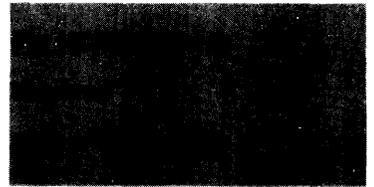


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Alden Public Library

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1012 Water Street not for publication

city, town Alden vicinity of _____ congressional district 3

state Iowa code _____ county Hardin code _____

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name City of Alden (James Green, Mayor)

street & number City Hall

city, town Alden vicinity of _____ state Iowa

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office, Hardin Courthouse

street & number _____

city, town Eldora state Iowa

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Iowa Public Library Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Division of Historic Preservation

city, town Iowa City state Iowa

7. Description

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" 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 Alden Public Library, a somewhat unusual example of Beaux Arts Classical design applied to a small scale structure, is believed to be one of the smallest Carnegie-endowed libraries ever built. This one-story, southwardly-facing edifice is located in a residential section south of Alden's business district and adjacent to the Iowa River. The Des Moines architectural firm of Wetherell and Gage designed this goldfish-tan brick structure early in 1914, and it was ready for occupancy by that fall. Its brick walls rest on foundations of the same material over a raised full basement. The library has a medium pitched gable roof sheathed in red tiles.

Exterior decoration is provided by brick quoins at the building's corners; a rather ornate outside chimney at its west end; an encircling belt course at the base of the main floor; a straight side raised stairway that leads to the entrance; a pedimented projecting entranceway, featuring pilasters and sheathed in stucco; and a dentilled cornice and terra cotta trim along the roofline. Windows are generally of the six-over-one wood sash variety. Windows at the ends and in the basement are set in arched brick surrounds while those on the front and rear facades are set in rectangular wooden surrounds and feature rough plaster panels. Except for the rebuilding of the front steps according to original specifications, the library appears to have undergone no significant exterior alteration.

Inside, the main library facilities and books are located on the main floor. The basement contains a large meeting room, two storage areas, a bathroom, and the furnace room. Except for covering the original wood floor with carpeting and partially covering the exposed ceiling beams, many original interior features remain. These include a window seat, a brick fireplace, door and window moldings, and many bookcases and furnishings.

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates 1914-present **Builder/Architect** Wetherell and Gage

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Alden's experiences in establishing a public library are representative of those of Iowa communities as a whole during the late 19th and 20th century heyday of the library movement. The library crusade in Alden also helps illuminate the Iowa manifestation of a national phenomenon that sought to obliterate the evils of society by increasing the availability of education and knowledge to the masses. Alden's first public library was established in February 1882 when a library association was formed and 225 books procured. It was public only in the sense that those who could pay an annual membership fee of \$1 could use it. Like most early libraries, the principal figures in its organization and operation were men. Within two years, however, the library encountered difficulties and closed its doors.

In April 1885 another library association was organized in Alden, but this time the chief impetus behind it came from the town's women. Alden women, like their counterparts in other sections of the state and nation, were beginning to expand their roles to include improvement projects for the community as a whole as well as their normal household duties. Under the direction of these pioneering women, the town library flourished and grew. In addition to membership fees, they helped finance it with carnivals, plays, concerts, and various other social events. The women also served as voluntary librarians, and one of them even operated her dressmaking shop in the library so that she could properly perform her library duty. By 1892 Alden's women had managed to erect a new library building, and in 1911 they persuaded local government officials to support it with tax money. Support by public funds enabled the women to disband the library association and give Alden a free public library.

Shortly after the library became a truly public institution, efforts were underway to obtain a grant from the Carnegie Corporation for a new library building. H.E. Button of Alden corresponded with Carnegie officials for several months before they agreed to the town's request. At the time, the Carnegie Corporation was under growing criticism for giving grants to towns too small to support libraries, and Alden with its population of less than 1,000 was smaller by far than most grantees. The chief factor in Alden's favor, however, was the fact that its library served the large farming area around it. In November 1913 the Carnegie Corporation offered the town \$9,000 for a new building if local officials agreed to provide a suitable site and spend \$900 a year for its operation. The town council quickly agreed to these conditions, and work on the new facility was soon underway. The cornerstone was laid in April 1914, and

(Continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet Item Number 9)

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Waterloo, Iowa

Quadrangle scale 1:250,000

UMT References

A 15 469850 4707200
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

The east eleven (11) feet of lot fifteen (15) all of lot sixteen (16) and the west thirty-five (35) feet of lot seventeen (17) all in block two (2) in River addition to town of Alden, Hardin County, Iowa.

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 Ralph Christian, Architectural Historian

organization Division of Historic Preservation date October 1980

street & number 26 East Market Street telephone 319-353-6949 or 353-4186

city or town Iowa City state Iowa

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national X 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Adrian D. Anderson

title Director date 1/28/81

For HCRS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 date 3/17/81
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date 3/17/81
Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | FEB 5 1981 |
| DATE ENTERED | MAR 17 1981 |

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE one

in August of that year the new library was formally dedicated. Since that date, it has been a focal point for educational and cultural activities in Alden and the surrounding area.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

| |
|--------------------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |
| RECEIVED FEB 5 1981 |
| DATE ENTERED MAR 17 1981 |

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

James Bertram to H.E. Button, November 7, 1913, copy in Office of Historic Preservation files.

Bowers, Martha H., "Dimensions of the Public Library Movement in Iowa," Unpublished paper in Office of Historic Preservation Files.

Miscellaneous clippings and notes provided by Alden Public Library copies in Office of Historic Preservation files.