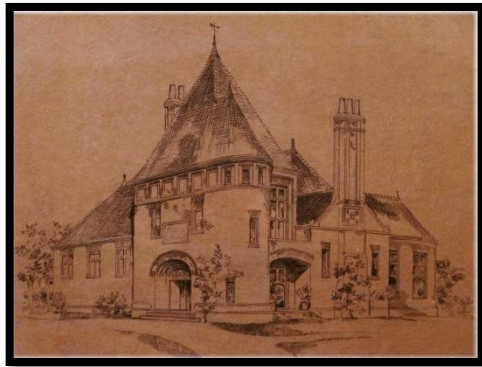
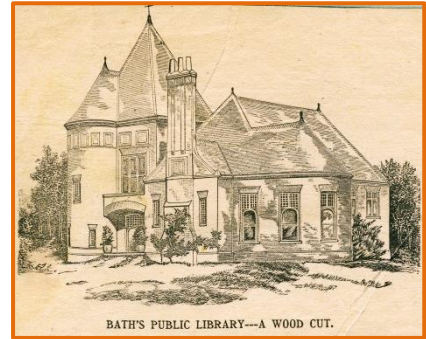


A FREE AND PUBLIC LIBRARY IS BUILT FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF BATH



A number of architects drew plans for the proposed Patten Free Library, but one George Edward Harding, a Bath native with a practice in New York City, offered his plans free to his hometown. Harding's mother still lived in Bath, opposite the City Park, one of the favored possible locations for the building. Harding's design pulled from the ideas of the nationally popular architect H. H. Richardson. Harding

created a Romanesque plan, whose exterior clearly indicated to the viewer where the reading room, library stacks, and stair tower were located. The result was a structure unique in the architectural fabric of Bath, almost a fortress to house the books, the library's treasures.



Begun in the summer of 1889, the new public library took shape quickly. The slaters were working on the roof by November. There were three major spaces – the closed stack of books, where fiction currently resides; the reading room, which remains such; and the tower, designed to house the Sagadahoc Historical Society. A librarian's office, foyer, and restroom completed the original arrangement. At that time, professional librarians recommended that patrons request books, which would then be fetched by the library staff from the closed stacks.



Next: [THE EVOLUTION OF A LIBRARY, INSIDE AND OUT](#)