

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

1. Name

historic Orange Free Public Library

and/or common Orange Public Library or Stickler Memorial Library

2. Location

street & number 348 Main Street _____ not for publication

city, town Orange _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 11th

state New Jersey code 34 county Essex code 013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: library

4. Owner of Property

name City of Orange, New Jersey

street & number City Hall, Day Street

city, town Orange _____ vicinity of _____ state New Jersey

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Essex County Hall of Records

street & number 469 High Street

city, town Newark _____ state New Jersey

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory: Orange; State Historic
title Preservation Officer Opinion has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980; 1977 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Office of Cultural and Environmental Services

city, town Trenton _____ state New Jersey

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered
interior

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Orange Free Public Library, dedicated in 1901, is a monumental Classic Revival building designed by McKim, Mead and White, and Albro and Brower. A grand portico of the Ionic order marks the entranceway and a copper roofed dome rises at the center of the structure's cruciform plan. The Library's two story limestone exterior contrasts sharply with the brick and terra cotta buildings in the surrounding central business district; an element of design often utilized by the architects. This imposing structure on its corner lot remains a landmark in downtown Orange.

The main facade, facing Main Street, is symmetrical with five bay wings flanking a monumental two story portico. Four fluted Ionic columns support a full entablature and triangular pediment. "Stickler Memorial" is carved in the frieze and flanked by garlands. Acroterion top the pediment which is filled with limestone decoration including an open book on a pedestal. Dentils are below the cornice and are carried along the entire facade.

The entrance doors, now glassed in, are painted black and recessed. Decorative limestone moldings and rosettes surround the door, and a bracketed cornice above a frieze carved with "MDCCCC" tops the entrance. A limestone plaque inscribed with "The Orange Free Public Library Incorporated 1884" is set in the wall above the entrance cornice. Fluorescent lighting has been installed beneath the pediment.

Three, large, multipaned windows are deeply recessed in the top levels of the wings with large expanses of blank walls below, and a belt course running around the entire structure above a heightened basement level. Recessed panels flank the windows continuing the spacial rhythm, and full length pilasters rise in the building corners. Large medallions with marble centers mark the centers of the full return cornice gable ends of the building. Here, too, we see deeply recessed windows set high on the wall with blank wall space beneath. An octagonal copper dome surmounts the crossing of the structure. Originally, both the dome and the roof were covered with brown copper, now blue-green, but the roof has been reclad with asphalt shingles.

In 1936, the Mary C. Watson alcove was added to the rear of the reference room. It was constructed of limestone, one story tall

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

cornerstone 6/25/1900

Specific dates dedication 6/21/1901 **Builder/Architect** McKim, Mead and White and Albro and Brower

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Orange Free Public Library is the oldest library building in Essex County and the finest example of Classic Revival architecture in the City of Orange. A McKim, Mead and White design with a limestone clad, cruciform plan, this monumental structure incorporates features of earlier libraries designed by that firm, thus representing an important link in a continuum of design development. Socioeconomically, the building portrays a grand local attempt at redistribution of resources (wealth and education) by philanthropy, prior to the adoption of the income tax and liberal public policies. The structure continues to function as an active library with only minimal alterations required for economy, utility and changing library practices.

In 1883, a committee of prominent local women began to investigate ways to improve the local library service. The Orange Lyceum had been organized in the 1830's, supporting a variety of cultural events and making a book collection available to residents. The book collection became a problem and was moved several times. By 1890, subscriptions had been collected and preliminary sketches for a library building were prepared by McKim, Mead and White, but fund-raising was not successful and planning ceased. (Leland, Roth, 1977, p. 634.) Plans were revived in 1899, when Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Whipple Stickler offered to pay for a new library as a memorial to their son, Dr. Joseph William Stickler. The Stickler Memorial Library cornerstone was laid on June 25, 1900, and dedicated on June 21, 1901. Up to 1945, the library was an association library funded by dues, endowments, and donations. In 1945, the citizens of Orange voted by referendum to financially support the library, and it received its second name, "The Orange Free Public Library."

Although the preliminary sketches for the library were done by McKim, Mead and White in 1890, the design evolution becomes controversial after the Sticklers became involved. According to Roth, "In March, 1900, McKim, Mead and White began enlarging the preliminary design; construction started in May in association with the architects Brower and Albro" (ibid.). Lewis Colt Albro was in training and practice with McKim, Mead and White at this time, but lived in the Oranges which may explain this association. An article in the Orange Chronicle (June 22, 1901) established a different perspective. It alludes to a local competition won by Brower and Albro, whose design left the patrons dissatisfied: "With unexampled

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Orange, NJ

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8	5	6	4	8	0	0	4	5	1	3	5	7	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing					

C

Zone		Easting				Northing					

D

Zone		Easting				Northing					

E

Zone		Easting				Northing					

F

Zone		Easting				Northing					

G

Zone		Easting				Northing					

H

Zone		Easting				Northing					

Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 82, Lot 11 - Orange Tax Map

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

Revised by Candy Peck, Office of Cultural and Environmental Services, NJ

name/title Nancy Picillo, M.S., Historic Preservation Intern

organization City of Orange date March 27, 1981

street & number 488 Berkeley Ave. telephone

city or town Orange state New Jersey 07050

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

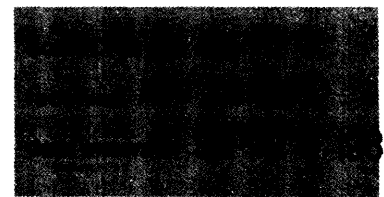
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Laura Schmelt

title _____ date August 7, 1981

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	Entered in the National Register
<u>for Allen Byer</u> Keeper of the National Register	date <u>9/28/81</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Orange Public Library
Continuation sheet Orange, Essex Co., New Jersey Item number 7

Page 1

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

with a belt course above the heightened basement level. A boxy stack wing built in 1978, occupies a former landscaped courtyard, but is invisible from Main Street. The wing is limestone, three stories tall, with a heightened basement level and a hipped roof. This addition has a larger percentage of the wall space devoted to recessed windows than the original sections, giving it a lighter feel, with less refinement.

The dedication ceremony speech (The Orange Chronicle, June 22, 1901) referred to the exterior of the building as "severely classic Greek, being as regards the central portico, modeled closely after the celebrated Erechtheum in Athens, which is conceded to be one of the most perfect specimens of the Ionic order of architecture. The central portico is imposing, with its massive columns supporting a fine pediment, and all the details of the work are kept strictly within classic lines. On either side of this central portico are the two wings in which the same architectural design is closely carried out. The total length of the front of the library is 102 feet. The roof as well as the dome is covered with copper, which by the action of the elements is toned to a beautiful and restful brown color. The building is built of Indiana limestone, backed with hard burned brick, each stone being anchored securely into the brick wall behind it. All the walls are laid in Portland cement, and the construction is as solid and substantial as it is possible to make it."

Interior:

Again, quoting from the dedication speech, "The great central rotunda is surrounded by eight columns of polished pink granite with bronze capitals and the floor is laid in marble mosaic of an artistic pattern. The rotunda has a height of about forty-five feet, the ceiling of the dome being tinted a delicate shade of blue, warming into an ivory tint in the middle portion, and this is accentuated with gold mouldings, while the lower section is painted a grey color. The ornamental plaster work in this rotunda is among the finest to be found in the entire country. On the right and left of the rotunda respectively, the general reading room and the reference

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Orange Public Library

Continuation sheet Orange, Essex Co., NJ

Item number 7

Page 2

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

room, the latter divided by a row of bookcases into a reference room proper and a children's room. The ceilings of these rooms are veritable works of art, being covered with deeply recessed octagonal panels, painted in an ivory tone, with gilded mouldings. The walls of these rooms are painted a rose color down to within eight feet of the floor and below this, in the reading room is a wainscot of antique oak, and in the reference and children's rooms bookcases of the same material, while at the base of these is a bottom course of polished black marble. The floors are a quartered oak, finished in the best manner."

"Opposite the doorway is the main delivery desk, with access on either side to the stack room in the rear. This delivery desk, as well as all the furniture of the building, is in antique oak finished to correspond with the rest of the trimming. Behind the delivery desk runs a corridor giving access on the right to the Trustees' room, and on the left to the Librarians room and the cloak and toilet rooms."

"To the rear of the delivery is the stack room, with antique oak facings to the steel shelving. This shelving is divided into three stories, of which only two are at present completed, the two stories giving accommodations for 30,000 volumes. Directly, to the rear of the stack room is the alcove for the medical library of the late Dr. Stickler, arranged by itself in a way that will admit of the most convenient access, while in an adjoining alcove is the medical library of the late Dr. William Pierson. At the extreme rear of the stack room is a fine stained glass window, under which in the future is to be placed a bust of Dr. Stickler. The window represents two youths intently reading a book, above them the motto 'Veritas' and at the bottom being the inscription, 'The Tree of Knowledge is grafted upon the Tree of Life.' [The designer is unknown; the craftsmen are David Maitland Armstrong and Helen Maitland Armstrong.]

"In the basement of the building are a storage room for bicycles, a repair room for books, and other conveniences, including toilet rooms for men. The entire building is heated by steam and lighted by incandescent lamps, the fixtures being of the latest and most artistic pattern. The workmanship in all its details in the entire building is of the very best and reflects the greatest credit on all of the contractors."

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Orange Public Library

Continuation sheet Orange, Essex Co., NJ

Item number 7

Page 3

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Over the years several changes have been made in the interior of the building. The children's room, formerly part of the referencing room, was moved to the lower level under stack portions. In 1936, the Mary C. Watson alcove was added to the rear of the reference room. This room, which originally housed a distinguished art book collection, continues the above described style and furnishing of antique oak. During the 1940's the dome was closed with a hung ceiling to conserve energy. The original marble and quartered oak floors were covered with rubber tile throughout the main level. More recently, new lighting fixtures have been installed throughout the main level; they are not particularly compatible, but are a compromise for economics and utility. The interior changes are reversible having only covered original materials, rather than replacing them.

The color treatment of walls and ceilings as noted above has been changed to white ceilings and deep gold walls. Important features such as the double-height book-stacks, the Trustees' Room, the rotunda columns of granite with bronze capitals, and the paneling of the two reading rooms remain in good condition.

In 1977, a request for \$2.5 million in Federal funds for a modernization program was denied because it included the removal of the stacks in the original portion of the building. Plans were subsequently amended so that all changes were restricted to space built on the rear and west side of the structure and none of the original features were altered. In 1978-80, funding of \$375,000 for 4,000 additional square feet enabled the addition of new shelf space on the main floor, with an enlarged children's room on the ground level, a new meeting room, and facilities for the handicapped (rest rooms and elevator). The old stack area, retaining its unique wood and steel shelving and glass flooring, will be converted to storage space.

The original antique oak furnishings in the reading rooms have been replaced by modern birch-topped tables and steel frame chairs. The Trustees' Room (now the Director's Office) has been maintained in nearly original condition.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Orange Public Library

Continuation sheet Orange, Essex Co., NJ

Item number 8

Page 1

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

generosity they, [the Sticklers] removed the price limit (\$35,000) and practically gave the architects carte blanche. McKim, Mead and White were called in and associated with the latter firm. The plans of Brower and Albro were adopted as the basis, but enlarged and modified in several ways, particularly in making the building higher, with a larger dome and a more imposing central portico." An examination of the plans and drawings would clarify the matter, but the only preliminary and final designs known with certainty to exist are sealed in the library's cornerstone. (Orange Transcript, December 29, 1949.)

On the basis of McKim's boyhood residency and long-established social connections in Orange, Roth, (*ibid.*), suggests that McKim was the designer while noting, "...a certain brusqueness and unrefined quality which suggested Mead's influence."

Roth (1977, p. 635) notes that the limestone clad, cruciform plan library "...continues a tradition already well established by the firm and incorporates features introduced in earlier works." These included the Whittemore Memorial Library in Naugatuck, Massachusetts, and the Walker Art Gallery at Bowdoin College, Maine, neither of which, however, displays an entry as prominent as the one in Orange, with its tetrastyle Ionic portico. Both McKim, and later White, were working from Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia prototype. White was involved in restoring the original library in 1895-96, and created an adaptation of it for the New York University in this period. The Low Memorial Library at Columbia University, New York, was another of this genre. In his total concept of the Columbia campus, McKim had designed the library in Indiana limestone, to purposely emphasize its distinctiveness in an overall mass of red brick and white limestone buildings. The Orange Library was built during an era when the dark red-brown local quarrystone First Presbyterian Church stood next to the red brick Victorian Gothic Music Hall at Main and Day Streets, while the Masonic Temple was clearly visible in its brick and terra cotta splendor, several blocks east. Thus the intention of contrast follows the established pattern, and the Orange Library demonstrates a continuum of thought in the neo-classical period.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Orange Public Library
Continuation sheet Orange, Essex Co., NJ

Item number 8

Page 2

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

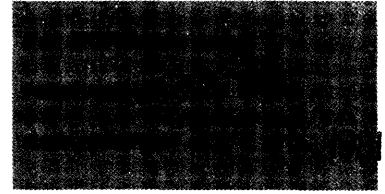
The building is related in detail to Low Memorial Library (1893-94). Interior elements have been reduced to a smaller version of the grandeur found there. The central rotunda has been made the circulation desk area, with reading wings on either side. The cruciform plan is carried out exactly. Crossed-bar lights, set high in the walls, and friezes bearing the titles "Religion", "Literature", "Philosophy", etc., encircle the dome, which is supported by polished granite columns with Ionic capitols in bronze. (See Roth, 1977, pp. 30-32, Plates 48, 49.)

Sociologically, the building expresses the intention of the upperclass philanthropists of the city to bring the working people into civilized society, and it thus encapsulates in a tangible form the ideological basis of the early 20th century. It should be remembered that after 1893, the economic base of the city (the hatting industry) was in turmoil. There were large numbers of politically vocal second and third generation Irish hatters, and a burgeoning population of first generation Italians involved in the industry or related services. Minor but continuous disruptions in production preceded the final strike in 1909, which brought the industry to its knees. In his dedication speech, the Rev. Amory H. Bradford, pastor of the Congregational Church of Montclair, recognized this tension between workers and owners:

"...One of the chief benefits of a building of this kind is that it becomes an object lesson on the proper way to use riches. It is difficult for men to learn that what they call their wealth is in no true sense entirely their own. But a fraction of the credit belongs to them. The community is the silent partner in every large fortune. Providence and his fellow men always do more to make a man rich than he does for himself. This is the truth that gives Socialism its fascination. The best antidote to the financial and economic heresies which are agitating our times is a recognition on the part of those who have large property that they are but trustees and that the community has rights in their fortunes quite as sacred as their own...no man uses his wealth aright who does not at the same time that he is studying his own interests consider with equal care the welfare of his fellowmen." (transcript, The Orange Chronicle, June 22, 1901.)

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Orange Public Library
Continuation sheet Orange, Essex Co., NJ

Item number 8

Page 3

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

The level of aspiration for the Library is further described by the Rev. Bradford:

"Into this building someday a young man from a hat shop with a soul as yet untouched by light, will aimlessly wander and open some book - he knows not and cares not what - but will be the birth of that soul...From being a nation of workers we are coming to be a nation of readers, and soon we shall be a nation of thinkers...Here [in the Library] the rich and poor will have equal rights; from this building will go out influences which will ennoble individuals, purify the foundations of citizenship, exalt the ideals of all the common people and lift even the roof of the humblest citizen.." (ibid.)

There is no record extant of what the working people of the City thought of these lofty aspirations, but the financial woes of the day-to-day operations of the facility indicate that there was no widespread base of support, for a one-dollar donation, ca. 1910, brought in only \$400. Large donations rather than small contributions were the main means of survival but the library kept expanding its influence into working class and ethnic neighborhoods as well as to branches in West Orange. Today, the Orange Free Public Library continues to serve all elements of the community, but it has taken a much more pliant "consumer-oriented" position appropriate to current philosophies of society.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Orange Public Library
Continuation sheet Orange, Essex Co., NJ

Item number 9

Page 1

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