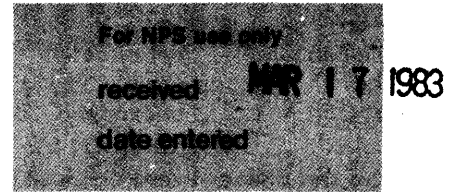


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Skowhegan Free Public Library

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Elm Street N/A not for publication

city, town Skowhegan N/A vicinity of congressional district

state Maine code 23 county Somerset code 025

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Skowhegan Free Public Library Trustees

street & number Elm Street

city, town Skowhegan, N/A vicinity of state Maine

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Somerset County Registry of Deeds

street & number

city, town Skowhegan, state Maine

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Me. Historic Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maine Historic Preservation Commission

city, town Augusta, state Maine

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Skowhegan Free Public Library is a two-and-one-half story brick building of irregular dimensions. The central mass of the building is a hipped-roofed cube, joined at its southeast corner by an octagonal turret. The left-hand portion of the cube's facade boldly projects in the form of a pavillion/bay, linked with the main portion by a pitched roof. A conventional two-and-one-half story oriel bay window projects from the east wall. A pitched-roofed brick ell projects from the rear of the building.

The library's entrance is behind a large, arched vestibule located in the facade between pavillion and turret. The vestibule was originally open, but has in this century been enclosed by a wood and glass screen. The arch is of terra-cotta, as is a sign above it reading "Free Public Library 1889". Above the sign is a small rectangular window.

Pavillion and turret both display their functions in fenestration. The windows of the turret proceed along the line of the stairwell within. The pavillion, enclosing reading rooms, has banks of triple rectangular windows on both its face and east wall. A dentiled entablature winds around the turret's eaves, containing a terra-cotta floral decoration on each side. Above the pavillion's window banks is a large terra-cotta semi-circle bearing the words "Memorial Hall" in runic letters, as well as a battery of shields and symbols. This indicates that the main reading room has been dedicated as a memorial to Civil War soldiers.

The interior's floorplan is irregular. The main door opens into a large reception room with librarian's desk. To the left, through an entry-way with millwork screen, lies the main reading room. This corresponds to the pavillion of the exterior. Behind this is a smaller reading room whose outer wall is the bay of the building's east face. Between this room and the reception hall lies a small, windowless librarian's office with built-in bookcases as walls. The two-story ell behind the reception desk constitutes stacks. The circular stairwell of the turret leads to a second floor hallway and children's reading room. Behind this is a librarian's office. The children's reading room was originally used as a society hall. The remainder of the second story contains service rooms, and the third story is an attic.

Interior elements are prolifically encased in decorative wood moldings, the wood being pine or some other light variety stained to resemble hardwood. Of particularly fine craftsmanship are the mantelpiece in the children's room and the turret staircase. A great deal of the furniture is also of Queen Anne vintage. Mantelpieces in the main reading room and reception room are of red terra-cotta, the former being particularly well-crafted.

The main entrance is capped by a semi-circular transom bearing a stained glass window, which displays the Maine state seal. The central facade window of the main reading room is also of stained glass and displays Columbia holding a flag, with the dates "1860-65". The transoms of the remaining reading room windows are similarly of stained glass, each having a different color scheme. The stained glass itself is unusual, consisting of very small, triangular panes fitted close together.

A black tablet above the mantelpiece in the main reading room (the Memorial Room) lists the names of Skowhegan's Civil War soldiers.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> poiiitics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

Specific dates 1889 **Builder/Architect** E. E. Lewis

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Skowhegan Free Public Library was the first library^s building in Somerset County, and is among the oldest public libraries in Maine. The building is also one of the county's major examples of Queen Anne architecture

Designed by architect E. E. Lewis of Gardiner, Maine, the structure was erected in 1889, and the interior completed the following year. The elevation is awkwardly arranged, the architect being more concerned with the floorplan; pavillion and tower have too much independence from the central mass. This was, however, characteristic of the period.

The building is most impressive in its interior decoration, which includes decorative millwork, moldings, mantelpieces, stained glass, and (uniquely) matching furniture. The rear stacks have been built into floor and ceiling. The stained glass of the "Memorial Room" is extremely fine, the "Columbia" window being particularly notable both as art and as an expression of the "patriotic memorialism" of the period.*

While Queen Anne houses are common in the Kennebec-Penobscot regions, larger Queen Anne buildings, particularly those executed in brick or stone, are rare. The Skowhegan Library is one of the more significant buildings in this class in the region.

*The interior decoration was the work of Maj. John Berry of Gardiner.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Industrial Journal, May 2, 1890, "Building Notes" (interior complete)
Kathleen Martin, "Skowhegan Free Public Library" (library reprint)

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property $\frac{1}{2}$

Quadrangle name Skowhegan

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A

1	9	4	4	2	9	1	5	0	4	1	9	5	1	7	0	1	1	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

Assessor's Map 26, Lot 113

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gregory K. Clancey, Contract Assistant/Frank A. Beard, Historian

organization Me. Historic Preservation Comm. date January, 1983

street & number 55 Capitol telephone 207/289-2133

city or town Augusta, state Maine 04333

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Eula S. Felt*

title S.H.P.O.

date 3/14/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 4/4/83

William Byron
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration