

**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 Sparta Free Library

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number Court and Main streets _____ not for publication

city, town Sparta _____ vicinity of congressional district Third

state Wisconsin code 55 county Monroe code 081

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 type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Sparta; Thomas W. Gomez, Mayor

street & number City Hall

city, town Sparta _____ vicinity of state Wisconsin 54656

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Monroe County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Sparta _____ state Wisconsin 54656

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison _____ state Wisconsin 53706

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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 Sparta Free Library is located on the northeast corner of the courthouse square in the center of the small city of Sparta. A variety of modest-sized buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries frame the landscaped lawns of the courthouse. The post office, city hall, and police and fire station are all located within a two-block radius of the library. The site itself is well-tended, enhancing the visual quality of the building.

Nearly cross-shaped with a projecting rear wing and shorter front portico, the sixty-one by thirty-six foot one-story brick building is raised on a high coursed stone foundation. An open Palladian portico with center Ionic columns and side Doric piers is reached from the east and west by a divided stair of rusticated stone. Inscription stones marked CARNEGIE, 1902, and SPARTA FREE LIBRARY decorate the stair, frieze of the stone entablature, and the stone parapet above the molded cornice. Cut stone oculi and a keystone arch trim the brick spandrels.

Stone arcading and sills enclose the round-headed windows, three to each side of the front portico, and four on each of the east and west end walls. Three-quarter-size windows on the faces of the rear wing are similarly accented. Stone quoins trim the corners of the building. Windows in the basement story are rectangular, with double-hung sash.

Much of the regularly-planned first floor is open, divided only by grand mahogany arches springing from panelled mahogany columns. The center entry opens to the card catalog and circulation desk, divided by arches from the reading rooms in the east and west ends and stacks to the north. The south wall of the east reading room is covered by a crenelated full-length brown brick fireplace, whose half-mantel is overhung by a stained ceramic three-quarter bas-relief portrait of Andrew Carnegie. Dark mahogany moldings course the buff plaster walls at the upper and lower edges of the rectangular window frames. Ceilings, and the center skylight, were covered by a dropped ceiling in 1975. Furnishings include four original Mission-style oak lounge chairs, two arm chairs, four dark oak library tables, and twenty-eight oak library chairs. Reached by a stair along the west side of the entry, the basement story is divided into children's room, a small meeting room, storage areas, and rest rooms.

A recently-approved addition to the rear of the building will be made in matching brick and stone, duplicating the high basement and arcaded windows of the exterior. The added space will accommodate stacks on the first floor and a new children's area in the basement. Work will include repairing the front divided stair and restoring the original ball finials, repointing the walls, damp-proofing the foundation, repairing the copper roof, restoring the skylight, and installing new plumbing, heating, period lighting, and air conditioning.

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 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 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		

Specific dates 1902¹

Builder/Architect Schick & Roth, La Crosse²

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Sparta Free Library is architecturally significant as representative of both a type and period of construction. Similar in scale and plan to other small turn-of-the-century Carnegie libraries, the Sparta example is distinguished among its fellows by the sophistication of its NeoClassical form. The crisp contrast of brick walls with stone arched openings and quoins, and the formal projecting pavilion with Palladian portico and rusticated divided stair compose, according to known information, a singular piece of design in the state.

The partnership of Schick & Roth of La Crosse, architects of the Sparta Free Library, was the descendant firm of Stoltze & Schick. Born in Germany in 1854,³ Gustave Stoltze practiced in La Crosse in the 1880s before joining into partnership with Hugo Schick in the 1890s.⁴ During their association the firm designed the Chicago, Burlington & Northern Depot, Tillman Brothers Block, the City Hall, and various schools and churches in La Crosse,⁵ and the Clark County Jail (NRHP, 1978) of 1897 in Neillsville. In the first decade of the twentieth century Hugo Schick joined in practice with Andrew Roth, who had been practicing in La Crosse since 1893.⁶ Born in Bidjow, Austria, Schick was raised and educated in Vienna, completing his studies at the Polytechnical School and Academy of Arts in 1877 at age twenty-two. Schick worked several years in Vienna, then in New York, Chicago, and St. Paul, before coming to La Crosse in 1886.

A grant of \$10,000 was received from the Carnegie Foundation in 1900 for the construction of the Sparta library; before the building was completed, an additional \$2,000 was requested and received.⁷ The building committee of the Sparta Free Library Trustees was composed of Dr. F. P. Stiles, C. M. Masters, Professor F. E. Doty, and George A. Richardson.⁸ Contractor L. V. Huschka completed the building in April of 1903.⁹

¹ Datestone on building.

² Sparta Herald, June 10, 1902.

³ Biographical History of La Crosse, Monroe and Juneau Counties, Wisconsin, Chicago, 1892, p. 179.

⁴ La Crosse City Directories, 1880–1920.

⁵ Biographical History of La Crosse, Monroe and Juneau Counties, Wisconsin, 1892, p. 179.

⁶ Files of the Wisconsin State Examiners Board, 1917–24, in the Archives Collection of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. On a license dated January of 1918 from the Industrial Commission of Wisconsin, Andrew Roth stated that he had practiced in La Crosse since 1893.

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Biographical History of La Crosse, Monroe and Juneau Counties, Wisconsin, Lewis Publishing Co., Chicago, 1892.

Sparta Herald, 1902-03..

ADDRESS NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Sparta, Wisconsin

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UTM References

A

1	5	6	7	5	6	5	0	4	8	6	7	8	0	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

West 130 feet of lot 1, 2, 3 in Block 4 of the original plat of the city of Sparta, Monroe County, Wisconsin.

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By (continued)

name/title Diane H. Filipowicz, Architectural Historian

organization State Historical Society of Wisconsin date May, 1981

street & number 816 State Street telephone 608/262-2970

city or town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Richard M. Mery

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

date 7/27/81

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 9/3/81

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Sparta Free Library, Sparta, Monroe Co., Wisconsin

Continuation sheet

Item number 8,11

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Footnotes (continued)

⁷ Sparta Herald, February 11, 1902

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Sparta Herald, August 19, 1902.

11. Form Prepared By

Research assistance by: Mrs. Blanche Gleiss
701 West Main Street
Sparta, Wisconsin 54656

March, 1981
608/269-2010