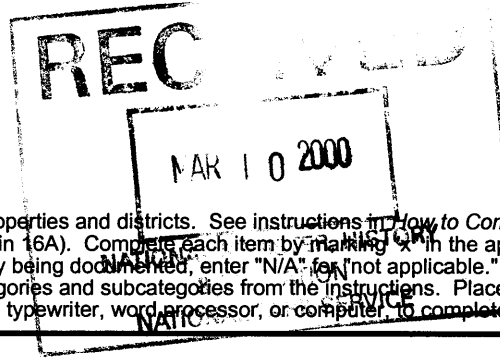


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" 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 Oakland Public Library  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 18 Church Street N/A not for publication  
city or town Oakland, N/A vicinity  
state Maine code ME county Kennebec code 011 zip code 04963

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.)

Carol S. Peterson 3/6/00  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
State or 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 this 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson A. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

4-14-00  
Date of Action

Oakland Public Library  
Name of Property

Kennebec, Maine  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)  
 private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)  
 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                  0                  Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Maine Public Libraries

\_\_\_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Education/Library  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Education/Library  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Classical Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation Concrete  
walls Brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Asphalt  
other Pedimented Entrance Vestibule  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

KENNEBEC, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

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The Oakland Public Library is a one-story, rectangular, three-bay brick building which is covered by a low hip roof. It has a projecting pedimented entrance vestibule, and a tall brick foundation with a granite water table.

Facing west, the front elevation's most conspicuous feature is the centrally located entrance vestibule. It is reached by a flight of seven steps which are framed by brick walls capped by concrete slabs that support short iron lamp posts. The recessed doorway is comprised of a classically styled surround with paneled pilasters and a full pediment. A large rectangular transom window in a patterned brickwork frame with a keystone is located above the doorway, and they are in turned framed by a pair of concrete columns set in antis. The columns support the pediment's galvanized iron entablature, which is detailed with modillion blocks. Brick pilasters with concrete capitals and bases support the terminus of the entablature at the corners of the vestibule, and narrow double hung windows are located on both sides. The flanking recessed bays of the main block feature tri-partite windows with one-over-one double hung sash and keystones. A brickwork panel is located below the windows, and rusticated brickwork decorates the corners (similar rustication decorates the interior corners at the junction of the vestibule, as well as each additional edge). The modillion block cornice and a stringcourse matching the entablature's architrave carries around the building. Trios of basement windows are located on-axis with the main window group.

Both the north and south side elevations are similarly detailed with a centrally placed tri-partite window similar to those on the facade, and a brickwork panel below. There are three basement level windows on the south side, and a brick addition on the north side which contains a door to the basement. The rear elevation contains three symmetrically placed tri-partite windows on the main level, a double door and two tri-partite windows in the basement level, and an exterior brick chimney stack around which the cornice and stringcourse make a jog.

Inside, the vestibule contains a small room (now a bathroom) on its north side and a staircase to the basement level on the south side. The main room is undivided with original steel shelving along the perimeter walls and free standing shelving added more recently. The entrance is framed by a Colonial Revival style surround and a wide cornice carries around the room. Among the surviving original features is a grandfather clock whose oak cabinet is detailed with half-columns and a pediment. The basement level is finished with plaster over lath and wainscot.

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 a 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Education

Period of Significance

1915-1949

Significant Dates

1915

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Coombs, Harry S., Architect

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- [x] State Historic Preservation Office
[ ] Other State agency
[ ] Federal agency
[ ] Local government
[ ] University
[ ] Other

Name of repository:

Maine Historical Society

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

KENNEBEC, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

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The Oakland Public Library is a Neo-Classical Revival style brick building that was designed by the Lewiston architect Harry S. Coombs. It was built with a grant from the Carnegie Foundation, and was opened on March 17, 1915. The library is eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criteria A and C as more fully explained in the Multiple Property Documentation Form titled "Maine Public Libraries."

[The following two paragraphs are edited from a history of the Oakland Public Library written by Rosalie Chase]

Oakland almost didn't get a library due to red tape and the penurious nature of its would-be benefactor Andrew Carnegie. In 1891 a library had been established, supported by subscription and housed in the basement of Memorial Hall. By 1911 it had 2,200 volumes and had outgrown its quarters.

An enterprising businessman, W. M. Ayer, wrote to Mr. Carnegie, through channels, asking for ten thousand dollars to erect a library on a lot already purchased for that purpose from a Miss Alice Benjamin. (The lot was located on Church Street adjacent to Memorial Hall.) Mr. Carnegie's secretary, James Bertram, stated, "I have already had correspondence about a library, and have been advised that there is ample accommodation at the Memorial building.... What is needed is to levy a tax to carry on a library in that building. There does not seem to be any need to put more money into stone and lime." It is difficult to say where Mr. Bertram obtained his information about "ample accommodation" as there is no proof that either Mr. Bertram or Mr. Carnegie ever visited Oakland, or in fact had any idea where it was located. The tenacious officers of the town, however, finding the hall to be "very cold, damp, improperly lighted and too small; fit only for use in summer," doggedly continued to plead their case, submitting a revised estimate of \$6,000 to \$8,000 to complete the project. On February 15, 1912, the town received a letter from the Carnegie Foundation (established in 1911) agreeing to fund the library "if the city agrees by Resolution to maintain a Free Public Library at a cost of not less than \$6,000 a year and a suitable building. Mr. Carnegie will be glad to give \$6,000. This shall include the cost of the building completely furnished."

Having obtained a commitment from the Carnegie Foundation, the town turned its efforts to developing a design. The above quoted history of the library states that in February of 1912, the building committee contacted the Madison engineer Clinton S. Humphreys to design the new building. Humphreys' prior experience in the design of libraries included the 1906 commission for the Madison Public Library (also funded by Carnegie), which was secured when he was a partner in the firm of Snow & Humphreys. His plan was apparently submitted to the Foundation, and in a subsequent letter to Humphreys the building committee reported that: "Mr. Carnegie cut out the round window and alcove on the back side and several interior partitions and other minor arrangements. I think we might as well give up any idea of our own if we get any assistance from Mr. Carnegie, and do what we can to make the interior attractive later on."

Revised plans were sent to Skibo Castle, Scotland where Carnegie was vacationing, and on March 15, 1912, he gave (through the Foundation) qualified approval of the plans, stating that heating must be added to the estimate along with two toilets, one sink, and steel bookstacks. Along with his approval, however, Carnegie reduced the amount he was willing to donate to \$5,800. The correspondence did not stop there, however. In a letter to Bertram in July of 1912 the town asked for an increase to \$10,000, stating that they expected the population to increase to 4,500 in the next year and a half, and that the rate of patronage in their library was one of the highest in the state (Chase).

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

KENNEBEC, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 3

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At this point, it appears that further consideration of the design must have taken place. This assumption is based on the existence of a set of drawings dated September 23, 1912, and titled "Library at Oakland Maine" by the Coombs Brothers architectural firm of Lewiston. The library also possesses another set of presentation drawings by the Boston firm of Smart & Murdock. Although undated, these drawings are presumed to be contemporary with the Coombs plans since the firm is only listed in the 1912 Boston city directory, and the overall concepts of the library are similar. The Coombs design shows a three-bay configuration with a projecting pedimented entrance vestibule, segmentally arched windows and transom and a chimney on the one end. Smart & Murdock's plan had a similar orientation, but it included an apsidal projection at the rear.

In 1914 the Carnegie Foundation agreed to raise its donation to \$14,000. The library history states that the Boston architectural firm of William H. & Henry McLean subsequently received the commission to design the building. However, a second set of plans in the Coombs Collection at the Maine Historical Society contains eleven drawings dated May 18, 1914. These plans, which were prepared by Harry S. Coombs (one of the partners in the earlier Coombs Brothers firm), are undoubtedly the ones used for the existing building. Construction commenced sometime thereafter, and the library was opened to the public on March 17, 1915.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

KENNEBEC, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

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### **Bibliography**

Chase, Rosalie. "Carnegie Library, Oakland." No date. Copy on file at MHPC

Coombs Collection [Records from Coombs architectural firm], Maine Historical Society, Portland.

Oakland Public Library  
Name of Property

Kennebec, 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	4	4	2	7	9	5	4	9	3	2	5	6	5
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

3 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

2 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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 December, 1999

street & number 55 Capitol Street, 65 State House Station 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

KENNEBEC, MAINE

Section number 10 Page 2

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## **Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property occupies the Town of Oakland tax map 14, lot 138.

## **Boundary Justification**

The boundary embraces the entire village lot that is historically associated with the Oakland Public Library.