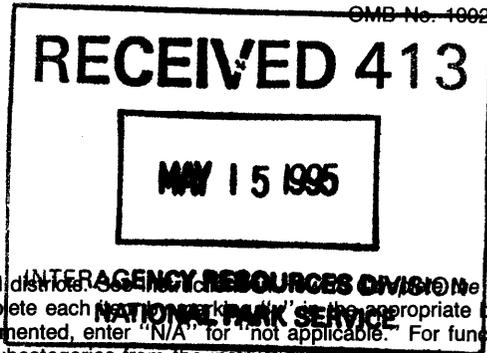


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. Use the *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sorrento Library

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number South Side of Waukeag Avenue, .5 Miles West of Junction with Route 185 N/A not for publication

city or town Sorrento N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Hancock code 009 zip code 04677

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Edward H. Beall 5/12/95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain.) _____

Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Entered in the National Register Date of Action 6/20/95

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- private
- public-Local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1 buildings

_____ sites

_____ structures

_____ objects

1 Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education/Library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education/Library

Domestic/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granite

walls Wood/Wood Shingle

roof Asphalt

other Engaged Arcade on Three Sides

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

1892-93

Significant Dates

1892-93

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Ball & Dabney, Architects

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

SORRENTO LIBRARY
Name of Property

HANCOCK, MAINE
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

| | | | |
|---|------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 1, 9 | 5, 6, 4, 5, 5, 5 | 4, 9, 2, 4, 4, 9, 5 |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 2 | | | |

| | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| 3 | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 4 | | | |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date April, 1995

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/287-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333-0065

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

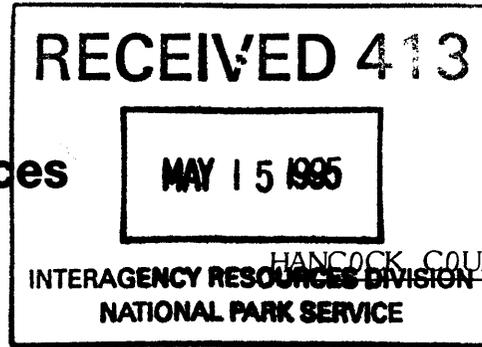
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

SORRENTO LIBRARY

Section number 7 Page 2



The Sorrento Library is a one-and-a-half-story hip roofed frame building which rests on a granite foundation and is sheathed in wood shingles. Among its distinctive exterior features is a porte-cochere on the facade and an engaged arcade that extends along three sides. The building is surrounded on three sides by frame summer cottages of about the same vintage, although the topography and evergreen trees provide it with a seemingly isolated site.

Facing north, the front elevation contains a broad central entry sheltered by the porte-cochere; flanking arcades; and a trio of dormers, of which the larger center one has a broad gable framing a Palladian window. Two shingled posts resting on a low stone wall and linked by a balustrade support the low hip roof of the porte-cochere whose elliptical arched openings feature keystones and Tuscan columns at the springing of the arch. The broad eave above the porte-cochere is detailed with long mutule blocks, a feature which is carried around the building. A second pair of posts abut the walls of the main block that contains the entrance. The entry door is framed by paired six-over-six windows above which is a wooden plaque with the name SORRENTO PUBLIC LIBRARY. Immediately above are a trio of windows composed of a center eight-over-eight framed by six-over-sixes. Three round arches with detailing similar to those on the porte-cochere form the arcades on either side. They each shelter a single eight-over-eight window and a French door. The arcade on the west side has been screened. It does not extend to the northwest corner of the building where there is a twelve-over-twelve window. Small gabled dormers containing eight-over-eight double-hung sash flank the larger center dormer which has three twelve-over-twelves and a semi-circular window above the middle unit.

The east side elevation has an arcade composed of seven round arches that matches that on the facade. Behind it is a pair of eight-over-eight windows. The broad plane of the roof is broken by a single gabled dormer containing a Palladian window which is smaller than the one in the front. There is a segmentally-arched opening (now enclosed) in the southeast corner of the foundation which originally provided a view to the basement level porch. On the west side is a centrally located two-part segmentally-arched window and an arched opening at the southwest corner in the tall basement level, as well as paired eight-over-eight windows on the main level. The stone chimney rises through the roof at a position opposite the east side dormer. The rear elevation is composed of a stone wall at the basement level that is punctuated by a broad segmental arch in the projecting center bay flanked by a pair of smaller ones on each side. Both openings to the east contain shingled infill panels and six-over-six windows. A porch located behind the arches shelters three windows on either side of a center door as well as an open string staircase which originally opened onto the upper porch, but is now closed (the stairs appear to be a twentieth century addition). The treatment of the second story includes a projecting center

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SORRENTO LIBRARY

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

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bay with a broad elliptical arch and flanking arcades, the west one of which has been infilled with windows and panels for the apartment at that end. A trio of dormers are located above the porch.

In plan, the library has two rooms including a large open space on the first story, a balcony which carries around the second level, and five unequally sized rooms in the basement (two of which are lavatories). The staircase is located immediately behind the front entrance with two short flights of stairs leading down to the lower level and one up to the main level. Two runs extend from the main level to an inter-story landing from which a single flight rises to the upper level. The main level has a broad stone fireplace and overmantel framed by pilasters on the west wall that separates the large room from a smaller one behind. This latter room (which also has a fireplace) has been converted to an apartment. Originally, it was described as being a reading room. One door opens from the main level onto the south arcade (originally there were two doors, the second now leads to a closet) whereas two French doors provide access to the north arcades. The upper level is distinguished by the balcony railing, at the corner of which are four short Ionic columns with Scamozzi caps supporting light fixtures. Five alcoves are formed by the dormers, and a small fireplace is located on the west wall. The principal rooms in the lower level consist of a broad central space referred to as the "billiard room" and a kitchen at the west end. The kitchen may be an addition after 1918 when the building began to accommodate community events that would have required a food preparation area. The interior is finished throughout in narrow tongue-and-groove sheathing with the upper level still retaining its stained woodwork (elsewhere it has been painted). When built, a series of eight columns standing on paneled plinths supported the balcony. These were removed in the 1930s to increase the floor space for dances, and chains attached to the ceiling and balcony floor were installed for support. Current plans call for the restoration of the columns which are in storage.

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SORRENTO LIBRARY

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

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Constructed in 1892-93 from plans by the Boston architectural firm of Ball and Dabney, the Sorrento Library is a stylish Colonial Revival style frame building and a centerpiece of the surrounding summer colony. It was built for the purpose of a community hall and library, a function which it continues to carry out. The building is eligible for nomination to the Register under criteria A and C for its association with the development of Sorrento and for its architectural significance.

[The following history of the Sorrento summer colony was written by Roger G. Reed, a former Maine Historic Preservation Commission staff member.]

The development of Sorrento as a summer resort began in the mid-1880s at a time when Bar Harbor on nearby Mt. Desert Island was undergoing its first major decade of growth. The activity at Bar Harbor inevitably spawned development on surrounding coastal areas. Located four miles across Frenchman's Bay from Bar Harbor, Sorrento was a choice site with its views of Mt. Desert Island. As described in an 1892 newspaper article, "One of the great advantages of Sorrento is its quiet and total absence of objectionable noises. For amusements of all sort or society life in its full grandeur all one has to do is to take the boat across to Bar Harbor and there find it to the hearts content...."¹

With its obvious scenic attractions, Waukeag Point and adjacent lands were purchased by a group of capitalists who formed the Frenchman's Bay and Mt. Desert Land and Water Company. Originally incorporated on October 6, 1885, the company had three principal shareholders: Charles W. Lewis of Brooklyn, Jonathan Shoender of Sullivan and William D. Lewis of Boston. The company hired a Boston landscape architect, Herman Grundel, to prepare a plan for the development of the site. Grundel's original landscape plan, dated June 26, 1886, is quite rudimentary and simply suggests how lots and roads should be laid out and what areas should be reserved for woodland.²

Apparently, little construction activity occurred until 1887. On December 9th of that year there was a complete change in the Board of Directors. The new investors included Frank P. Jones of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, a wealthy capitalist and entrepreneur who would dominate the development of Sorrento until his death in 1902. The other board members, which included Jones' son-in-law, Charles Sinclair, were all allied to his interests.³ The new men apparently took more aggressive actions in promoting development, which included altering the Grundel plan to allow for a greater number of building lots. The company's annual report for 1888 mentioned that 4,374 building lots were available.⁴

In order to promote this development the company formed the Sorrento Building Company in 1887 and hired a local builder, William H. Lawrence, to

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SORRENTO LIBRARY

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

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superintend construction. During 1887-1888 Lawrence had a large crew at work constructing several cottages, three wharves, a cafe and annex for guests, and several other ancillary structures. Included was a large house for Frank P. Jones and one for his daughter and son-in-law, the Sinclairs. Several more cottages were erected in 1889, as was the large Hotel Sorrento. Jones, as President of the Boston and Maine Railroad, arranged rail and connecting steamboat service. At no time later did the construction activity match these early years, and it is perhaps not simply coincidental that speculation in Bar Harbor also peaked in 1889. Probably for this reason a Union Church to be built by the company in 1889-1890, was never erected.

Development did continue at Sorrento, albeit at a slower pace. The company's promotional literature listed a great many individuals who had purchased building lots. It is unlikely, however, that many of these investors ever intended to actually build a cottage. Mrs. Cochran donated funds to build the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in 1889-1890. The company built four cottages in 1892.⁵ A year later Mrs. Jones provided the money to erect the library building. According to one source, it was through Frank Jones' influence with the Maine Legislature that the township of Sorrento was set off from Sullivan in 1895.⁶ For the next few years Sorrento was very much a company town in which William H. Lawrence served as town clerk, first selectman, postmaster, justice of the peace, overseer of the poor, and fish and game warden. With these and other duties occupying his time, another building contractor, Charles Candage, was hired in 1895-96 to construct at least three large cottages.

A reorganization of the company occurred after Jones' death in 1902, and the destruction by fire of the Hotel Sorrento in 1906. In 1908 the Sorrento Realty Company was organized with a capital stock of \$250,000. The new officers were Paul Hunt of Brookline, President; George H. Grant of Ellsworth, Vice-President and General Manager; and Henry M. Hall of Ellsworth, Secretary and Treasurer. Mrs. Horatio N. Slater of Boston, sister of Paul Hunt, was a major shareholder.⁷ The new company converted "Lookout" and "Rock End" cottages into a new Hotel Sorrento. Cottages continued to be built but, as on Mt. Desert, the period of the most intense development was over.

The architectural firm of Ball and Dabney produced designs for at least two buildings in Maine during the seven years of its existence. However, one of the principles, William H. Dabney, Jr. (1855-1897), designed several buildings in York Harbor prior to joining into a partnership with Henry B. Ball (1866-____) in 1890. Dabney was a pioneer in the development of the Shingle Style and the Colonial Revival, gaining particular notoriety for the design of "Redcote" in York Harbor, a modest summer cottage which the architectural historian Vincent J. Scully wrote: "... expresses a casual and

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appealing adjustment to function."

Although the Sorrento Library was ostensibly built for the residents of the summer community, it remained in the possession of Mrs. Jones and her heirs until October 15, 1918, when it was given to the Sorrento Village Improvement Association. The Association altered the interior somewhat in the 1930s to create a more open hall for dances and other events. However, it is expected that the restoration of this space will be carried out in the next several years. Otherwise, the library has had few changes made to it, and it remains an important focal point in the community.

ENDNOTES

1. Bar Harbor Record, May 26, 1892.
2. Herman Grundel was also hired to prepare a landscape plan for the development at Sullivan Harbor nearby. See Industrial Journal (Bangor) July 27, 1888, p. 5. Grundel appeared in the Boston city directories as a florist during the 1870s. From 1882-1899 he was listed as a "landscape gardener". He died on January 4, 1890.
3. Frank P. Jones, King of the Alemakers, by Ray Brighton, Portsmouth, 1985, p. 175, No. 5. The other new directors were: James P. Cook of Salem, Charles H. Lewis of Boston, Camden C. Dike of New York, Charles F. Manderson of Omaha, and J. Wesley Kimball of Newton.
4. Nonetheless, a pamphlet issued by the company in 1890 claimed that, "Many miles of avenues and streets have been laid out and built under the direct supervision of a landscape gardener, who has exercised great care in protecting the natural scenery." (Copy in collection of Maine Historic Preservation Commission.) A Bar Harbor "landscape gardener", Isaac Mitchell, worked on the grounds of the Jones Cottage. He may be the person referred to in that document.
5. Three of these cottages were "Sunrise", "Blythlea", and "Cloverdale". The latter was also known as the Price cottage. The Lawrence Letterbook documents the difficulties in providing the development during the years 1892-1895.
6. Brighton, Jonas, op. cit., p. 172.
7. Industrial Journal, August 1908, p. 21.

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Murphy, Kevin D. "William H. Dabney, Jr.: 1855-1897." A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine. Vol. VI. 1991. Portland, Maine: Maine Citizens for Historic Preservation.

Reed, Roger G. "Sorrento: A Survey of Selected Buildings." 1989. Typescript original copy on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.

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SORRENTO LIBRARY

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies the Town of Sorrento tax map 14, lot 12.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary embraces the entire village lot historically associated with the Sorrento Library.