards of portraiture.

The Thoreau bicentennial exhibition opened in July with a gala reception and a substantive lecture by Thoreau scholar and biographer Laura Dassow Walls. From July into September of 2016, Wilson conducted the final four of five public gallery tours to accompany the 2016 Wyeth/Men of Concord exhibition (part of a collaboration with the Concord Museum). She also led several private tours for scheduled groups, including one for the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering in July 2016. The Library's final Wyeth program was a talk by artist and illustrator Ilse Plume, "Art Inspired, Art Commissioned."

Staff Assistant Constance Manolo Skocay assembled several well-received displays for the Special Collections and Main Library lobby showcases, highlighting a variety of topics: national park photographs by Herbert Wendell Gleason, in celebration of the national park centennial; the work of the Concord Dance Hostess Committee during World War II; winter images of Concord; photographs of Bush (the Emerson house on the Cambridge Turnpike), to accompany the Emerson portraits exhibition in the gallery; Flynn-Kennedy letters, in honor of the centennial of the birth of John F. Kennedy; and Concord town meeting, at the request of the League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle. She also participated in the juried process through which area artists are booked for month-long slots when the gallery is not required for Special Collections exhibitions. Project Archivist Janaya Kizzie prepared a display of West Concord photographs and presented a public program on postcards in October.

The department offered a range of freestanding Concord-related programs: a presentation on Thoreau pencils by Henrik Otterberg and Feng I Tai; a book launch for Thoreau at 200, in collaboration with the Thoreau Society; a slide lecture on Concord barns and stone walls by local resident Pierce Brownie; and a lecture by Richard Higgins on his book Thoreau and the Language of Trees. In addition, staff delivered presentations to visiting classes and organizations including: Concord Academy history students; an NEH-funded teachers' seminar for college and community college teachers; "Rivers and Revolutions" students from CCHS; the CCACE Concord history and guides class; visiting German college students taking part in a Walden Woods Project program; and the Old Concord Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In May, Leslie Wilson spoke to the Louisa May Alcott Society at the American Literature Association conference in Boston.

We were fortunate that when long-time Special Collections Technical Assistant Robert C. Hall left CPPL late in 2016, Janaya Kizzie was able to take over his essential digital responsibilities, although this reduced the amount of time she could devote to her third round of archival processing work (funded by the Library Corporation). Before she departed at the end of June, she was able to complete the organization, arrangement, and description of the Ada Shepard Papers and W. Barksdale Maynard Papers. The finding aids for these collections are now accessible on the Library website. Additional smaller processing and descriptive projects were undertaken by four interns (Jennifer Richards, Katheryn Marchak-Wansom, Jessica Hinson-Williams, and Brianne Comeau) from the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science archival degree program.

Research use of the department's holdings was, as always, vigorous. Staff was pleased to see the results of access to our collections come to fruition in the publication of several important new pieces of scholarship, including Laura Dassow Walls’s Henry David Thoreau: A Life, Robert D. Thorson’s The Boatman, Thoreau at 200, and Henry David Thoreau in Context (to which Leslie Wilson contributed an essay on Thoreau and Concord). Other departmental activities for the year included arranging and facilitating the capture through the Concord Oral History Program of a panel discussion by five Concord Olympic medalists, and participation in creating an audio tour of selected works of art from the library collection and of an accompanying web-accessible version and printed brochure of the tour. And, of course, the collections continued to grow through gift and purchase.

Even as Special Collections staff anticipated the opening of our exhibition celebrating Henry Thoreau's two hundredth birthday, we looked forward to the spring 2018 installation of a display to showcase a recent gift of sketchbooks and letters by Ada Shepard, governor to the Hawthorne children in 1858 and 1859, while the Hawthorne family lived in Italy. Check in on the progress by visiting concordlibrary.org.

Four additional lectures and four public gallery tours completed the exhibition-related programming. The lectures were all delivered by scholars currently engaged in significant work on Thoreau. Elizabeth Hall Witherell (Editor-in-Chief, the Thoreau Edition) spoke on September 16 on "I think I could write a poem to be called Concord; Thoreau Expresses the Inexpressible"; Robert Thorson (Professor of Geology, University of Connecticut) on September 23 on "The Boatman: Henry David Thoreau's River Years"; Robert A. Gross, Draper Professor of Early American History, Emeritus, University of Connecticut) on October 7 on "The Nick of Time: 'Coming of Age in Thoreau's Concord"; and Robert N. Hudspeth (Research Professor at the Claremont Graduate University, Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Redlands, and editor of The Correspondence of Henry D. Thoreau) on October 14 on "Thoreau's Concord in His Correspondence." Curator Leslie Perrin Wilson's gallery tours on August 16, September 9, September 28, and October 2 were well-attended.

Public response to the exhibition was gratifying. Visitors to the Library's gallery included many Thoreau admirers for whom the opportunity to see manuscripts in his hand and artifacts of his life formed part of a moving pilgrimage experience.
The Library Corporation

> We are guardians. With oversight for preservation and maintenance, we ensure that the Library’s historic structures will grace and serve the community for generations to come.

> We are trailblazers. Spearheading facility expansion and innovation—from new spaces to sustainable systems—we meet evolving needs and forge a vibrant future for the Library.

> We are conservators. Plants, lawn, benches, or the shade of a sheltering tree on a summer day—these settings and amenities, which we support, enhance the patron experience.

> We are champions of Concord’s heritage. The Library Corporation’s Special Collections undergirds a world-class repository of New England culture.

We also contribute to initiatives such as book acquisitions and special events. Critically, our flexible resources and process enable the Library to grasp significant opportunities. For example, our timely acquisition of property adjacent to the Main Library laid the foundation for much needed expansion. The Corporation plays a vital role in fulfilling Concord’s aspirations for its Library.

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Deanne and Vivianne Aldrich  
Karen Allen and Maggie  
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Kenneth and Lynda Anderson  
Cato and Alexis Anderson  
Richard and Marilyn Anderson  
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George and Carolyn Grunol  
Brian and Virginia Goufle

The Friends of the Concord Free Public Library (CFpl)

A productive partnership advances the Library’s work. The Town of Concord allocates municipal funding for its operation budget, including staff, utilities, and books and materials. Dependent entirely on private philanthropic support from the community, the nonprofit Concord Free Public Library Corporation owns and oversees the buildings, grounds, and Special Collections. The Library Corporation also raises and manages the endowment and the Annual Fund—providing essential funding to augment the operating budget.

TOWN OF CONCORD staff, operations, utilities, books & materials funded by the town

CFPL CORPORATION buildings, grounds, Special Collections funded by community philanthropy

CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY LIBRARY COMMITTEE policies, long-range planning

THE FRIENDS OF CFpl programs, books & media, museum passes funded by membership dues and book sales

A MAINSTAY OF THE LIBRARY  
The generosity of Concord residents created and continues to sustain the nonprofit Concord Free Public Library Corporation. The Library is a central pillar of the Library, complementing the Town’s budget for operations and the Friends’ contribution of programming and materials. Corporation Trustees hold responsibility for the unique premises and special collections that distinguish the Library.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DONORS  
We are deeply grateful to donors at every level, all of whom it make possible for The Concord Free Public Library to continue providing essential services to our community. This list recognizes gifts and pledges in support of the Concord Free Public Library Corporation from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. Thank you!
The William Munroe Special Collections have grown into the most comprehensive archive of primary and secondary source material related to Concord history, life, landscape, literature, people, and influence from 1635 to the present day. Special Collections officially began with the founding of the Concord Free Public Library in 1873 and the far-sighted request of the Library Committee for citizens to donate material of local significance to ensure “an appropriate gift of the present generation to posterity.”

The Library Corporation is proud to announce that an art tour has been launched on concordlibrary.org to showcase 18 unique pieces of art that adorn the walls on the first level of the Library. This tour allows users to hear audio descriptions of each selected piece of art. A printed map is available to use during the walking tour.