

Becket Athenaeum

North Congregational Church

3367 Main Street, Route 8

42° 19'51.19"N 73° 05'03.06"W elevation 1228 feet

The **North Congregational Church**, was dedicated in 1850. Fifty-five members had asked to be dismissed from the [First Church](#) in Becket Center to establish a local church for the growing North Becket population and to prevent their youth from joining the more accessible [Baptist](#) congregation established in 1844. The new church, valued at \$3, 000.00 could seat 200 people. It has a gable front, with a center entry with pilasters (flat, vertical wall ornament resembling a column) and entablature (horizontal parts that lie above the column.) A more elaborate pilastered belfry (place for ringing a bell) once rose to a steeple.

In 1926 after dwindling attendance, the two churches organized together forming the [Becket Federated Church](#), choosing to worship as one in the former Baptist building.

In 1944 the Grange acquired the church and in 1964 after failing Grange attendance, the **Becket Athenaeum** was deeded the building as a gift. This is the third and present library location. This new site was more accessible, especially after the 1927 Flood and the rerouting of roads. Built in the Greek Revival style, the original wood exterior is well preserved, except for the steeple which was removed when it was deconsecrated; and the stained-glass windows and bell which were moved to the [Federated Church](#).

The first **Becket Athenaeum** was begun in 1888 to maintain a library, reading room and museum and "to promote good education...good citizenship, and the general welfare." The first building was given by Miss Blanche Perkins, who wanted to remove a source of evil from the community and substitute a fountain of good. The building, a former saloon, was located beyond Main St. just over the railroad tracks. It was in use from 1888 to 1928, when the building was demolished. In 1928, H. Cerelia Snow bequeathed her family home to be the second, larger Becket Athenaeum. The H. Cerelia Snow Library had 4,000 books in the library room, a separate reading room, a kitchen and a meeting room on the second floor. It was in use until 1964. Miss Snow was a renowned Becket teacher of fifty years, library trustee and town genealogist. Her extensive, "Genealogy of the Inhabitants of Becket" is still used by the Historical Commission today to answer public queries on their Becket ancestors. The **Becket Athenaeum** has the original and a copy is at the [Becket Town Hall](#).



H. Cerelia Snow Library

For further information email the Becket Historical Commission:

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