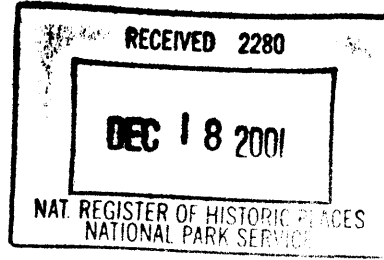


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**



1529

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name Slater Library and Fanning Annex

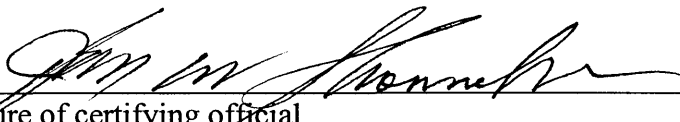
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 26 Main Street not for publication ___
city or town Griswold vicinity ___
state CT code 09 county New London code 011 zip code 06351

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

 November 29, 2001
Signature of certifying official Date
John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical 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 commenting or other official 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):

Edson A. Beall

1-28-02

for

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>

buildings
sites
structures
objects
Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

Slater Library and Fanning Annex
Name of Property

New London, CT
County and State

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education – Library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education – Library

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian – Richardsonian

Romanesque

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

roof slate

walls granite

other brownstone

yellow brick

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from Instructions)

Social History

Industry

Architecture

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Period of Significance

A. 1884-1950

B. 1815-1884

C. 1884-1950

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.

Significant Dates

1884

1930

1882

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

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Slater Library and Fanning Annex
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Description

Located along the northeastern border of New London County and in the Eastern Uplands Geographic Historic Context, Griswold abuts the towns of Preston and Lisbon to the west, North Stonington to the south, Voluntown to the east, and Plainfield to the north. The Borough of Jewett City, its edges in part defined by the Quinebaug and Pachaug Rivers, is located in the southwestern section of town.

The Slater Memorial Library is located at the junction of State Routes 12 and 138, at the southernmost terminus of Main Street as the terrain rises sharply from the Quinebaug River. Sited on a rise above street level, the building stands somewhat isolated, set back from the road, with an expanse of lawn bordered by a stone wall in front. Although historic commercial buildings line Main Street to the north, the library's immediate neighbor is a one-story modern commercial building at grade and set farther back from the street.

Exterior

The Slater Library and Fanning Annex, a tall one-and-a-half-story, basically rectangular building with a two-story projecting tower, is approximately 40 x 80 feet in dimension and executed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style (see photograph 1). The building is oriented east/west, its north and south elevations running virtually to the lot line. At the rear the land slopes downward and the ground-floor level is exposed. There is no parking on the parcel. Although built in two sections--the original squarish building in 1884, to the design of Stephen Carpenter Earle (1839-1919), and an addition added in 1930 that doubled its length, designed by the Norwich, Connecticut, firm of Cudworth and Thompson--the library presents a seamless exterior on its principal elevations of random-coursed rock-faced pink granite walls and similarly dressed brownstone. Brownstone frames the main entrance and windows, and is used for the water table and two stringcourses that band the building. The bracketed cornice is pink granite. Granite and brownstone are set in sandstone-tinted mortar with flush joints. Multi-gabled main roof, dormers, and tower are charcoal slate. Tall granite chimneys rise above the north and south roof slopes.

The asymmetrical facade (see photograph 2) consists of a projecting two-story square tower that shelters a deeply recessed brownstone entrance porch, whose semicircular arch is supported by brownstone piers and pairs of three-quarter engaged columns with foliate capitals (see photograph 3). On either side of the arch, above the massive brownstone springer, is a cartouche with a griffin's head in high relief against carved strapwork (see photograph 4). The words "Slater Library" are carved in high relief within a horizontal band of brownstone set several courses above the voussoirs. Above the entry at the second-floor level are paired double-hung, nine-over-one wood windows under a multi-paned, semi-circular transom of colored glass, with brownstone surround. The tower terminates in a modified jerkinhead roof, the ridges capped with copper. At the first floor, the tower is flanked by an arcaded grouping of three tall double-hung, nine-over-one windows, each with colored-glass transoms. Window mullions and surrounds are brownstone. The facade roof is punctuated by a hip-roofed dormer with three coupled four-over-one wood windows

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under a single brownstone lintel supported by granite piers.

On the north elevation of the 1884 section of the building is a grade-level entrance to the basement, which was added when a limited remodeling of the original building was undertaken in conjunction with construction of the annex in 1930. A glass and wood door with a single sidelight is under a brownstone lintel. The door leads to the intermediate landing of a staircase from the first floor to the basement. Beyond the entrance, towards the rear at basement level, are three double-hung, six-over-one windows in the annex. At the first-floor level, set back from the facade, is a wood double-hung, twelve-over-twelve window below an arched transom with radial muntins. The entire window is patterned in colored, leaded glass: intense yellow, red, and blue, contrasting with white. The window is original to the 1884 building and illuminates the entrance hall within (see photograph 5). The smallest window on the north elevation is the restroom window, added to the 1884 section at the time of the 1930 changes to the building. The three evenly spaced, first-floor annex windows, tall and arch-headed, are virtually identical in size, overall shape, and proportions to both the facade and original south elevation windows. They are, however, different in the details. As on the south elevation, the windows are nine-over-two but are metal with wireglass rather than wood. The windows are set directly into granite-framed openings; brownstone trim is limited to the arch and sills. A three-windowed roof dormer is centered over the three first-floor windows. Dormer windows are wood, double-hung, six-over-one.

On the south elevation, the distinction between the massing of the original building and that of the annex is made clear: the annex is about 10 feet wider and creates an ell where the two sections of the building meet (see photograph 6). The transition, however, is imperceptible: the east-facing first-floor window of the annex is identical to the four first-floor windows of the 1884 section, raising the possibility that an original window was reused at the time of the 1930 construction program. The windows of the 1884 section are wood, double-hung, nine-over-two with multi-pane arched transoms and have brownstone surrounds. To the rear, the annex windows are metal with wire glass in a nine-over-two pattern like the windows on the north elevation, but have brownstone surrounds patterned after the adjacent original windows. The change in grade allows for three windows at the basement level of the addition. Both dormers of the 1884 section are bisected by a granite chimney that juts out slightly from the wall plane as it rises from the stringcourse. A single wood, double-hung, four-over-one window flanks either side of each chimney. The annex dormer matches that on the north elevation.

The rear (west) elevation of the building presents an entirely different aspect from the rest of the library building: the foundation is concrete, the walls are yellow brick, and the treatment of window openings is singular. The existing four window openings at the basement level have massive grey granite lintels and sills; a fifth opening is partially bricked in at the upper half and the sill has been removed to allow for a door. The five arch-headed first-floor windows, though identical in glazing pattern and material to those on the north and south elevations of the annex, are set within brick jambs and have brownstone keystones (see photograph 7). On this elevation, there are no brackets under the eave. A roof dormer identical to that on the north elevation is centered over the windows.

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Interior

Slater Library

The original front doors open into a side entrance hall (see photograph 8) with a multi-colored, geometrically patterned tile floor and wood wainscot resting on a marble base. Ahead and to the left, 15-light doors with grooved panel and bull's eye corner-block surrounds lead to the library's original reading rooms. An enclosed staircase along the north side serves the second floor. The reading rooms run front to back, linked by large multi-paneled wood pocket doors (see photograph 9). These high-ceilinged, rectangular rooms have extensive cherry millwork: door and window casings, splayed window reveals, and crown molding (see photograph 10). The more elaborate front room has wainscot identical to that in the entrance hall and has a brick fireplace with cherry mantel and overmantel with shelf (see photograph 11). Paired doors on the north wall of the front room lead to the restroom and the stairs to the basement level.¹ Freestanding oak bookshelves--likely from the 1930s--line the walls of both rooms.

At the second floor, the stairs terminate at a landing with French doors that open to the first of two small rooms under the sloping roof, which were originally used as meeting rooms but are now used for storage. Along the south wall of the most immediate room is a shallow brick fireplace with a curved mantel shelf, supported by brackets, that extends beneath the dormer windows on either side of the chimney (see photograph 12). Pocket doors separate the two rooms. The front room, amply lighted by two dormers, is the larger of the two spaces and has a large cased opening leading to an alcove in the tower. The alcove interior is illuminated by the tower second-story windows. Pocket doors and all trim match that on the first floor.

Fanning Annex

Access to the Fanning Annex is through the 1884 section of the building. At the first floor, the large rectangular space is divided down the center by two widely spaced posts supporting a cased structural beam that runs the length of the room, east-west (see photograph 13). Because the windows extend to the ceiling, the built-up cornice--more elaborate than in the front section--runs in between the windows. There are no window casings. At the far end of the room are four rows of freestanding, double-sided, oak bookshelves, original to the 1930 construction. Period oak shelves line the room's perimeter. Existing oak tables also date from 1930. A modern charge desk is located in the southeast corner.²

¹ The basement runs the full length of both the Slater Library and the Fanning Annex, divided into three rooms that correspond to the layout on the upper floors. These spaces are utilitarian and are used for storage. Historically, the annex basement room served as the children's library.

² The original charge desk is stored on the second floor of the Slater Library. Based on style analysis, it is probable that architect Stephen Carpenter Earle designed the charge desk.

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At the second floor, French doors located at the intersection of the two building sections lead to a large open space with a raised platform at the far end, in front of the rear (west) elevation dormer windows (see photograph 14). The rectangularity of the space is broken by alcoves located under the north and south dormers. Originally intended to serve as an assembly room, the space is now used to house materials related to the history of the Town of Griswold. Varnished millwork includes: paneled wainscot, two-panel doors, and window and door casings with raised moldings. Spaced along the periphery of the room are pilasters with decorative brackets. The walls, coved ceiling, and pilasters are plastered.

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Statement of Significance

Overview

The Slater Library and Fanning Annex is historically significant as an example of the late-nineteenth-century civic-minded philanthropy of wealthy industrialists that made possible the erection of educational and cultural institutions not only in Connecticut but nationwide, and the construction of new public buildings that accompanied the processes of urbanization. The Slater Library further exemplifies the growing momentum of the public library movement in the late nineteenth century that resulted in the construction of hundreds of buildings in New England dedicated solely to this purpose. (Criterion A) The building stands as a testament to the central role of the Slater family in the historical development of Jewett City and as a tangible reminder of the importance of textile manufacturing to the economy of the Eastern Uplands. (Criterion A) The original benefactor, John Fox Slater, owner of the Slater mills in Jewett City, was a prominent industrialist and creator of the Slater Fund, one of the most important sources of financial support of African American education in the post-Reconstruction South. (Criterion B) The Slater Library and Fanning Annex is architecturally significant as an example of the work of Stephen Carpenter Earle, an important regional architect based in Worcester, Massachusetts, and as a well-preserved and ably executed interpretation of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. (Criterion C)

Historical Significance and Background

Development of Jewett City

Originally part of the Town of Preston, Griswold was not established until 1815. Jewett City, however, had already begun to develop as a distinct community by the late eighteenth century as the waterpower of the Pachaug River was harnessed by small-scale millers, and as settlers arrived and built houses. Between 1750 and 1770, Eliezer Jewett had acquired most of the land within the boundaries of Jewett City and had built the earliest saw, grist, and fulling mills. In recognition of Jewett's efforts, this small hamlet was subsequently known as Jewett City. Other manufactories began early in the nineteenth century, including pioneering enterprises in wool carding and cotton yarn. The Jewett City Cotton Manufacturing Company, founded in 1811, was among the earliest such establishments in the state. These enterprises were small-scale, however, and the village population grew only slowly: the 1819 Pease and Niles *Gazeteer* reports that Jewett City had but 30 of the Town of Griswold's 230 houses.

By the Civil War, however, in Griswold, as in much of the Eastern Uplands, new forces would transform the economy and the landscape: the rise of the factory system and mill village, and the introduction of new technologies, including the railroad. Start-up of the Slater mills and the arrival of Norwich and Worcester rail service were two factors that propelled change in Jewett City. When the Jewett City Cotton Manufacturing Company succumbed to adverse market conditions in the early 1820s, the plant was purchased by Samuel and John Slater. Samuel Slater, who had emigrated

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from England to Rhode Island in the late eighteenth century, was a pivotal figure in development of the early textile industry, initially through his association with the firm of Almy and Brown in Providence, Rhode Island, and was instrumental in introducing both the mill form and mill village in New England. By the 1820s, the Slater family had far-flung business interests in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts. John Slater had oversight of the company business in Connecticut and his immediate concern was to increase the capacity of the Jewett City Cotton Manufacturing Company plant by constructing a new dam to increase waterpower. After his death in 1843, his son, John Fox Slater, acquired partial ownership and in the 1850s embarked upon an ambitious building plan that included new brick mills and mill worker housing.

Although mills operated in other scattered sites in Griswold, including the Hope Factory in Hopeville that was also owned by the Slater family, by mid-century most of them had gone bankrupt or been destroyed by fire. Reflecting the trend in the cotton textile industry in Connecticut's Eastern Uplands after the Civil War toward fewer but larger, more capital-intensive firms with much-expanded labor forces, Jewett City became a center for large-scale textile manufacturing, numbering the Slater mills, Ashland Cotton Company, and Aspinook Bleaching Company. Their collective value by the 1890s was approximately \$1.5 million and they employed over 1,000 workers. In 1896, the Slater mill ran 700 looms and 19,000 spindles, and had 550 hands. Under Slater ownership were 141 tenements and a general store. After John Fox Slater's death in 1884, his son, William A. Slater, assumed control of the property, and the mills continued to be family-run into the early twentieth century.³ First French Canadian, and later Polish, immigrants arrived in considerable numbers to work at the mills. Although Griswold was still among the state's smaller towns, the population steadily increased from 1860 onward, and in the period 1870-1890 grew by 20 percent--mostly centered in Jewett City.

Industrial expansion and population growth spurred new development in Jewett City: a bird's-eye map of Jewett City from 1889 shows a Main Street with financial, commercial, and institutional buildings.⁴ Several new buildings of brick and stone construction imparted a more urban-like character to Main Street. In general, the process of urbanization also necessitated the creation of new or expanded municipal services, including street lighting, water lines, fire and police protection. Frustrated at the perceived unwillingness of the town to provide the necessary funds for improvements in Jewett City, residents successfully secured designation as a borough from the State of Connecticut General Assembly in 1895, a status that gave a Board of Warden and Burgesses governing powers, including taxation, within the borough proper. A contemporary publication proudly noted that:

Jewett City also has a telegraph office, public telephone, express company, international money order post office, a weekly newspaper--the

³ Jewett City textile mills continued to run during the 1930s and during World War II, but after the war the town's and the region's traditional economic base was undermined by the inability to compete with production in the Far East and the American South and lack of capital to modernize plants.

⁴ L.R. Burleigh, *Jewett City, Conn.* (Troy, New York: Burleigh Lithography, 1889).

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Jewett City Press--livery stables, lumber and coal yard, grain elevator,
hotels, stores of all kinds⁵

Slater Library and Fanning Annex: A Community Institution

Dedicated in 1885, the Slater Library was the gift of John Fox Slater.⁶ Slater had died in 1884, but had already made arrangements for erection of the library. Construction was underway at the time of Slater's death, and his son, William A. Slater, oversaw its completion at a total cost of \$15,000. The library was to be managed by a board of trustees that initially included William A. Slater of Norwich, and Thomas L. Shipman, Alfred A Young, Allen B. Burleson, and James O. Sweet, all of Griswold.⁷ By the terms of incorporation in 1884, authority to appoint trustees to the Slater Library Corporation was vested in William A. Slater during his lifetime.⁸

The establishment of the Slater Library coincided with a broad movement to provide free public libraries. John Fox Slater's philanthropy was informed by more general trends of social reform that emphasized the importance of education in a democratic society and the crucial role of the public library. Although some states had enacted enabling legislation to allow towns to use public monies to establish and maintain public libraries, the founding of purpose-built public libraries relied heavily on private munificence:

Of the slightly more than 450 purpose-built structures that marked
the American countryside by the end of the century, more than
80 percent had been endowed by local philanthropists....⁹

The motives underlying late nineteenth-century philanthropy were complex: a combination of duty, paternalism, and self-interest. The amassing of fortunes carried with it great responsibilities, especially to provide opportunities for self-improvement for those less fortunate. The establishment of libraries expressed the belief that books could positively contribute to the development of character and improvement of one's condition in life. From the perspective of the

⁵ Robert S. Tyler, "The Borough of Jewett City," *The Graphic*. Vol. 11 No. 1 May-June-July 1896, p. 16.

⁶ While the Slater Library was not the first such institution in Griswold, it was the first building dedicated solely to this purpose. In 1881, a public library had been endowed by Daniel T. Coit in the village of Pachaug. It was located in the Coit Chapel, an annex of the Pachaug meetinghouse.

⁷ Members of the board were leading businessmen in Griswold and Norwich who held positions of civic responsibility in the community: self-made men who had interests in textile manufacturing and banking. For example, Alfred A. Young, one of the executors of Slater's estate, had been an agent of the Slater mills, was a director of the Norwich Bleaching, Dyeing & Printing Co., held the position of vice-president of the Jewett City Savings Bank, and was one of the incorporators of the Chelsea Savings Bank, Norwich. James O. Sweet was treasurer of the Ashland Cotton Company in Jewett City, and had served both as town treasurer and on the board of education.

⁸ Subsequently, the board of trustees became self-perpetuating.

⁹ Kenneth A. Breisch, *Henry Hobson Richardson and the Small Public Library in America: A Study in Typology* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997), p. 6.

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employer, books could inculcate moral values helpful in maintaining a reliable and industrious workforce, and also serve as a means of creating social cohesion. "As was often noted by orators at the time, at least one other major function of the library was to offer an alternative to the saloon and the pool hall."¹⁰ These values were reflected in an observation made about the Slater Library contained in an 1896 magazine article:

The reading room is opened every week-day evening and both old and young show their appreciation of the privilege given them, as the warm and lighted room is well patronized, and many a stranger finds a cordial welcome here, and spends a pleasant and profitable hour, who might be otherwise tempted to more doubtful resorts.¹¹

Beneficence, however, created an obligation on the part of the recipients and linked them to the donor by a bond of gratitude. As the same article noted:

We also take great pride in another public institution, which has had much to do with the social question--Slater Library and reading room, which places the people of this village under renewed obligations to the donor, Mr. Slater, of Norwich.¹²

The Slater Library opened as a subscription library, probably a reflection of Slater's belief that people would appreciate the facility more if they had to pay something for its services. The terms of Slater's will made clear that his estate's support for the library was limited to a term of years, on a declining scale, so that, at the end of the term, its support "should rest upon the public for whom it was created."¹³ However, the institution relied on the generosity of Slater's son, William A. Slater, who provided an annual sum for operating the library.

The trustees met annually and the meeting minutes of the library's early years, though terse, record the sums spent for purchase of books and periodicals and the number of subscribers. The 1891 minutes reported the successful cultivation of a new readership:

In order to induce the young people of the town to frequent the Library the Book committee had added to the reading room the comic papers such as Judge Puck and Life and the result is gratifying

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹¹ Mary E. Soule, "The Social Advantages," *The Graphic*. Vol. 11 No. 1 May-June-July 1896, p. 18.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Daniel L. Phillips, *Griswold - A History* (New Haven: The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Company, 1929), p. 260.

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in that it has induced a class of people, who have heretofore shunned the Library, to frequent it.¹⁴

From the outset considerable effort was made to acquire a wide range of non-fiction and fiction, including many literary classics and a small but impressive collection of biographies, histories, and philosophical treatises. There was a separate juvenile collection as well. By 1889, the library housed 1,876 volumes.¹⁵

The library's ability to serve the community was greatly enhanced when it became a free library:

The year including March 31st 1892 shows a large increase in the number of subscribers and a greater interest in the Reading Room. Through the kindness of Wm. Slater the use of the books of the Library was made free to all Jan.1st 1892. The large increase in the number of subscribers is due directly to this change of policy. At the beginning of the year the number of ticket holders was 70 - today the patrons of the Library number 239.¹⁶

By 1896, the library contained over 3,000 books, and a contemporary author noted that "from 200 to 300 new books are added yearly. The average daily circulation is about 100 books."¹⁷

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the library trustees continued to rely on financial support from William A. Slater, though the trustee meeting minutes indicate some limited local fund-raising activities and the receipt of small bequests either in the form of cash or books. Slater died in 1919, leaving to the library \$7,000 for maintenance, to be paid in installments, and \$12,000 to the general fund. Realizing the need for a "permanent endowment," however, the trustees looked to a native son of Jewett City, David Hale Fanning (1830-1925). Fanning's is a Horatio Alger story: orphaned at the age of seven, he went to live with his older siblings, struck out on his own at the age of 16 and made his way to Worcester, Massachusetts, where, after starting as a mill hand and later trying his luck in various trades, he founded the Royal Worcester Corset Company in 1861. So successful was his company that in 1920 it was said to be the largest such manufactory in the country, with offices in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, and customers worldwide.¹⁸ Fanning had already demonstrated interest in Jewett City by giving monies to the Jewett City Cemetery Association for improvements, providing contributions towards erection of a Soldiers' Monument, and underwriting the cost of creating Fanning Park in 1913.¹⁹ Approached by a member of the board,

¹⁴ *Record of the Slater Library*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁵ *Catalog of Books in the Slater Library* (Norwich, Conn.: Press of the Bulletin Co., 1889).

¹⁶ *Record of the Slater Library*, p. 9.

¹⁷ Robert S. Tyler, "The Borough of Jewett City," *Op.cit.*, p.16.

¹⁸ *Yesterday and Today: A Souvenir of the Royal Worcester Corset Company*, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1921.

¹⁹ In Worcester, Fanning's philanthropy was well known: he had endowed a girl's technical school.

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Fanning agreed to give the library \$20,000, provided the funds were matched within a year of receipt.²⁰ Successfully meeting this challenge, the trustees invested the proceeds in government bonds.

By 1924, Fanning (now 94 years old) and Dr. Jennings had already had discussions about a bequest to construct an addition to the library.²¹ Fanning died the following year and left \$75,000 in his will to be used for construction of the David Hale Fanning Annex, which was to house a Reading Room for boys and girls at the basement level. Despite some concern about whether the funds would be found to maintain an annex, the trustees of the library accepted the gift.²² In 1928, the board hired the architectural firm of Cudworth and Thompson, of Norwich, to design the annex and shortly thereafter hired builder Earle E. Gilbert. The annex was under construction in the summer of 1930 and completed by 1931, thus meeting Fanning's deadline.

John Fox Slater: Businessman and Benefactor

John Fox Slater, son of John Slater and nephew of Samuel Slater, John's brother, was born in Slatersville, Rhode Island, in 1815. As a young man, Slater assisted his father at family-owned mills both in Hopeville and Jewett City, and assumed management of the Jewett City mills in 1834. He inherited partial ownership of the Jewett City mills after his father's death in 1843 and gained full ownership in 1872. The Jewett City mills prospered, making an important contribution to the growth of the cotton textile industry in Connecticut in the second half of the nineteenth century. Under Slater's direction the Jewett City mills increased in size from 90 looms in 1853 to 449 at the time of his death in 1884, ranking the company among the largest in the state. Slater was an original investor, the first president of the company, and later a member on the board of directors of Ponemah Mills, in Taftville in Norwich.²³ His business interests extended beyond textile manufacturing: he was a director of the Norwich & Worcester Railroad, Norwich and New London Steamboat Company, Norwich Fire Insurance Company, and Norwich Gas Company. A resident of Norwich beginning in 1843, Slater was instrumental in founding Norwich Free Academy, and, exemplary of his civic-mindedness, he served as a trustee for more than 20 years.

Slater's commitment to education extended far beyond Connecticut. Late in life, he established an eponymous fund with a \$1million endowment which provided monies to support black colleges in the South. Former President

²⁰ The library has in its possession typewritten letters sent by David Hale Fanning to Dr. George H. Jennings, trustee of the Slater Library, dating from 1919 and 1920. Fanning's letters suggest how to conduct fundraising activities, sans the help of the Slater family. In correspondence dated June 1, 1920, Fanning noted with characteristic forthrightness: "Mrs. Slater does not seem the least interested in Jewett City or the Slater Library, but with Slater's name she ought to be interested enough to give you a liberal sum. She probably will never give you a penny. But it is a satisfaction to know that the people of Jewett City are alive and awake and can live and raise money without any of her help."

²¹ David Hale Fanning to Dr. George H. Jennings, February 28, 1924.

²² *Record of the Slater Library*, pp. 69-70.

²³ Ponemah Mills began as the Orrey Taft Manufacturing Company in 1865. The name was changed in 1871. Ponemah Mills became the largest cotton textile company in the state.

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Rutherford B. Hayes was named chairman of the Slater Fund. The trustees included Daniel Coit Gilman, president of Johns Hopkins University; Theodore Dwight Wolsey, president of Yale University; Leonard Bacon, minister at Park Congregational Church in Norwich; and Episcopal Bishop Phillips Brooks of Massachusetts. The Slater Fund was instrumental in causing a number of the South's fledgling black colleges to add industrial training programs to their original liberal arts curricula. In its first decade of existence, the fund expended over \$400,000 to support such programs.²⁴ Acutely aware of the need for better-trained black teachers for the South's all-black, rural common schools, in the early twentieth century, Northern philanthropy underwrote efforts to establish county training schools, which had as one of their missions to prepare industrial arts teachers. The Slater Fund was centrally important in this endeavor and contributed over a million dollars for the purpose.²⁵

Architectural Significance

For the Slater Library, John Fox Slater engaged architect Stephen Carpenter Earle (1839-1913) of Worcester, Massachusetts, who earlier had designed the Park Congregational Church (1873), Mrs. Mary Hubbard Slater's residence (1874), and the Reverend L.W. Bacon House (1879) in Norwich.²⁶ Earle's career is illustrative of the major changes that occurred in the profession of architecture in the second half of the nineteenth century. Born into a prominent Quaker family in Leicester, Massachusetts, he went to live with his father's first cousin in Worcester after his father's death in 1853. In 1856, he was graduated from Worcester High School, where he studied mechanical drawing. Earle's initial training was received as a draftsman-apprentice in the office of Calvert Vaux in New York in 1861 and 1863.²⁷ While in New York, Earle took architectural drawing classes at Cooper Union. He subsequently returned to Worcester, was briefly employed as a draftsman in the office of Elbridge Boyden (1810-1898), Worcester's leading architect, and later worked as draftsman for an engineering project in western Massachusetts before he set out to study architecture in Europe in the manner of the *grande tour*, like so many other aspiring architects of the era. Earle's travels took him to England and the continent, including Italy and France. He returned to Worcester in 1866 and opened an architectural office. In 1868, he did, however, avail himself of courses offered to practicing architects at the new Department of Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

²⁴ In recognition of Slater's generous philanthropy and the signal importance of the Slater Fund, in 1888 Congress commissioned a gold medal in his honor from Tiffany's in New York City. The medal showed Slater in profile on one side and a black man receiving a book on the reverse. See Arthur Lester Lathrop, *Victorian Norwich, Connecticut* (Salem, Massachusetts: Higginson Book Co., 1999), p. 161.

²⁵ After 1937, the Slater Fund and others merged to form the Southern Education Fund.

²⁶ The circumstances of John Fox Slater's selection of Earle to design his wife's residence are unknown. He was likely to be familiar with the Park Congregational Church. It is also possible that through his business interests in Worcester, Slater was familiar with Earle's major important commissions in that city and his growing reputation. After Slater's death in 1884, his son, William A. Slater, commissioned Earle to design the Slater Memorial Art Gallery at Norwich Free Academy.

²⁷ Earle's apprenticeship was in the form of a legal agreement in which Earle paid Vaux one hundred dollars "to admit the said S.C. Earle as a student in his architectural office and to furnish him with such opportunities for attaining a knowledge of the business of architecture as his practice may offer." Quoted in Curtis Dahl, *Stephen C. Earle, Architect: Shaping Worcester's Image* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1987), p. 8.

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Singly, and in partnerships, initially with James E. Fuller and later with Clellan W. Fisher, Earle designed some of Worcester's most prominent buildings in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, including All Saints Church (1874), Central Congregational Church (1883), and the original building of the Art Museum (1897). During the course of his long career, Earle designed nearly 200 buildings: he received commissions for ecclesiastical, civic, commercial, and residential buildings in other cities and towns in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. In addition to those in Norwich, his known Connecticut commissions included the Bill Memorial Library (1890) in Groton. Recognizing the value to the profession of the new architectural periodicals of the time, Earle submitted many of his designs to the prestigious *American Architect and Building News*, which had begun publication in 1873. Beginning in 1876, and during the next 20 years, 25 of his designs were published. From 1872 to 1884, Earle maintained a second office in Boston, where, in 1874, he was elected a fellow of the Boston Society of Architects.²⁸ Earle was a founder of the Worcester Society of Architects in 1887, which became a chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1892. Earle served first as vice-president and later (from 1898 until his death) as president of the Worcester Chapter.

Earle was one of the leading New England practitioners of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886) had quickly risen to national prominence and his style--with its emphasis on exploiting the textural and tonal contrasts of stone and use of bold massing to achieve a picturesque effect--greatly influenced his contemporaries and a younger generation of architects. Earle became acquainted with Richardson when the firm of Earle and Fuller was named superintending architect for Worcester High School (commissioned 1869), which was designed by Richardson and built by Norcross Brothers of Worcester.²⁹ Worcester High School was one of Richardson's early buildings, executed in brick and in the High Victorian Gothic style--neither of which was characteristic of his mature work. Whether Earle maintained an acquaintance with Richardson is not known, but much of Earle's work--especially after 1880--attests that he was an informed follower of Richardson's designs.³⁰

The 1884 Slater Library exhibits many of the key characteristics of the Richardsonian Romanesque style: rock-faced stonework; an interplay of light and shadow created by deeply recessed window openings and the heavy round-arched portal; references--albeit limited--to medieval architectural ornament; and polychromy--contrasting granite and brownstone--to articulate individual architectural features. Not the conical-roofed, round form associated with Richardson's work, the tower is Earle's own conceit to create verticality in a constrained site. Although the Slater Library is visually complex, Earle repeated design *motifs* to unite the overall composition. Despite the constraints imposed by a small site, Earle--as the *Norwich Bulletin* noted at the time--succeeded in giving the building "a certain dignity and character."³¹ That same feeling is conveyed on the interior, especially in the original high-ceilinged

²⁸ During these years, however, Earle continued to devote most of his time to his Worcester office. Interestingly, many of his illustrations in *American Architect and Building News* are signed "Stephen C. Earle, Architect, Boston."

²⁹ Worcester High School was the first Richardson building constructed by Norcross Brothers, a firm the architect later employed for many of his commissions. It is said that Norcross Brothers was also favored by Earle. See Lisa Koenigsberg, *Renderings from Worcester's past: nineteenth century architectural drawings from the American Antiquarian Society* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1987), p. 35. Of interest is the fact that Earle designed a residence for O.W. Norcross in 1890.

³⁰ With an office in Boston, Earle had ample opportunity to study Richardson's Boston work firsthand.

³¹ *Norwich Bulletin*, September 21, 1885.

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Reading Room where the tall facade windows occupy the entire east wall and flood the room with light. Earle's use of colored-glass windows further enhances the quality of the interior.

Earle designed a total of a dozen libraries, beginning with the Rogers Free Library (1877) in Bristol, Rhode Island, and ending with the Leicester Public Library (1895) in Leicester, Massachusetts. Ranging from small to large, they illustrate his ability to work in a variety of styles and keep abreast of changes in architectural fashion: from High Victorian Gothic in the 1870s to Colonial Revival at the end of the century. Although Earle's forte was his interpretation of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, his *oeuvre* can best be described as eclectic, exhibiting that late nineteenth-century penchant for freely combining elements from various historical architectural styles. As one author noted: "Earle and his generation were apt to see such mixture more as a merit than as a fault."³²

The Norwich, Connecticut, firm of Cudworth and Thompson, architects for the Fanning Annex, was mindful of historical styles as well.³³ David Hale Fanning had expressed his desire that the addition bearing his name be "in accord with the main building."³⁴ The annex blends harmoniously with the Slater Library and, in many respects, is indistinguishable from the 1884 building. On the exterior, Cudworth and Thompson took considerable care to use the same materials as those of the original building--grey and pink granite and brownstone--and in the same manner--granite for the foundation and walls, and brownstone for the trim. Many existing architectural elements were repeated--for example, the arch-headed window openings and hipped-roof dormers. But closer scrutiny reveals significant differences. Newsclippings of the period emphasize that the annex was to be fireproof, hence the windows are metal and wireglass. Although on the south elevation, the brownstone window surrounds match those of the original 1884 building, on the north elevation, the use of brownstone is limited to the arched heads and sills. On the rear elevation, the treatment makes no allusions to Earle's design.³⁵ It is likely that some of this seeming lack of architectural coherence was due to cost saving: the north elevation, for example, was barely visible at the time, given the proximity of the original 1889 Jewett City Savings Bank building. In the annex, the interiors are of the period, although the remodeling appears to have been sensitive to the historic character of the Slater Library, disturbing little, if any, historic fabric.

³² Curtis Dahl, *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

³³ Established in 1915, the firm of Cudworth and Thompson was responsible for many of Norwich's most impressive buildings, including the Masonic Temple and several churches. It was the successor firm to Cudworth and Woodworth, which had designed Norwich State Hospital.

³⁴ David Hale Fanning to Dr. George H. Jennings, February 28, 1924.

³⁵ The rear elevation is in yellow brick, a material used by Cudworth and Thompson in the c. 1930 Jewett City Savings Bank.

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Conclusion

True to the trust delegated to it by its benefactors' intentions, for more than a century the Slater Library and Fanning Annex has served the citizens of Jewett City and the Town of Griswold as a repository of learning. Although the textile industry has long since gone from Jewett City, and--sadly--many of the mills have been lost, the Slater Library and Fanning Annex remains as a vivid reminder of the industrial history of not only Griswold but also eastern Connecticut. Time has diminished neither the library's architectural character nor its presence on Main Street.

Slater Library and Fanning Annex

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Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

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.

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

John Fox Slater

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Stephen Carpenter Earle

Firm of Cudworth and Thompson

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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:

Slater Library and Fanning Annex

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 19 251340 4610400

3 _____

2 _____

4 _____

____ See continuation sheet.

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Bibliography

Primary Sources

Correspondence from David Hale Fanning to Dr. George H. Jennings: June 20, 1919; July 21, 1919; July 22, 1919; January 15, 1920; January 24, 1920; January 30, 1920; February 24, 1920; and February 28, 1924.

Record of the Slater Library. Minutes of trustees' meetings from 1885 to 1970.

Secondary Sources: Books and Periodicals

Anderson, James D. *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

Breisch, Kenneth A. *Henry Hobson Richardson and the Small Public Library in America: A Study in Typology.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997.

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Phillips, Daniel L. *Griswold - A History: Being a history of the Town of Griswold from the earliest times to the entrance of our country into the World War in 1917.* New Haven: The Tuttle Morehouse & Tyler Company, 1929.

Spencer, Linda S. *Historic Preservation in Connecticut, Volume II, Eastern Uplands: Historical and Architectural Overview and Management Guide.* Hartford, Connecticut: Connecticut Historical Commission, 1993.

The Graphic. "Jewett City Souvenir Number." Vol.11 No.1, May-June-July, 1896.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased).* Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970.

Worcester Telegram. December 12, 1913.

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Maps

Burleigh, L.R. *Jewett City, Conn.* Troy, New York: L.R. Burleigh Lithography, 1889.

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

The verbal boundary description for the Slater Library and Fanning Annex in Griswold, Connecticut, is located in Volume 10, p. 614 (1885), and Volume 17, p. 570 (1923) of the Griswold Land Records, which are located in the Town Hall, 32 School Street, Jewett City, Connecticut.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

The nominated property includes the land historically associated with the Slater Library and Fanning Annex since 1930.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda S. Spencer, National Register Specialist/Historian
organization Connecticut Historical Commission date June 1, 2000
street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone (860) 566-3005 city or town Hartford
state CT zip code 06106

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name Slater Library Corporation street & number 26 Main Street
telephone (860) 376-0024 city or town Griswold state CT zip code 06351

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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List of Photographs

All negatives are on file at the Connecticut Historical Commission and, unless otherwise noted, were taken in 1999 and 2000 by Linda S. Spencer, Historian, Connecticut Historical Commission.

1. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT.
North and east elevations. Camera facing southwest. David A. Poirier, Connecticut Historical Commission, 1992.
2. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT.
East elevation. Camera facing west.
3. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT.
Entry porch. Camera facing west.
4. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT.
Column detail and cartouche, entry porch. Camera facing west.
5. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT.
Colored glass window, north elevation, 1884 section. Camera facing west.
6. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT.
South and east elevations. Camera facing northeast.
7. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT.
West elevation. Camera facing south.
8. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT.
First-floor, front entrance hall. Camera facing west.
9. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT.
First floor, 1884 section, view from second room beyond pocket doors to front room. Camera facing east.
10. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT.
First floor, interior 1884 section, facade windows. Camera facing east.
11. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT.

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12. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT
Second floor, interior 1884 section, fireplace in second room. Camera facing south.
13. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT
First floor, interior 1930 annex. Camera facing west.
14. Slater Library and Fanning Annex, 26 Main Street, Griswold, CT
Second floor, interior 1930 annex, assembly room. Camera facing west.