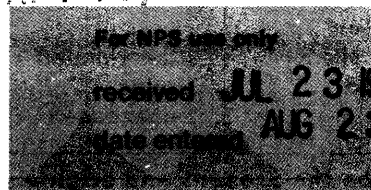OMB NO. 1024-0018
EXP. 10/31/84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUL 23 1985

date entered AUG 23 1985

See Instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic   Alexandria Public Library

and/or common   Alexandria Public Library

2. Location

street & number   7th Ave. W. and Fillmore Street   N/A not for publication

city, town   Alexandria   N/A vicinity of   ~~congressional district~~

state Minnesota   code 22   county Douglas   code 041

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	X public	X occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	N/A ___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	X yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	X transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other: Library

4. Owner of Property

name City of Alexandria

street & number 114 7th Ave. W.

city, town Alexandria   N/A vicinity of   state Minnesota 56308

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.   Douglas County Courthouse

street & number   320 7th Ave. W.

city, town   Alexandria   state Minnesota 56308

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey   has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date 1983-1984   ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, Ft. Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul   state Minnesota 55111

7. Description

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Alexandria Public Library, built in 1903, is located at the northeast corner of 7th Avenue West and Fillmore Street, one half block west of Alexandria's business district. The Beaux Arts-inspired building was designed by Wisconsin architect Henry A. Foeller and was a modification of Foeller's plan for a public library in Oconto, Wisconsin. The library is one story tall, nine bays wide, has a hipped roof, and is faced with light brown pressed brick on a smoothly dressed coursed ashlar gray limestone base. The main facade is dominated by a central three bay portico comprised of two fluted concrete Ionic columns in antis and four brick pilasters with simple limestone capitals supporting a pressed metal entablature and pediment with dentils and acroteria. The frieze contains the words "Alexandria Public Library" in raised metal lettering. Recessed within the portico is a new glass and metal entrance with the words "Carnegie Building" incised in the stone lintel. The entrance is reached via a wide stairway with two fluted cast iron lamp standards with white glass globes. The outer bays of the main facade are separated by brick pilasters and contain rectangular 1/1 sash at both the main story and basement levels. These pilasters have stone bases resting on a smooth stone watertable and simple capitals supporting the building's frieze. The library has four bay sidewalls which are similar in design to the main facade. There is a basement level entrance on the west facade.

The interior of the library has an open plan, with a central room containing a large oak circulation desk and a brick fireplace, flanked by open reading rooms. The top of the walls are decorated with dentils, egg and dart molding, and ornate corbels supporting plaster-covered ceiling beams between rooms. The library is furnished with quarter-sawn white oak furniture, most of which was fabricated by the Alexandria Manufacturing Company and purchased for the new library circa 1903, and oak bookshelves with architraves and dentils which were saved from the previous library. The basement level of the library was originally unfinished, but now contains a children's reading room, offices, and storage space.

The Alexandria Public Library is basically intact and in good condition. The only apparent exterior alterations have been installation of aluminum framed 1/1 sash, a new glass and metal entrance, and an asphalt shingle roof. The interior has new carpeting, some new shelving and furniture, and new light fixtures.

8. Significance

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Alexandria Public Library, built in 1903 at 7th Avenue West and Fillmore Street near downtown Alexandria, is historically significant as one of the largest public libraries erected in west central Minnesota with funds donated by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and as the home of a public institution which has served Alexandria and Douglas County since the early 1880's. Architecturally the building is important as a successful design by prominent Wisconsin architect Henry A. Foeller and as the first of several fine Beaux Arts-inspired buildings constructed in Alexandria shortly after the turn of the century.

The Alexandria Public Library was organized in the 1880's by members of a local reading club founded in 1878 or 1879. Prior to 1904 the library was housed in a succession of buildings including the city hall. Efforts to acquire a library building coalesced in 1902 when the library board of directors petitioned benefactor Andrew Carnegie for funds to construct a new building. Carnegie agreed to build the Alexandria library in 1903, a year in which he approved the funding of 203 other libraries nationwide and which represented his single greatest year in number of libraries financed. Carnegie's donation to the Alexandria library was dependent on his usual stipulations that the village government provide a building site and agree to allocate at least $1,000 annually (a minimum of ten percent of the amount donated) toward library maintenance and operation. The Carnegie grant was initially approved at $10,000 and later raised to $12,000, a sum larger than that allocated by Carnegie to any other community in the region.

In the spring of 1903 the library board of directors and the village council agreed on the proposed building site, a village-owned lot used as a farmers' market site, and the library board voted to accept the plans of Henry A. Foeller, a prominent Wisconsin architect familiar with library design. Duluth contractor H. W. Hinkley submitted a bid of $10,775 for the erection of the building, a figure which was reduced to fit within the initial $10,000 Carnegie limit by eliminating the construction of shelving, speaking tubes, a book lift, and a finished basement. In July of 1903 the site was prepared and in October D. B. Shepard was hired by the Board to oversee construction. Building costs, including the installation of steam heating, exceeded the original $10,000 grant and an addition $2,000 was received from Carnegie. The library was furnished with oak furniture made by the Alexandria Manufacturing Company, book shelves moved from the previous library, a circulation desk paid for by a local girls' club, and paintings, maps, and other decorations donated by citizens and civic groups. The contents of the previous library were moved into the new building in September of 1904. In 1917 the basement was finished.

Since its establishment the Alexandria Public Library has provided vital library services to residents of Alexandria and a much larger area. In 1913 the library established a children's collection and began to allow children as well as adults to use the library. From 1922 through the 1940's the library offered its basement community room for use as a museum and meeting room for civic groups. For most of its history the library has lent books and other materials to county residents who live outside of Alexandria. In 1975 the Alexandria Public Library joined libraries in five nearby counties to form the(see continuation sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Alexandria Public Library Board of Directors. Meeting minutes, 1903 - 4.
Bobinski, George S. <u>Carnegie Libraries</u>. Chicago: American Library Association, 1969.
Douglas County Historical Society. <u>Douglas County: Album of the Ages</u>. Dallas: Taylor
    Publishing Co., 1979.
<div align="center">(see continuation sheet)</div>

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property   Less than one

Quadrangle name   Alexandria West Quad.   Quadrangle scale   7.5

UMT References

A | 1,5 | 3,1,5,4,4,0 | 5,0,8,3,8,0,0   B | | | | | |
  Zone   Easting   Northing   Zone   Easting   Northing

C | | | | | D | | | | |

E | | | | | F | | | | |

G | | | | | H | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification
       Lots 1 - 2, Block 59, Original Townsite of Alexandria.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state   N/A   code   N/A   county   N/A   code   N/A

state   N/A   code   N/A   county   N/A   code   N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title   Susan Granger/Field Assistant

organization   State Historic Preservation Office
                 Minnesota Historical Society   date   January 1984

street & number   Fort Snelling History Center   telephone   (612) 726-1171

city or town   St. Paul   state   Minnesota 55111

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national   _____ state   X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89–665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature   *Russell W. Fridley*

title   Russell W. Fridley
       State Historic Preservation Officer   date   7/1/85

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Alexandria Public Library, Alexandria, Douglas County, MN

Continuation sheet   Item number   8, 9   Page   1

8) West Central Regional Library System (later renamed the Viking Library System), an arrangement which allowed for the sharing of materials and resources. In recent years the library's collection has expanded to include paperback books, record albums, tapes, art prints, and films.

Architecturally, the Alexandria Public Library is a good example of the Beaux Arts, a style favored by communities and institutions nationwide for use in public buildings, schools, and banks. The Alexandria library was the forerunner of a small Beaux Arts building movement in the community which produced the U.S. Post Office (1910, now on the National Register of Historic Places), the Farmers' National Bank (1912), the Douglas County State Bank (circa 1915), and the Alexandria Bank and Trust (1919-1920) all located in downtown Alexandria.

Henry A. Foeller, the architect of the library, designed hospitals, schools, prisons, libraries, and residences throughout Wisconsin and other states. Three buildings designed by Foeller have been placed on the National Register (St. Peter's Church in Oconto, 1895; Kellogg Public Library in Green Bay, 1903; and Wapun Public Library in Wapun, 1904). Foeller was instrumental in the establishment of Green Bay's park system and was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. He worked alone and with several partners throughout his career. The present Green Bay firm of Berner-Schober-Kilp is a successor to the partnership Foeller formed with George Schober in 1910.

9) Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office, Madison. Biographical file on Henry A. Foeller.