

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 (former) Caswell Public Library  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 42 Main Street N/A not for publication  
city or town Harrison N/A vicinity  
state Maine code ME county Cumberland code 005 zip code 04040

### 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.)

*James J. [Signature]* 12/30/04  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

*James [Signature]* 2/15/05  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
*Edson H. Beall*

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	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____	_____	Total

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

Maine Public Libraries

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION / Library  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT / NOT IN USE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN / ROMANESQUE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone  
walls Stone  
roof Asphalt  
other Concrete  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

CASWELL PUBLIC LIBRARY (FORMER)

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

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### DESCRIPTION

The (former) Caswell Public Library in Harrison Maine is a striking Romanesque Revival structure built in 1908-09 by the local architect John H. Procter. Set among vernacular residential and commercial buildings dating primarily from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, this asymmetrical stone structure, with its tower and rounded corner room is one of the Town's most important institutions. The library, nestled under a pair of maple trees and surrounded by perennial gardens, is situated about fifteen feet from the sidewalk that runs along the town's Main Street, and, while it's material and design are unique in this village center, the scale and setting of the one-story building help to integrate it seamlessly into its neighborhood.

The library faces south, and is constructed almost entirely of rusticated granite cobbles. The whole structure is set on a raised foundation, however, the stone wall surface is continuous from the cornice to the ground. The mortar joints between the stone have been roughly and irregularly incised. At the core of the structure is a rectangular mass under an asphalt-clad hipped roof. A large semi-circular room extends from the southern half of the east elevation. This integrated wing is capped by a semi-conical roof which is extended to intersect the plane of the hip roof. A second round projection, or tower, is appended to the southwest corner of the building and capped by a free-standing conical roof. A stone chimney projects from the roof just to the east of its peak. The five bay facade is centered on a stone entrance porch which projects eight feet to the south. The porch is divided into two spaces, one open and the other enclosed to form a vestibule, both of which are set forward of the core mass. The east and west walls of the porch are of solid stone (punctuated by a window as described below) which terminate on the south end in two tall stone pillars capped by pecked granite caps. The pillars rise slightly higher than the front and side walls of the porch, and create a subtle crenelated effect. Cement steps lead through the arched porch opening into the exterior antechamber, and then through the first of two large glass and ash doors into the vestibule and then into the library proper. On the north end of the structure is a stone and cement basement entrance with a slightly overhanging asphalt roof and batten door. A stone arch in the rear wall of the library building marks the intersection of the basement entrance with the wall.

The fenestration of the (former) Caswell Library is irregular, with window size and design varying with location. All the windows are set in wooden frames with concrete sills and enclosed within an arched stone architrave marked with a dressed keystone. The most prominent window is located to the east of the entrance door and consists of a single large bottom sash surmounted by a fixed fan sash with a webbed design. Juxtaposed with this eye-catching piece, to the north of the porch is a small, fixed, faceted window with opaque glass. In each of the rounded sections of the building, are regularly distributed one-over-one sash windows, however the three in the tower are shorter than the four in the southeast wing. Two pairs of joined one-over-one windows and a single window that matches the tower sash are positioned on the west elevation. Finally, the east and rear elevations contain examples of the one-over-one tower windows, small fixed sash, and paired sash distributed asymmetrically across the surfaces. Short and deeply recessed basement windows are set under stone arches on all sides of the building except the southeast wing. Finally, two red-glass windows

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASWELL PUBLIC LIBRARY (FORMER)

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 3

---

with intersecting oblong tracery formed by wooden muntins are located in the east and west walls of the entry porch, and provide light to the vestibule.

The interior of the (former) Caswell Library consists of two large spaces and three smaller rooms. Throughout the building the window and door trim and the wainscoting is all of varnished ash which contrasts warmly with the cream colored plaster walls. However, the original maple floor is now covered in wall to wall carpeting. Immediately to the east of the entrance is the semi-circular reading room. This space, which is flooded with light from its five windows features a corner fireplace with an elaborate decorative mantle of walnut and quarter-sawn oak. Between the large windows are tall narrow bookshelves which continue around the room below sill height. Folding ash doors originally separated the reading room from the second large space, which consists of an oblong room that occupies the entire western half of the building. Book shelves line the walls and sit free standing in the northern half of this room, while the free-standing, u-shaped circulation desk, (now removed), occupied the front of the space. The small tower room has, in recent years, functioned as a computer center, but its original use is unknown. Finally, in the northwest corner of the building is a small bathroom, stairs to the basement and a seven by eight foot alcove that forms the children's section. In the basement of the library, is a small office, a meeting room with a galley kitchen and activity/storage room. Each of these rooms were built within the last 50 years, and contain cement floors, wood paneling, drop ceilings and sheet rock partition walls.

**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.)

- 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.
- 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1908 - 1954

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1908

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

John H. Proctor

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**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.

**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:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASWELL PUBLIC LIBRARY (FORMER)

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The (former) Caswell Public Library is a one-story Romanesque Revival stone structure located in Harrison Maine. Constructed in 1908-09 by the local architect John H. Procter, the south facing structure is set on a small grassy lot near the village center. It was built with funds raised in part by the Harrison Public Library Association and with generous donations from Daniel H. Caswell, for whom the building was named. The library building is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C as more fully explained in the Multiple Property Documentation Form titled "Maine Public Libraries."

The following is a short history of the (former) Caswell Public Library, as prepared by the Library Board President for a forthcoming Bicentennial publication.

"The Harrison Public Library Association was incorporated in 1906 after the Wyonegonic Club, a ladies literary society, brought together two collections in the town. One had been stored in private homes and later at Bridgton Academy, while the other established by the Temperance Reform Club was kept in their building. The fire of 1907 destroyed the Reform Club building where the library collection was housed. Fortunately, the books were saved and were then circulated from a private home. The Association members carried on their work, trusting a building was in the future for Harrison. Daniel H. Caswell Sr., a native of Harrison residing in Texas with a summer home near Crystal Lake, realized the interest of the group to have their own building for the sole purpose of a library. He gave a parcel of land in the village, the former site of the burned Calvin Baptist Church, and a total amount of \$1700 toward the \$3500 cost of the building. Mr. Caswell's condition to his gift was the "building might bear the name of the donor, as a tribute of honor to his generous character".... Fund raising commenced, and a bronze tablet listing all donors over \$100 was hung in the entryway. A loan of \$1200 was obtained from George Burnham of Burnham and Morrill to finish the interior. The Caswell Public Library was completed in 1908. The mortgage was paid in 1910. It wasn't until 1947 that the trustees legally made the change of the corporation from Harrison Public Library Association to Caswell Public Library Association."

The architect for the (former) Caswell Public Library was John H. Proctor, a local resident. Although he had several commissions in the area, little is known about his career. While living in nearby Bridgton at the turn of the century he worked with his father, Horace F. Proctor on commissions including "the Odd Fellows Hall and other buildings in Harrison Village, and the stately mansion and outbuildings of J. Howard Randall of South Harrison, the most elegant and costly group of home buildings in the town or near vicinity". (Moulton p. 376). In 1906-07 John H. Proctor served in the Maine Senate, and shortly after finishing the (former) Caswell Public Library, they moved to Avon, Maine where they had engaged in the lumber industry. It is likely that the (former) Caswell Public Library was Procter's only library commission. On the interior, the functional orientation does not closely reflect the tri-partite division of a delivery room/hall, stacks fronted by (and access sometimes controlled by) the circulation desk, and a reading room that had been so strongly advocated by

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASWELL PUBLIC LIBRARY (FORMER)

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 3

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librarians over the preceding decade and a half, and which was becoming the norm in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. While the reading room is separate from the circulation and stack area, it was initially conceived of as a "social parlor designed for business and social meetings". (Moulton, p. 330). The stacks and the circulation desk shared the large oblong room in the west end of the structure with pre-ordained ordering of the space.

Stylistically, at least 15 libraries in Maine were built in the Romanesque Revival style between 1887 and 1912, roughly half of them using stone or incorporating rounded wings or towers. The Harrison commission occurs late in this group, however, and this style was subsequently used for only one other library Maine. The popularity of the style crested in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with 13 examples built before 1901. While there is no denying that Procter might have been familiar with these buildings (the nearest geographically was located in Portland), it is much more likely that his inspiration was influenced by the library's biggest benefactor.

Daniel H. Caswell was born in Harrison in 1835 and started his career at sea. According to information in the Caswell family bible, after he put into several ports in the southern states he realized the economic potential to be had in the cotton industry, and subsequently moved his family to Tennessee, where he prospered.<sup>1</sup> Shortly before the turn of the century they relocated to Austin Texas, where he founded the Austin Oil Manufacturing Company. Although Caswell would remain in Texas until his death in 1918, he often returned to Harrison in the summers, as did many of his descendants over the next few generations. In 1900 Caswell constructed a 10 room house in Austin. (Daniel H. Caswell and William T. Caswell Houses: NR 75002004). Built of rough quarried limestone block, this Victorian - Romanesque structure was two stories high, with a slate covered hipped roof, and corner tower under a conical slate roof. Attached to the front and sides of the house is a two story sleeping porch, which obscures the fenestration pattern. While the arched forms found at the (former) Caswell Public Library do not appear on the earlier Caswell building, the use of stone and the presence of the tower suggest a tangible stylistic link between the two buildings. Indeed, a framed drawing of the Austin property hangs on the wall of the library.

After lengthy discussions regarding overcrowding and access, the Caswell Public Library Association moved the library collections into the nearby former Harrison Town Office in August 2004. The Association has retained ownership of the (former) Caswell Public Library building and plans to continue to utilize it for classes and community events.

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<sup>1</sup>The bible belonged to William Thomas Caswell, one of Daniel Caswell's sons.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASWELL PUBLIC LIBRARY (FORMER)

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Moulton, Alphonso. Centennial History of Harrison, Maine. (Salem, MA: Higginson Book Co.), [1995] 1909.

Reese, Marsia Hart. "A Grandeur Restored" in *Austin Homes & Gardens*. (June 1983), pp. 36-43.

"Village Library (Aug 4, 2004)". Copy on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine.

"Harrison Public Library Association" in *The Bridgton News*. (Bridgton, Maine). No date; c. July 1910. Copy of clipping on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine.

### Other Resources:

E-mail correspondence between Barbara Ward (wife of Daniel H. Caswell's great grandson) and Librarian Diane Jackson. In this correspondence Mrs. Ward quotes the family history from the family bible kept by Daniel's son William T. Caswell). The bible is in possession of Barbara Ward in Austin, Texas. Copy on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine.





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASWELL PUBLIC LIBRARY (FORMER)

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 10 Page 2

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The (former) Caswell Public Library is located on tax map 45, lot 156 as surveyed by the Town of Harrison Maine.

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The above cited boundary includes all the property associated with the (former) Caswell Public Library since it was donated to the Harrison Public Library Association by Daniel H. Caswell in 1908.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

CASWELL PUBLIC LIBRARY (FORMER)

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, MAINE

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1 of 4  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
7 September 2004  
West facade; facing east.

Photograph 2 of 4  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
7 September 2004  
Tower, northwest corner of west facade; facing east.

Photograph 3 of 4  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
7 September 2004  
Fireplace surround and mantle, reading room interior; facing northwest.

Photograph 4 of 4  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
7 September 2004  
Interior of the reading room; facing south.