

Membership Libraries Group

1. Redwood Library & Athenæum (1747)
redwoodlibrary.org | Newport, RI
2. Charleston Library Society (1748)
charlestonlibrarysociety.org | Charleston, SC
3. New York Society Library (1754)
nysoclib.org | New York, NY
4. Boston Athenæum (1807)
bostonathenaeum.org | Boston, MA
5. Salem Athenæum (1810)
salemathenaeum.net | Salem, MA
6. Athenæum of Philadelphia (1814)
philaathenaeum.org | Philadelphia, PA
7. Maine Charitable Mechanic Association (1815)
mainecharitablemechanicassociation.com | Portland, ME
8. Portsmouth Athenæum (1817)
portsmouthathenaeum.org | Portsmouth, NH
9. Center for Fiction (1820)
centerforfiction.org | New York, NY
10. Institute Library (1826)
institutelibrary.org | New Haven, CT
11. Mercantile Library (1835)
mercantilelibrary.com | Cincinnati, OH
12. Providence Athenæum (1836)
providenceathenaeum.org | Providence, RI
13. Mechanics' Institute Library (1855)
milibrary.org | San Francisco, CA
14. Lanier Library (1890)
lanierlib.org | Tryon, NC
15. Timrod Literary & Library Association (1897)
timrodlibrary.org | Summerville, SC
16. Athenaeum Music & Arts Library (1899)
ljathenaeum.org | LaJolla, CA
17. Folio: The Seattle Athenæum (2015)
folioseattle.org | Seattle, WA

What Is an Athenæum?

A membership library, pooling the resources of multiple readers, was proposed by Benjamin Franklin in 1731, and the idea spread worldwide. The name *Athenæum*, derived from Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom, was first adopted for a library in Liverpool in 1797, which collected “useful” books to encourage self-betterment and had a reading room to furnish news of the day. Of the thousands of membership libraries that flourished in America in the nineteenth century, fewer than twenty survive. Help preserve local history and become a Friend of the Portsmouth Athenæum.



Portsmouth Athenæum

Open Tuesday–Saturday,
1 to 4 p.m., and by appointment

9 Market Square
P.O. Box 366
Portsmouth, N.H. 03802

603.431.2538
portsmouthathenaeum.org

PORTSMOUTH ATHENÆUM



Become a Friend

Collect | Preserve | Share

Support the Athenæum

Incorporated in 1817, the Portsmouth Athenæum is a nonprofit, member-supported organization. For more than two centuries, it has preserved and provided access to an extensive collection of manuscripts, rare books, photographs, artworks and artifacts, and digital collections related to local history and genealogy. As an intellectual center of the community, it sponsors exhibitions, concerts, lectures, and other educational and cultural programs.

- ◆ Research Library
- ◆ Gallery
- ◆ Reading Room (open to the public on Thursdays, 1 to 4 p.m.)

We're supported
by people like you!

David J. Murray | ClearEyePhoto.com

Membership Benefits

Continue the Athenæum's legacy and become a Friend. Benefits include:

- ◆ Subscription to the Athenæum's quarterly newsletter, with up-to-date information on events and activities as well as notice of recent acquisitions of books, special collections, and curatorial objects
- ◆ Free admission to lecture series
- ◆ Advance notice of lectures, programs, and volunteer opportunities
- ◆ Invitations to exhibition openings

Your contribution is tax deductible.

At any time, you may apply to become a Subscriber, the next level of membership.

Mission

We, the Proprietors of the Portsmouth Athenæum, associate to promote learning and advance useful knowledge among our constituents and the wider community by facilitating convivial interchange and intellectual discourse; maintaining our historic buildings and library; and collecting and preserving materials relevant to the history and culture of Portsmouth and the Piscataqua region.

I would like to show my support as a Friend of the Portsmouth Athenæum. Enclosed is my contribution of:

\$25 _____ \$40 _____ \$50 _____ Other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Send to: Portsmouth Athenæum P.O. Box 366 Portsmouth, N.H. 03802