

SC-1913

NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 10024-0018

Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)



United States Department of 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 Farnsworth Public Library
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 715 Main Street N/A not for publication
city or town Oconto N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Oconto code 083 zip code 54153

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.)


Signature of certifying official/Title

10/27/2017
Date

State Historic Preservation Office - Wisconsin
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 official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Farnsworth Public Library

Oconto

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall

12-21-07

Jan

Signature of the 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
 structure
 site
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

<input type="checkbox"/> contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> noncontributing
1	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	0 total

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

Public Library Facilities in Wisconsin

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/library

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick

roof asphalt

other metal

Narrative Description

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

Farnsworth Public Library
Name of Property

Oconto
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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the 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.

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 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION (A)

ARCHITECTURE (C)

Period of Significance

1903-1967 (A)

1903 (C)

Significant Dates

1903

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Foeller, Henry A.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Farnsworth Public Library
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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:

X State Historic Preservation Office

- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

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

1 16 431107 4970771
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Traci E. Schnell/Senior Architectural Historian	date	October 2016
organization	Heritage Research, Ltd.	telephone	262.251.7792
street & number	N91 W17194 Appleton Avenue, Suite 203	zip code	53051
city or town	Menomonee Falls	state	WI

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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

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title	Mayor Lloyd Heier	date	October 2016
organization	City of Oconto	telephone	920.834.7717
street & number	1210 Main Street	zip code	54153
city or town	Oconto	state	WI

name/title	Kristin Laufenberg, Director	date	October 2016
organization	Farnsworth Public Library	telephone	920.834.7730
street & number	715 Main Street	zip code	54153
city or town	Oconto	state	WI

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 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 Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Farnsworth Public Library
Oconto, Oconto County, Wisconsin

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Neoclassical Revival-style Farnsworth Public Library was constructed in 1903; it includes a 1993 addition. Situated along the northerly¹ side of Main Street between Erie and Michigan avenues, the library is located in a largely residential area just west of the downtown commercial district. Homes are located to the north and west of the property, while a church is found across the street and a car repair (former gas station) business is situated across the street to the east. A twelve-car, paved parking lot, constructed in 1993, comprises approximately one-quarter of the library parcel and which is along Erie Avenue (entrance is gained from Main Street and one exits to Erie Avenue). The remainder of the property includes a small number of mature trees and less mature bushes. Aside from the street sidewalks, additional concrete walks lead to both the front (south) and east entrances of the 1903 block, while an additional walk leads from the parking lot to the handicapped accessible entrance of the 1993 wing.

Four additional elements are also found on the library parcel but due to their small size and scale, they are not included in the inventory count of the nominated resource. These features are still a part of the setting and include: 1) a small bench; 2) a flagpole; 3) signage; and 4) a modern fence.²

Library (Contributing, 1903):

The library building is comprised of two periods of construction, which are physically connected via a glass connecting wall; the addition will be discussed following the description of the main block. Measuring approximately 55 feet by 70 feet and topped with an asphalt-shingled, hipped roof, the original and symmetrically arranged, Neoclassical Revival-style, 1903 block rises a single story from a raised basement. The lower level is faced with Bedford buff limestone; limestone also comprises the main story window sills and the portico columns. Walls of the building are faced with brownish-tan pressed brick³, while the cornice is made of galvanized metal that has been painted white. Windows throughout the building are original, wood-frame sash examples.

¹ Although W. Main Street runs at a slight (less than 45-degree) angle from northwest to southeast, building elevations are identified by the cardinal points, north, south, east and west.

² See descriptions of, and locational for, all four features later in section 7, page 5.

³ Specifications for the library building specifically call for "standard size, shade No. 105 medium hydraulic pressed brick as manufactured by the Illinois Hydraulic Pressed Brick Company or its equal with the consent of the architect and owner," H.A. Foeller, "Farnsworth Public Library Building," Specifications, undated (circa 1902), page 10, Original copy on file at the Farnsworth Public Library, Oconto, WI. Interior brick was cited to be "good hard burned, the best merchantable common bricks...", page 11.

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Farnsworth Public Library
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The primary (south) entrance elevation is dominated by a central monumental portico comprised of a pair of fluted limestone columns with Ionic capitals, each of which is flanked by a brick pier that rises above the stone-sheathed, raised basement. Fronting the portico are seven stone stairs that are bookended by a short stone stair wall upon which rests a light fixture comprised of a three-legged and copper pole topped with a single, round lamp. A central, wood-and-glass, double-door entry is set within a stone surround that encompasses an overhead transom that retains its original decorative lighting. Dentils run above the doorway, as well as above the stone surround, the upper edge of which reads "OPEN TO ALL" in raised lettering. Located to either side of the doorway is a one-over-one-light, double-hung window, atop which is a fixed window with patterned panes like the transom. The portico's gabled pediment is underscored by a wide entablature that is comprised of an architrave with multiple fascia, above which is a frieze that includes the words, "FARNSWORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY," in raised letters; a raised roundel accents each end. The cornice, which wraps around the building, consists of a row of dentils and a row of egg-and-dart ornament, which is again repeated in the gable. Sculptural metal ornament embellishes the pediment. To each side of the portico and along the stone basement level are three, nearly square, double-hung windows; a projecting watertable delineates the basement's upper edge. Again to either side of the portico, the brick main level includes three, large, one-over-one-light sash windows that are separated by an engaged brick pilaster and underscored by a plain stone sill.

Turning to the east, this elevation continues with engaged brick pilasters alternating with large, one-over-one-light, double-hung sash with stone sills; likewise, four sash openings run along the basement level. Moving north, a slightly shorter and flat-roofed entrance block includes a side entrance with a metal door, alongside a small, double-hung sash window. Each of these openings is topped with a decorative brick header with a central limestone keystone. The remainder of the east elevation, and along the recessed northward-extending section, includes only a single window along the basement level, while the main floor is devoid of fenestration.

The north elevation of the entrance block includes a single window along both the basement and main floor, while the taller portion of the main block includes two rows of six double-hung windows along the main level; dentil trim accents the top from the bottom row of windows. The basement level includes a pair of original sash openings, a metal double-door to the lower level, as well as a large vent. A large brick chimney rises from the north side of the east reading room wall.

Completing the main block, the west elevation features the same four-window arrangement of the east wall, the windows of which alternate with engaged pilasters along the main floor.

Aside from the addition to the west, which was designed referencing Preservation Brief #14 (New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings), exterior alterations to the original building are limited to a 1998 roof replacement (at which time the original slate was replaced with asphalt shingles) and the

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Farnsworth Public Library
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installation of tinted storm windows. The lights that sit upon the sidewalls of the original staircase have been altered from a multi-globe fixture to one with a single globe. Based on early photos (and the original plans themselves), the fixtures were not original to the building's 1902 design or its 1903 construction⁴; however, they are believed to have been added early on.

Despite a secondary (and handicapped accessible) entrance along the 1993 addition, access to the facility is still maintained through its original double-door front entry. A vestibule and a six-stair approach lead to the main floor of the library proper. And despite the 1993 wing, the interior arrangement of the main floor has changed very little. Original plans (See Figures 1 and 2) confirm intended usage of each space: the large room to the right (east) of the entrance was the Children's Room, while the room to the left (west) was identified as the Newspapers, Periodicals and General Reading Room. The Delivery (Circulation) Desk is located at the center, behind which was the Stack Room. To the right (east) of the stack room was the Librarian's Room, as well as stairs to the ground-floor entry along the east side of the building, while the room to the left (west) served as the Reference Room. Original plans depict the bulk of the basement level as unfinished; however, located along the rear (north) of the building were the Boiler and Fuel Room (as it does today), an Unpacking Room and a Bicycle Room & Work Room. A single restroom is located adjacent and to the west of the front doors to the main level, while a small closet is found to the east.⁵

Much of the building's original detailing remains intact. The vestibule floor is covered with decorative tile and a set of six stairs accesses the main floor which is covered with carpet squares (originally floors were described as "cork carpet," after which rubber tile was installed in 1949). The wood-and-glass double-doors (with glass transom above) at the top of the stairs open into the main floor, which includes bench seating and wooden columns to either side of the entrance, as well as a wooden circulation desk (identified in the plans as a delivery desk) located straight ahead (north). A skylight remains above the circulation desk. A single, plaster beam divides the plaster ceilings of both of the primary, main-floor reading rooms into coffer-like spaces that are embellished with dentil trim and egg-and-dart plaster finish that is painted gold. The plaster ceiling of the entry area, as well as the former Stack Room space (where the delivery desk is located), includes the dentil and egg-and-dart plaster detailing. A low, wood-trimmed and plaster wainscot runs along exterior plaster walls, while all original wooden window trim remains intact. An ornamental, pressed brick fireplace with a tile hearth remains extant in both reading rooms. Wood trim throughout the main level of the building is largely quarter sawn white oak; however, the shelving was specified on the plans to be stained Georgia pine and the back hall and the Bicycle Room floor are plain red oak. The original tile floors in both the

⁴ Please note that throughout the document there is a deliberate use of, and differentiation between, the 1902 design date and the 1903 construction date.

⁵ H.A. Foeller, "Farnsworth Public Library," Original plans, 25 June 1902, On file at Berners-Schober Associates, Inc., Green Bay, WI, page 1.

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original bathroom and the utility closet also remain intact, as do the wood-and-glass doors that lead to them.⁶

Although use of the original front stairs to the basement has been discontinued, the stairs themselves remain intact (but have been boarded over and the space above used for storage). As well, the stairs at the northeast corner of the building are no longer used, but have instead been boarded over. The ceilings are dropped on the lower level and carpeting covers the floor (please note that the bulk of the lower level was unfinished until 1993, See Section 8 for further information).

Non-Contributing Addition (1993⁷):

The non-contributing and hipped-roof addition was built off of the northwest corner and set significantly back from the original block. It includes an elevator, as well as a set of stairs, which access all floors. From both the front (south) and the rear, a glass-and-metal wall immediately connects the 1903 brick block to the 1993 addition (through which the staircase is visible). The addition, which is constructed of concrete block, is faced with a tan brick along the main floor, while the basement level is faced with split face concrete that is used to simulate rough stone. The same split face concrete is utilized along the top edge of the wing to simulate a frieze and a thin line of concrete is used to delineate the line between the basement and main levels, to simulate, yet not replicate the original water table.

Adjacent to the full-height, glass-and-metal connecting wall, the south (entrance) elevation includes a double-door, handicapped-accessible entrance along the basement level, while the upper level includes a series of four, regularly placed, one-over-one-light, double-hung sash with a split face concrete "keystone." While the rear (north) elevation is entirely devoid of fenestration, the west wall includes three, symmetrically arranged, double-hung windows with plain concrete sills. Three, small and fixed windows occupy the basement level.

On the interior, the addition's lower-level entrance opens into a corridor that leads to a meeting room/classroom to the left (west), both a men's and women's bathroom (directly ahead/north of the entry), a janitor's room (to the immediately left [west]), as well as the lobby and circulation desk (right [east]), adjacent to which is a small workroom to the east (See Figure 5). From the lobby/circulation desk area a staircase leads to the lower level of 1903 block, while another staircase leads to the main level of the 1903 block and continues to the second level of the 1993 addition (See Figure 4); an elevator also services all levels. This floor includes open (adult fiction) stacks, as well as a small

⁶ Foeller, "Farnsworth Public Library," Original plans, page 2.

⁷ CPA Associates, Inc., "Farnsworth Public Library," Plans for addition, 15 January 1993, Copy on file at the Farnsworth Public Library, Oconto, WI.

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meeting room/ workroom, Finish of the interior of the 1993 addition is comprised of painted concrete block walls, dropped acoustical tile ceilings and carpeted floors.

Other Site Features

There are four smaller elements that, while of insufficient size and scale to include in the inventory count, are nonetheless components of the library's setting. These include the following:

Bench: An aggregate stone, curved bench seat is located immediately southwest of the 1903 library block and in front of a small grouping of bushes (it can be seen in the foreground of Photo #5). A date of construction could not be discerned for the structure.

Flagpole: A modern metal flagpole that is set at the center of a small flowerbed is located immediately west of the previously described bench seating, which is near the westernmost edge of the grassy parcel. A cement walk leads from the sidewalk that parallels W. Main Street to the flagpole and completely encircles the outer edge of the surrounding flowerbed.

Signage: A modern metal, two-sided sign is situated near the west edge of the grassy parcel and adjacent to the sidewalk that parallels W. Main Street. The top of the sign reflects the pediment feature of the library building and includes dentil detailing.

Fence: Comprised of metal posts and synthetic webbing, this modern fence extends north from both the original block and the 1993 addition and encompasses much of the rear of the parcel.

INTEGRITY STATEMENT

The integrity of the Farnsworth Public Library is very good, if not near excellent, on both the exterior and interior. The primary architectural characteristics that define this building as a freestanding library remain unchanged. The 1993 addition was completed according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and is, therefore, set back from the main block and fully distinguishable from the original block. While the size, scale and massing of the addition is compatible to the original design, the materials used for it simulate, rather than replicate, the original. Although the original northwest corner reference room was "lost" with the 1993 addition, all remaining spaces remain intact and interior features (wood and plaster trim) remain in very good condition. The addition notwithstanding, the exterior alterations are limited to a new roof material and the installation of storm windows.

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Farnsworth Public Library
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Farnsworth Public Library is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Education, as well as under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, for its styling, as well as a property type (library). The Farnsworth Public Library is locally significant for both Criterion A and C. The library's significance regarding each criterion is defined by the context provided in *Public Library Facilities in Wisconsin*, a multiple property nomination form completed in 1990. Regarding Criterion A, History (Education) the Farnsworth Public Library, since its construction and dedication in 1903, has remained an important educational center for the residents of Oconto and the surrounding communities that do not support a library of their own. Regarding Criterion C (Architecture), the building is a very good and highly intact example of the Neoclassical Revival style of architecture, of which there are very few examples in the City of Oconto. The 1993 addition notwithstanding, the building's strict symmetry, its dominant portico entry and colossal columns, as well as its classically inspired dentils and egg-and-dart trim, all combine to provide for an excellent and largely unaltered example of the style. Furthermore, the building retains a significant degree of interior integrity through its largely unaltered floorplan and, thus, continues to exemplify a typical library floorplan from the turn of the twentieth century.

General History of Oconto

The city of Oconto is located in Oconto County, the latter of which was formally established in 1851. The earliest settlement in the county, however, dates to 1829, when Daniel Hubbard erected the first sawmill on the Pensaukee River, in the present-day unincorporated community of Pensaukee (south of Oconto). The first permanent settlement was made in 1836, when George Lurwick built a home and a sawmill in Oconto. Colonel David Jones, who built the first mill in Peshtigo, Wisconsin (in 1836), would build another mill in Oconto in 1847. Five years later, the population of Oconto was recorded as 424. By 1855, that number had more than doubled (to 1,015) and the original plat of the village was laid out that same year.⁸

As of 1860 and one year after official village incorporation, Oconto's population was recorded as 885 and, within that decade, the city was home to as many as twelve sawmills, the lumber business being the community's economic base. Oconto was formally chartered as a city in 1869 and, two years later, the Chicago & NorthWestern Railroad established Oconto as a hub. That same year, a significant fire destroyed the surrounding area of Oconto, including, most notably, the neighboring community of Peshtigo. The city of Oconto was spared and, as of 1870, recorded 2,655 inhabitants, triple the

⁸ *History of Northern Wisconsin* (Chicago: The Western Historical Company, 1881), 654-55.

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population of the previous decade. Aside from the establishment of churches, schools, and the development of the commercial downtown, a variety of social and/or benevolent groups had formed, including the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (Lodge 130), Free and Accepted Masons (Pine Lodge), as well as a Turnverein. And, in 1878, a group of residents formed to create the Oconto Library Association.⁹

Prior to discussion regarding the history of the Oconto Library Association, it is important to provide some brief information regarding the early history of the development of the public library in Wisconsin, which is provided, at length, in the multiple property nomination form entitled, *Public Library Facilities in Wisconsin*. In summary, the territorial legislature authorized in 1836 the establishment of a state library and, in 1868; the state authorized the establishment of “free” town libraries through taxation for book purchases. Four years later, the law, known as the Wisconsin Public Library Act (Wisconsin State Statutes Chapter 20), changed to allow villages and cities to do the same. Despite the enactment of that statewide law, the City of Oconto did not partake in it. In fact, for the first twenty years following the act (through 1892), only thirteen “legal” public libraries began operations statewide, while “illegal” and/or private association libraries continued to establish themselves throughout the state.¹⁰

Oconto Library Association

Six years after the free library legislation was passed, the Oconto Library Association was established in March 1878 with Judge H.W. Hubbell serving as its first president. Books were collected and available from a member’s home. Such public associations In order to maintain the library and to purchase new books, benefits were held. Among the fundraising events held included an 1879 concert performed by the Pinafore Opera of Green Bay and a dance held in 1883. Later in 1883, the association voted in Oakman A. Ellis as president and Mrs. Robert Ellis as vice president. At that time, the group had \$500 cash and had added approximately 200 volumes during the previous year (total volumes held as of 1881 numbered 700). In 1885, a newspaper article suggests that the association

⁹ Ibid., 655-56; A brief history of Oconto is included on the city’s website, Available online at <http://cityofoconto.com/History.html>, Accessed October 2016. As discussed in *Public Library Facilities of Wisconsin*, Wisconsin’s library associations were generally either subscription or membership organizations. Subscription groups “purchased stock in exchange for borrowing privileges,” whereas an association library was one where “members (or the public at large) paid an annual membership fee or weekly borrowing charge.” Although the latter membership process suggests that this was a private association, they were considered to be open to the public, “Public Library Facilities of Wisconsin,” National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) Form, Prepared by Paul R. Lusignan, Former Chief of Survey and Registration, State Historical Society of Wisconsin (December 1990), E-1.

¹⁰ Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, 3 vols. (Madison, WI: Division of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), Vol. 3, Education, 5-1, 2; “Public Library Facilities of Wisconsin,” E-2, 3.

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engaged the Franklin Square Library Company of Louisville, Kentucky, to supply their circulating library, the local agent of which was Oconto resident Miss Maggie Paramore. Mr. S.W. Ford (also of Oconto) would serve as librarian. The 1886 annual meeting of the association was held in the Music Hall block at which time W.B. Mitchell was elected president. Oakman Ellis remained on the board, holding the position of treasurer and Robert Ellis served as librarian. At that time, the local paper reported that certificates (essentially membership) were reduced from \$2.00 to \$1.00 per year and the fee for books for those that weren't members was reduced from ten cents to five cents. As of 1886, there were 1,120 books in the collection, which was housed in a rented room in Runkel's jewelry store on Main Street.¹¹

In 1890, finding that the association's finances were dwindling, the group approached the city of Oconto to take over library operations, by which time the city's population numbered 5,219. Knowing that the city had the ability to levy a tax in order to support a public library (per the 1872 act), the association was willing to donate their books to the city, as long as the city would provide library services to the public for free. Two weeks later, a meeting was held in Runkel's Jewelry store to take final action on the offer, which included not only the books but also bookcases and \$200. The city council did not take action on their proposal. The group made another attempt to offer the library (and \$100) to the city the following year and, again, the donation was not accepted. The library was, thereafter, moved from Runkel's and stored in the carriage house of W. H. Young and the Oconto Library Association officially ceased operations. In 1894, an editorial in the local paper discussed the boxed-up books and how a free library would provide a great educational opportunity for the over 3,000 children in the city. The article appears to have met deaf ears again since no municipal action was taken. Twenty months later, high school principal Robert L. Cooley had the books moved from storage to the high school. Upon inspection, he determined that a number of the volumes were missing and requested their return.¹²

¹¹ *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 656; Newsbrief (re: opera benefit), *Green Bay (WI) Advocate*, 27 November 1879, 3/3; Newsbrief (re: dance benefit), *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 10 January 1883, 4/4; Newsbrief (re: officers elected), *Green Bay Weekly Gazette*, 19 May 1883, 3/7; Sources conflict on the date of the Oconto Library Association's date of establishment. An 1895 account cites the date as 27 March 1878, whereas the library website (which likely utilized historic records) cites a date of 13 March 1878, "Old City Library," *Oconto Reporter*, 13 September 1895, this and all following newspaper clippings, unless otherwise cited, are from a scrapbook which covers the history of the Farnsworth Public Library, Oconto, WI; "To the Reading People of Oconto," *Oconto Reporter* (clipping), 22 August 1885; Newsbrief (re: 1886 meeting), unidentified newspaper clipping, 10 April 1886.

¹² Newsbriefs (re: dissolution of the association), unidentified newspaper clippings, 15 and 29 March 1890; Newsbrief (re: turn over library), *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 2 February 1891, 3/2; "A Public Library," editorial, unidentified newspaper clipping, 6 January 1894; "Old City Library," *Oconto Reporter*, 13 September 1895. No mention of the book collection and its status was found in local papers until 1903.

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That same year (1895), the Wisconsin Free Library Commission was established. Appointed by the governor, the Commission's purpose was to "give advice and counsel to all free libraries in the state and to all communities which may purpose to establish them, as to the best means of establishing and administering such libraries, the selection of books, cataloguing, and other details of library management." In its first report (1896), the Commission cited the existence of twenty-eight free libraries in Wisconsin.¹³

The most important figure associated with the construction of "free" library buildings throughout the nation was, of course, Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie grants required that the community 1) provide an adequate site; and 2) provide support to the library through an annual maintenance appropriation of ten percent of the total grant amount. Although his philanthropic building program began with the 1893 library in Fairfield, Iowa, it was not until 1901 that Wisconsin received its first Carnegie grant for library construction. Although Wisconsin was, ultimately, awarded grants for the construction of sixty-four total libraries across the state, it was, in other cases, that the municipality or local citizenry funded their establishment or, yet in other cases, that local benefactors underwrote the construction of a local library. As with the City of Oconto, its library building was the result of a gift provided to the city by former resident and lumberman George W. Farnsworth.¹⁴

George W. Farnsworth

George W. Farnsworth was born on 22 May 1825 in Fairfax, Franklin County, Vermont, the son of James and Johanna (nee Keith) Farnsworth. After experiencing a comfortable early childhood, George's father lost much of his fortune in the 1836-37 panic. As a result, at the age of twelve, George was set to work in a store in Burlington, Vermont. The following year, James Farnsworth died. At the age of fifteen, George's brother-in-law sent him to school in New York State; his intent was for George to become a minister. Making the decision that such schooling was not to his liking, he quit; and in spring of 1840, George set off to Burlington, Vermont, on foot, with but a few clothes and \$15.00 in his pocket. After boarding a boat, he ultimately arrived in Milwaukee on the steamer *Michigan*. After heading south to Chicago and finding no secure work, he ultimately found work in a store in Kenosha (then known as Southport), where he worked until the age of eighteen (1843). That same year George moved again; this time to Racine, where he would first engage in the lumber business, which would become his lifetime occupation. In 1845, he would begin the manufacture of lumber in Muskegon, Michigan, and, one year later, he built his first sawmill in present-day

¹³ Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, Education, 5-2,3; "Public Library Facilities in Wisconsin," E-5, 7.

¹⁴ Theodore Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997), xi, 164-65; "Public Library Facilities in Wisconsin," E-5; Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, Education, 5-6, 7.

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Ludington, Michigan. In circa 1849, he wed Diantha Wilson and was doing considerably well for himself; however, very shortly thereafter, he found himself in debt and was forced to sell out.¹⁵

After once again working in a store, George engaged briefly in the sale of pork, which proved lucrative and he began again to build up a savings. Ultimately, in April 1856, as an agent for R. M. Norton & Company, George was sent to Oconto to build a mill and run it. One year later, and against George's recommendation, Norton (and H.S. Durand) made a poor business decision. That decision was followed by the Panic of 1857, at which time the Norton Company's Oconto mill failed. The following year, George, along with a Mr. L. St. Ores,¹⁶ came in possession of a foreclosed mill that had been built in 1856. After running it for a few years, St. Ores (who moved to California) sold out to John Sedam and the mill ran under that name for a time.¹⁷

The 1860 census firmly establishes the Farnsworth family's residency in Oconto. At that time, the thirty-four-year-old George and his wife Diantha (age 33) had two children: Carrie (age 11) and Julia (age 9). Also in living with them were George's mother Johanna (age 71) and fifteen-year-old Mary Glynn, a servant. Son George James was born in 1863. In 1867, George bought out Sedam and immediately sold it to Nathan Mears, Eli Bates and James C. Brooks for a profit of \$8,000 and the firm was renamed Farnsworth, Mears & Co. In 1869, Diantha died. Although some secondary accounts indicate that George moved with his children to Chicago that same year, the 1870 census records them as still living in Oconto. By this time, his real estate holdings were approximated to be \$75,000, while his personal property amounted to \$50,000 (whereas the 1860 census recorded a mere \$1,000 in real estate and just \$300 in personal property). However, later in 1870, George wed Vermont-born Jane Worthington Smith. The following year, Farnsworth and his brother-in-law William K. Smith organized Farnsworth & Smith, the community's second banking facility, following the first's failing. It is in 1871, when it is believed that Farnsworth moved to Chicago later residing at 1421 Astor Street.¹⁸

¹⁵ *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 661; There are a number of secondary biographical accounts of Farnsworth's life; however, when sources conflicted, Farnsworth's 1903 account was consulted, "Mr. George Farnsworth's Address At Dedication of Farnsworth Library," Typescript, June 1903, Copy on file at the Farnsworth Public Library, Oconto, WI. Farnsworth's dedicatory address provides much more detail regarding his pursuits previous to establishing himself in Oconto. Those exact details are not considered germane to the nomination and are, therefore, not included in this documentation.

¹⁶ A review of the 1850 and 1860 census indicates that Mr. L. Ores was most likely Lewis Ores. However, there were two of them; Lewis and Lewis Jr., the latter of whom was born in 1820 and it is unclear as to which one it was, as they both resided in Oconto, U.S. Federal Census, Population, 1850, 1860, Available online at www.Ancestry.com, Accessed August 2016.

¹⁷ "Mr. George Farnsworth's Address," 3; George Woodward Hotchkiss, *History of the Lumber and Forest Industry of the Northwest* (Chicago: G.W. Hotchkiss & Co., 1898), 420.

¹⁸ U.S. Federal Census, Population, 1860, 1870; *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 658, 661; Hotchkiss, *History of the Lumber and Forest Industry of the Northwest*, 419-20; "Oconto Company Founder is Dead," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 27 January

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Assets of Farnsworth's firm ultimately grew to \$250,000 and, in 1878; the company (which operated a flour mill, shingle mill and planning mill, as well as a general store, a boarding house and three area farms) was reorganized as the Oconto Company. As of 1881, George Farnsworth's company, for which he served as president and general manager, employed approximately 250 hands. Employed as superintendent was his son-in-law, Oakman A. Ellis, who had wed Farnsworth's daughter Caroline, in 1869. In 1886 Farnsworth retired from all business activities and lived a retired life in Chicago (ultimately residing at 1421 Astor Street).¹⁹

Farnsworth Public Library History

In December 1901, O.A. Ellis received a letter from his father-in-law George Farnsworth, in which Farnsworth offered to fund the construction of a free public library in the City of Oconto. The total funding amount offered was \$15,000, which was to both cover purchase of a site, as well as building construction. In order for the offer to stand, Farnsworth asked that they city levy a tax totaling \$1,500 per year in order to cover the care and maintenance of the facility. This offer was crafted, no doubt, with knowledge of Carnegie's grant requirements, for Farnsworth's condition to the city was also 10 percent of the proposed funding amount. On 4 March 1902, Ellis presented the offer to the city council; the members of which included the following names: Anderson, Brazeau, Burns, Clayton, Hemmingsen, Johnson, Klass, Megan and Rens. Farnsworth's proposal was written up as Ordinance No. 261 and was adopted the following week (on 11 March) and signed by Mayor Jacob Spies. At that meeting, the mayor appointed the following members to the Library Board: John Noonan, Sr.; L.W. Brazeau; C.W. Stoelting; W.H. Young; C.S. Hart; and O.A. Ellis.²⁰

On 18 April 1902 it was reported that the lot to be purchased was owned by S.W. Ford. Located along Main Street, it was cited as "centrally located" as well as near the high school. Farnsworth himself came to Oconto earlier that same week to address the library board. The article also cited that "architects have been requested to submit plans...". The process through which Henry A. Foeller was selected as the architect remains unknown; however, Foeller had, to date, designed no less than three

1913, 1/3. The 1913 article reporting his death cites that he moved to Chicago in 1861, which was likely a typographical error and was to read 1871. Following Farnsworth's ultimate retirement in 1886, the banking institution known as Farnsworth & Smith was succeeded by the Oconto National Bank, with Smith serving as cashier and George Beyer as president, reported under "Changes, Dissolutions, Etc." in *The Bankers Magazine & Statistical Register* (Boston, MA), February 1887, 634.

¹⁹ *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 658; "Bank President at Oconto Celebrates His 85th Birthday," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 21 October 1925, 2/6.

²⁰ Oconto City Council meeting minutes, including Ordinance No. 261, 4 and 11 March 1902, Copy of minutes on file with the Farnsworth Public Library, Oconto, WI. Prof. C.A. H. Fortier, superintendent of schools, was later appointed secretary of the board, "The Donor," unidentified newspaper clipping, 26 June 1903, In Farnsworth Public Library scrapbook, In possession of the library, Oconto, WI.

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other buildings in Oconto. In 1899, St. Peter's Catholic Church at 516 Brazeau Street was built from Foeller's plans. That same year, and following the destruction of the city's ten-year-old armory building by fire, Foeller was selected to complete the plans for the new armory building, which was completed in 1900, east of Broadway and along the south side of Main Street (no longer extant). The third, and perhaps the strongest connection between Farnsworth and Foeller, was Foeller's selection as the architect for the Oconto National Bank building at 1200 Main Street (no longer extant). The Oconto National Bank was the successor institution to Farnsworth & Smith, bankers. As mentioned earlier, Smith was Farnsworth's brother-in-law and Smith continued to serve as the cashier of the successor bank at the time of construction of the 1900 bank building. Also, in 1901, Foeller designed the Kellogg Public Library in Green Bay; the plans and elevations of which were widely publicized in printed publications. In any case, Foeller was ultimately chosen and the exterior design for the Oconto library appears to have been directly modeled after the Kellogg library, which was then under construction.²¹

In May 1903, Elizabeth Wales was hired at the facility's first librarian (who remained there through 1904). Wales, who graduated from the library school of the Armour Institute of Chicago, had about ten years of library experience in Quincy, Illinois; Braddock, Pennsylvania; and Marlborough, New Hampshire. For the first month, she did her business of securing books at the high school library, initially, with the assistance of Mrs. L.E. Stearns of the state library board.²² An article published the day prior to the library's dedication provided future library-goers a preview of what they would see on its opening day, along with some general rules of drawing materials.

...those who care to attend will find a beautifully finished, convenient and well-equipped building, attractive in itself. They will see upon the shelves a collection of books numbering 2,000...In the arrangement of the library visitors will notice a semi-circular delivery desk immediately opposite the entrance. Here will be kept the record of books going out and coming in. It is not in any sense to be a barrier to the free use of books; passage way is left at both sides that the reader may go in and consult the shelves for himself, stopping on the way out to leave the record of his choice before taking the volume home.²³

²¹ "Oconto's New Library," unidentified newspaper clipping, 18 April 1902; "St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Catholic Churches," National Register nomination form, Prepared by Terry L. Shoptaugh, Historian, Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, March 1980, On file at the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI: "Will Prepare Plans," (re: Oconto bank), *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 20 March 1900, 2/2; "Bank Plans Are Ready," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 29 March 1900, 3/1; "Plans Were Accepted" (re: contract for Oconto Armory), *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 18 October 1899, 5/2. Notably, the 1899 Foeller-designed armory was also destroyed by fire, on 5 May 1927.

²² The Librarian At Work," unidentified newspaper clipping, circa May 1903.

²³ "The Donor" unidentified newspaper clipping, 26 June 1903. A later newspaper article indicates that the first 347 volumes to be placed in the library were those previously held by the Oconto Library Association, which were housed in the high school, Gerry McDowell, "Library Has Key Role in History of Oconto," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 11 May 1969, D1/2-4, D3-3.

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Location of the initial 2,000 volumes was follows: Novels, arranged alphabetically by author, were located along the right side of the book room (behind the circulation desk); while the left side, as well as the reference room to the left, included general literature, science, art, etc., and were arranged by subject. Those not meant for circulation but to be used only in the library were identified with a gold star. The (adult) reading room (to the left) included government publications, as well as the current periodicals, while the children's reading room included juvenile reading books. Shelving capacity at opening was noted as 4,000 volumes.²⁴

Dedication of the building, which was designed to accommodate 25,000 volumes²⁵, was held on 27 June 1903 and George Farnsworth himself gave the address. He provided an overview of his life—including both its ups and downs—as well as his fears for the future. He concluded his speech with the primary reason for his funding the library, as follows:

I came here 47 years ago a poor man, and whatever I have to-day, be it more or less, is owing to the success I have met with here, and having been almost without the benefit of an education, except what I have been able to obtain by reading and, excepting that in a few years my remains will be placed in your little cemetery, as I am now 78 years old, and wishing to leave you some token of acknowledgment of the good I have received here, I could think of nothing which I thought would be more useful or of greater benefit than a free library for the present and future generations, and I hope and trust it will be sustained and patronized, and prove in the end all I have hoped for.²⁶

The main floor of the library officially opened for business on Monday, June 29th, holding the hours of 2pm to 5:30pm only. As stated by Miss Wales, “there is still much technical work to be done, for which the librarian must have uninterrupted time.” A column in the local paper, entitled “Library Notes,” and edited by Miss Wales, reported that on the first day, a total of sixty-eight volumes were drawn from the library, with thirty-eight of them being borrowed by children. The remainder of the article went on to spell out library rules regarding borrowing privileges, loud talking (which wasn't allowed), fees and fines, etc. Within a few months of the library's opening, the facility received a grandfather clock, a gift of Mrs. A.F. Hayes of New York. At the time of its gift, the mahogany timepiece was believed to be approximately 250 years old. The clock, which was placed in the general (adult) reading room, remains in that room today (2016). Another gift presented to the library was a plaster frieze entitled, “The Choir Boys,” a reproduction of part of the organ loft screen in St. Maria del Flore in Florence, Italy. Originally located above the fireplace in the Childrens' Room, the frieze was a gift of architect Foeller.²⁷

²⁴ “Library Notes,” unidentified newspaper clipping, circa June 1903; “Library Notes,” unidentified newspaper clipping, circa July 1903.

²⁵ “Takes Pride in New Library,” *Janesville Daily Gazette*, 16 July 1902, 3/3.

²⁶ “Mr. George Farnsworth's Address,” 6.

²⁷ The basement remained unfinished at the time of the opening; however, future plans to utilize that level as a lecture room

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At the time the library was conceived, the facility was expected to be the center of the traveling county library system, which was to be similar to that of neighboring Marinette County. Indeed, the Farnsworth Library served the county in that capacity. Within one year after the library's opening, a traveling library collection was established. Stations to which books were sent included the following: Abrams, Brookside, Little River, Stiles, Lena, Oconto Falls, Mosling, and Mountain. Additional, later locations included Gillette and Suring. What began as a traveling library eventually evolved into the county library system, which allowed any county resident to draw (or request) a book from any of the member libraries in Oconto County. Today, the system has expanded to include seven more counties to better serve northeastern Wisconsin.²⁸

In 1906, the facility was robbed. The perpetrator broke through a basement-level window and, thereafter, broke into the librarian's room, making off with \$4.00 in cash. In addition to the broken windows and office door, paperwork was also strewn about. Prior to the Oconto break-in, the Kaukauna library had been broken into and, after Oconto, the vandals got away with \$17 from the Stephenson library in Marinette.²⁹

George Farnsworth died on 26 January 1913. In honor of Farnsworth regarding both his business and philanthropic contributions to the city—including the subject library building—all businesses and all mills were closed between 11am and 12pm and public schools were closed. The Oconto Common Council passed a resolution of respect for Farnsworth, as did the Lumberman's Association of Chicago, of which Farnsworth had been a member. In November of that year, a twenty-six-foot-high, granite statue with a six-foot base, engraved with the Farnsworth name, was erected in Oconto's Evergreen Cemetery.³⁰

was referenced in "The Librarian At Work," unidentified newspaper clipping, circa May 1903; "The Donor," unidentified newspaper clipping, 26 June 1903. The Woman's Club, upon their visit to the building prior to its opening, thought the basement might work well as their headquarters, "Library Notes," unidentified newspaper clipping, circa June 1903; Leigh Caldwell, "Venerable Clock Performs Faithfully Keeping Time at Farnsworth Library," *Green Bay Press-Gazette* (clipping), no date. The article indicated that library records did not indicate the relationship of Mrs. Hayes to the library or to Oconto. In the 1930s, the clock stopped and its original weight mechanism was removed and it was replaced with battery power. McDowell, "Library Has Key Role in History of Oconto," D1/2-4, D3-3. The frieze is no longer located in the library and current library staff does not know its whereabouts.

²⁸ "The Librarian at Work," unidentified newspaper clipping, circa May 1903; Farnsworth Public Library history information, no date (circa 1993), Included in Farnsworth Library scrapbook.

²⁹ "Oconto Library is Forced and Robbed," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 31 May 1906, 1/4, "Library Thieves Raid Marinette Institution," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 1 June 1906, 5/4.

³⁰ "Donor of Library Is Dead at Oconto," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 30 January 1913, 4/3; "George Farnsworth," obituary, *Lumber World Review* (Chicago, IL), 10 February 1913, 44; "Monument to George Farnsworth," *Green Bay Semi-Weekly Gazette*, 12 November 1913, 7/2.

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In 1923, Miss Ethel Fair of the Department of Library Science at UW-Madison toured the Farnsworth library and made a special commendation regarding the library's association with Oconto County's traveling library system. As of that year, the Farnsworth library held third place in the entire state, for the number of books loaned out that year. In 1930, and not yet twenty years old, the library received a number of improvements, including the following: replacement linoleum in the librarian's office, with the old covering utilized to patch other areas in the building; the addition of two magazine racks and a number of new bookcases; as well as the re-varnishing of the library tables. At that time, circulation for the year was cited at 68,877; the number of borrowers totaled 4,517; and total volumes numbered 11,457.³¹

The following year (1931), it was reported that the city had cut the library's funding by twenty-two percent and, in 1932, funding was cut again—this time by fifty-seven percent, resulting in an appropriation of a mere \$1,500, the same amount that Farnsworth had asked the city to provide for the building's maintenance nearly twenty years earlier. It was noted by library staff that the facility was highly utilized as a result of the then high rate of unemployment and citizens were using their free time to read. Despite the financial cuts, the library's 1935 report was somewhat positive, citing a circulation of about 75,000 books and magazines and the purchase of 160 new books. Although purchase numbers were down, staff was able to clean and/or repair nearly 17,000 books in order to keep them in circulation. Also on a positive note, the library reported that they were in the process of organizing an exhibit of the art work of Mrs. Grace Comstock Heath, a former resident of Oconto, to open in April 1936. Because of the city's cuts, and recognizing the value of the library's services, the Oconto county board, as well as the Oconto Woman's Club were both able to provide additional funding, albeit a small amount.³²

In 1933, the library received a painting from artist Leon Lundmark, entitled "Rocky Shore." With that donation, the library board was identified as saying they held hope for additional works of art, with the hope that the library could also serve as a small art museum. Ten year later, a \$5,000 gift was made to the library by the Oconto Company in 1943, when the company—which was started by Farnsworth—closed. Stipulations of the gift were that it be used for "making changes, alterations, or additions as the

³¹ "Commends Work of Oconto Library," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 23 March 1923, 12/2; "Improvements Made at Oconto Library," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 1 March 1930, 5/2.

³² "Drastic Cuts Are Made by the City Council," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 9 September 1932, 14/8; "Oconto Library is 'Holding Its Own'," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 30 January 1936, 10/4; "Library Board to Hold Meet Tuesday," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 22 February 1937, 22/5-7. Grace Comstock Heath was born in Michigan in 1897. She resided in Oconto for a period, after which she lived in Wauwatosa and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as well as Illinois. She died in Florida on 28 December 1951, Florida Death Index, Available online at www.Ancestry.com, Accessed October 2016. Although little specific information is available, Comstock Heath does have an entry in archives of the Museum of Wisconsin Art, West Bend, WI, Available online at www.wisconsinart.org/archives/artist/grace-comstock-heath/profile-1573.aspx, Accessed October 2016. It is unknown, however, if the exhibit did actually occur.

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library board might from time to time see fit, but not for current running expenses. The library board put the gift into war bonds and the announcement of the gift was not made public until 1944, at which time circulation was identified as 50,674 and total volumes numbered 26,857 (notably already beyond the 1903 planned volume capacity). Five years later, the interior of the library was painted and woodwork varnished and an open house was held for residents and patrons to view the building's updated interior. A new rubber tile floor was also installed.³³

In 1986, Anders Dahlgren, a state consultant for Public Library Construction and Planning, toured the Farnsworth Public Library to provide an assessment of the structure and its utilization. The report concluded that the approximately 2,900-square-foot building had outgrown its space and usefulness. At that point, the lower level was only utilized for the building's mechanicals and storage. In order to maintain an acceptable level of service, an expansion/addition was needed and it would need to include handicapped accessibility, which was also requested by two local residents in 1989. Between 1986 and 1991, circulation increased from 18,928 to 43,260. Interlibrary loan increased from 443 to 2441 and cardholder numbers grew from 860 to 3,078. In 1991, a portion of the non-fiction collection was moved to the lower level. As of that year, the exterior of the library remained largely unchanged, less a 1988 roof replacement and the installation of storm windows.³⁴

Recognized that the 1992 enactment of Americans with Disabilities Act was looming, the library board requested that the City address their needs. Interviews were held with six firms and CPR Associates of Appleton was ultimately chosen to prepare a feasibility study. All interested parties were polled for their opinion on the project. The consensus was in favor of retaining the existing and historic library building and adding a wing, as unobtrusively as possible. In July of 1991, Greg Douglas, the lead architect, determined that an addition was, in fact, feasible. CPR's initial design for the addition was modified following guidance from both Dahlgren and the State Historical Society, as well as a committee that toured three recent library additions (Elkhorn, Delavan and Stoughton).³⁵

Following formal acceptance of the revised plans on 1 July 1992, the library board solicited for a building fund campaign, the primary component of which was an addition. The total cost of the project, which would also include new heating and air conditioning systems, handicapped accessible restrooms, an elevator, as well as a parking lot, was estimated at \$452,600. While \$450,000 in funding

³³ "Lundmark Painting, 'Rocky Shore,' Is Given to Library," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 15 August 1933, 7/6; "Library Gets \$5,000 gift," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 27 April 1944, 16/5; "Newly-Decorated Oconto Library To Hold Open House," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 17 February 1949, 12/5.

³⁴ Anders Dahlgren, Consultant, Department of Public Instruction, State of Wisconsin, to Lisa Cochenet, Director, Farnsworth Public Library, Oconto, WI, Letter of Correspondence, 16 October 1986, Included in CPA Associates, Inc., "Farnsworth Public Library: Feasibility Report," 1991, Copy on file at the Farnsworth Public Library, Oconto, WI.

³⁵ "Farnsworth Public Library: Feasibility Report."

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was already available (\$325,000 from the City of Oconto and \$125,000 from a grant award), the library hoped to raise \$125,000 for furnishings. Any additional monies raised would go toward the reduction of the city's portion.³⁶

The new addition and remodeled lower level was completed by the end of 1993. Following its completion, the lower level of the original block became home to the children's collection. The first floor retained its original layout; however, the northwest corner room (originally identified as the reference room) became the connector to the new block and now houses the building's elevator. As well, to comply with ADA requirements, the original circulation desk (which serves as the librarian's work area and reference) was shifted back slightly to allow appropriate passage on either side. The building's singular bathroom remains adjacent to the entrance, but is for staff use only. And, while the original staircases to the lower level (from both the front and side entrances) were covered up and are no longer utilized, they remain in place.

Restoration of the building's exterior occurred in 2001, the cost of which was just over \$18,000. Work included cleaning of the exterior, the removal of deteriorated grout, tuck pointing, and the application of a sealer. In 2003--the library's 100th anniversary year--the library's collection numbered over 24,500 books, including 1,500 books in large print. Also available were audio books, videocassettes, a small number of DVDs and subscriptions to forty-four magazines and four area newspapers. As of the previous year, circulation was recorded as 64,844 and an additional 6,686 items were circulated through Interlibrary Loan. Furthermore, approximately 7,770 library materials were loaned out to other Outagamie-Waupaca Library System (OWLSnet) member libraries. In February 2003, the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation provided funding for two computer terminals with internet access, resulting in a total of six, internet-accessible computers. The Friends of the Farnsworth Library held a 100th birthday celebration on 27 June 2003. Farnsworth Public Library is one of six Oconto County libraries in the Nicolet Federated Library System, an organization of a total forty-two libraries that formed in 1976 to provide better library service throughout northeastern Wisconsin.³⁷

³⁶ Farnsworth Library Building Fund, Letter sent to residents and/or other potential donors, Signed by Rose Stellmacher and Laurel Schreiter, no date, Copy on file in the Farnsworth Public Library Scrapbook.

³⁷ "Farnsworth Public Library: Exterior Building Restoration Report," City of Oconto, Oconto County (January 2001), Copy on file at the Farnsworth Public Library; Farnsworth Library information, Compiled for the library's 100th birthday, June 2003, Copy on file in the Farnsworth Public Library scrapbook. The other five libraries in Oconto County which are part of the Nicolet Federated Library System include those in Oconto Falls, Lakes County (Lakewood), Gillett, Lena and Suring (Area). The other counties that the Nicolet Federated Library System serves include the following: Brown, Door, Florence, Kewaunee, Marinette, Menominee and Shawano.

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AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: EDUCATION

Built as a result of a philanthropic gift from former resident and lumberman George Farnsworth, the Farnsworth Public Library is locally significant in the area of education, as it has provided library services to Oconto residents for 113 years, which it continues to do so. Although Oconto has been home to a number of school buildings throughout its history (notably, however, no historic school buildings remain in the city), the library has—and continues to—provide educational opportunities to school-aged children and adults. Additionally, beginning in 1904, the Oconto library was historically the center of the traveling county library system. This system eventually evolved into what is today the Nicolet Federated Library System, an organization of a total of forty-two member libraries serving eight northeastern Wisconsin counties. Therefore, as a result of its long-standing support of not only Oconto residents, but also surrounding communities without their own library facilities, the Farnsworth Public Library is considered eligible for the National Register under Criterion A (History) Education.

Period of Significance

The Period of Significance related to Criterion A, History (Education) is 1903 to 1967. The year 1903 represents the year that the library was completed and opened to the public, while 1967 reflects the 50-year rule (although the building continues to serve the community as a library to date).

AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: ARCHITECTURE

The Farnsworth Public Library is a very good and largely intact example of the Neoclassical Revival style of architecture, which was popular in Wisconsin from approximately 1895 to 1935. The style's popularity was fueled by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which featured a formal grouping of fourteen buildings with white stucco and classical detailing. The style evolved from the Greek architectural orders and was most often utilized for public and institutional buildings, such as banks and libraries. Characteristics of the style include overall symmetry, classical detailing, and the use of stone. Often a monumental and pedimented portico is incorporated for the primary entrance.³⁸

Indeed, the 1903 block of the Farnsworth library is dominated by a portico entry that is supported by a pair of fluted, stone columns with Ionic capitals, each of which is flanked by an engaged pier. Resting upon the supports is a galvanized metal entablature that is comprised of an architrave with multiple fascia, above which is a frieze that includes the words, "Farnsworth Public Library" in raised letters; a raised roundel accents each end. Finally, the cornice, which wraps around the entire perimeter of the building, consists of a row of dentils topped with a row of egg-and-dart ornament. The center of the

³⁸ Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, Vol. 3, Architecture, 2-18; John J.-G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1981), 69.

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full gabled pediment is comprised of brick, while the gable itself is also embellished with dentil and egg-and-dart trim. Additional dentil trim accents the windows to either side of the double-door entry, as well as along the uppermost edge of the entrance surround. Although the majority of the symmetrically designed building consists of pressed brick, the raised basement level is comprised of stone, as are the building's window sills. The single feature of the building that is not consistent with the Neoclassical Revival style is the galvanized metal, sculptural ornament that rises from the pediment, and which is more consistent with the, albeit related, Beaux Arts Classicism style.³⁹

The Farnsworth Library aside, Oconto is home to just two extant buildings that can be classified as Neoclassical in style, neither of which is truly stylistically comparable to the library. The International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F) Lodge, built circa 1900, is a two-story, brick commercial block with an altered storefront and boarded over windows on the second floor. Despite those alterations, the building's street-facing elevation continues to exhibit its Neoclassical character through its ornate cornice that includes a broken pediment, dentil trim and a frieze featuring an ornate swag motif, along with stone belt coursing that also acts as a continuous sill and header for the second-floor fenestration. The second structure, another two-story, brick block, served as an office and later as a bank, and is located at 1133 Main Street. Although less detailed than the I.O.O.F. Lodge, this structure's cornice is detailed with ornate stone brackets and brick pilasters run up its primary façade. Like the I.O.O.F. Lodge, Neoclassical elements are restricted to only its entrance elevation, while the remaining three facades are of common brick and are without detailing. Also of note (and mentioned previously), a third example--the Oconto National Bank building, formerly located at 1200 Main Street--was designed by Foeller. Although demolished in 1997, that institutional structure included such Neoclassical style elements as fluted Doric columns, as well as a stone beltcourse above the first floor that was detailed with dentils.⁴⁰

Henry A. Foeller

Built in 1903, the Farnsworth Public Library was designed the previous year by Green Bay architect Henry A. Foeller. Foeller was born in Wittisheim, Alsace, France, on 27 February 1871. At the age of fifteen, he came to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, where he attended Oshkosh High School. Foeller's 1901

³⁹ The exact same Beaux Arts-influenced ornament is found on three other of Foeller's library designs, including the Kellogg Public Library in Green Bay (1901; 1903); Alexandria Public Library (1903; 1903); and the Edgerton Public Library (1905; 1907). Notably, the same ornament was utilized on Daniel Burnham's earlier (1900) design for the Gilbert M. Simmons Memorial Library in Racine (Racine County) and is also found on Claude & Starck's later (1904) design for the Arabut Ludlow Memorial Free Library in Monroe, Green County, WI (See Figures Section, #11 for image of Monroe library).

⁴⁰ Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database (WHPD), Maintained by the Wisconsin Historical Society, Division of Historic Preservation. Available online at www.wisconsinhistory.org/Content.aspx?dsNav=N:1189. Accessed August 2016.

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American Institute of Architects membership application indicates that he began his career in architecture in 1889, but had no formal school training. Although not listed in the 1889-90 *Oshkosh City Directory*, Foeller is, as of 1891, identified as working for (and boarding with) noted Oshkosh architect William Waters. Foeller moved to Green Bay in 1895, at which time he was employed by architect Carlos C. (C.C.) Buck. In the fall of that same year, Foeller and Martin Erickson conducted a short-lived drawing school; the classes of which were offered at McCunn's Business College. After traveling abroad for five months (November 1895 to March 1896), Foeller returned to Green Bay, where he established his own architectural office, in the quarters formerly occupied by Buck (who had moved in February 1896 to Boston, Massachusetts). For no less than six months (February to June 1897), Foeller partnered with James E. Clancy, with whom he had earlier competed for commissions, including Green Bay's Eighth Ward School. By no later than August 1897, Foeller was operating solely independent once again, until engaging in various partnerships beginning in 1907. Foeller died on 18 June 1938, at which time the firm name was Foeller, Schober and Berners and included Max Schober and Edgar Berners as principals. The firm continues today, bearing the name Berners-Schober.⁴¹

Foeller's Library Designs

Foeller was known largely for his institutional architecture, which included churches, schools, and banking institutions. Included in that same category were libraries. Following a 1900 design for a combined city hall, library and armory (no longer extant) in the City of Portage, his initial, stand-alone library design was the Kellogg Public Library (NRIS 81000035; designed 1901⁴²; completed 1903; See Figure 12) at 125 S. Jefferson Street in Green Bay, which was built with Carnegie Foundation

⁴¹ Henry A. Foeller, Membership application for the American Institute of Architects, 16 November 1901, Available online at <http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/F-H/FoellerHenryA.pdf>, Accessed October 2016, Although a secondary source indicates that Foeller attended the Oshkosh State Teachers College, such education is not included on Foeller's AIA application (he cited only high school), "Phillips High School," National Register of Historic Places nomination form, Prepared by Mary Jane Hettinga and Patricia Schroeder, Marathon County Historical Society, December 1993, Nomination available online at <http://npgallery.nps.gov/nrhp/GetAsset?assetID=f3a157c4-8a60-4efa-9c90-48872e7d0687>, Accessed October 2016; *Oshkosh City Directory*, 1889-90, 1891, 1893; "Drawing School Opens Monday, Sept. 2," Advertisement, *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 4 August 1895, 8/4, Ads continue for the school through September 1895; "Is Going to Europe," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 12 November 1895, 1/5; "Will Locate in Boston" (re: C.C. Buck), *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 20 February 1896, 5/2; Newsbrief (re: Foeller to open office), *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 14 March 1896, 5/3; "Told Him to Leave," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 15 March 1896, 5/3; "New School Building" (re: Eighth Ward School), *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 22 April 1896, 1/5.

⁴² This and other design dates, unless otherwise cited, were ascertained from the archived plans of Berners-Schober Associates, Inc., Green Bay, WI. Notably, the initial plans submitted by all three firms to the Kellogg Library Board were reportedly "not what the board desired exactly, although all are good." The article went on to say that the board had "changes in mind which it considers essential and these will be made by the different architects after which the plans will be again submitted," "Library Board Will Decide On Sketches," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 21 June 1901, 9/1.

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funding. The subject Oconto library, which largely resembles the Green Bay building, was Foeller's second (designed 1902⁴³; completed 1903). As of 1905, his library designs also included the following: Stevens Point Public Library (designed 1902⁴⁴; completed 1903; Carnegie funded); Alexandria (Minnesota) Public Library (designed and completed 1903⁴⁵; Carnegie funded); Berlin Public Library (designed and completed 1903; Carnegie funded); Waupun Public Library (designed 1904; completed, 1905); and the Edgerton Public Library (designed 1905; completed 1907). Of the aforementioned designs, the facility in Stevens Point is no longer extant.⁴⁶

Although the Farnsworth Library did not utilize Carnegie Foundation funding, the style of the Oconto Library, which was patterned after the Kellogg Public Library in Green Bay, has also been dubbed as "Carnegie Classical." A review of library designs presented in *The Architectural Review* (January 1902), suggests that Foeller may have gotten his design inspirations from the West End Branch Library (1899; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; See Figures 14 and 15) that was designed by the firm of Alden & Harlow of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.⁴⁷

Typical Library Plan

As stated in the Multiple Property Document for "The Public Library Facilities of Wisconsin," the typical library building--those built between 1895 and 1920--included the following spaces, which were generally found on a single floor: reading rooms for children and adults; a desk from which the librarian could service the public; a book stack area; and an office or workroom area. A lecture or meeting room was also generally included and was often located on the lower level, which presented itself on the exterior as a raised basement. Indeed, the Farnsworth Public Library includes all of the aforementioned required spaces; however, it was without a dedicated lecture room since the lower level was utilized, at least partially, for the traveling library system that was instituted one year after the building's completion.

⁴³ H.A. Foeller, "Farnsworth Library," Original plans.

⁴⁴ Foeller's plans were chosen over fifteen other submissions, "Foeller's Plans Were Adopted," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 15 September 1902, 3/2.

⁴⁵ The design of the Alexandria, Minnesota, library was chosen following a visit by Senator Knud Nelson and Colonel Ward of Alexandria, Minnesota, to both the Green Bay and Oconto libraries of Foeller's design, with the Oconto library best exhibiting the features desired with consideration to the Carnegie funding awarded to them (\$15,000), "Green Bay Architect's Plans Are Preferred," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 20 May 1903, 3/1.

⁴⁶ A review of the firm's archived plans identifies a significant number of library designs executed over its history. However, following a closer examination of those done by Henry A. Foeller at the turn of the twentieth century, number a total of eight, which are enumerated in this document.

⁴⁷ Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America*, 67-70; Images of library buildings, In *The Architectural Review*, Vol. IX, No. 1, January 1902, 53.

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Libraries of that period (1895-1920) generally took on one of four forms: the simple (and small) rectangle; the larger rectangle (which includes a rear bumpout for the stack area) [note that each of the aforementioned forms feature an open floor plan]; the divided interior plan; and the eclectic. The Oconto library is a representative example of the third type, as it features a more compartmentalized approach to its layout and includes distinctive rooms for each of the building's services/functions. Furthermore, this type is divided into two zones, with each of the zones including three spaces. The front zone is comprised of reading rooms that flank a central entry and the service area, while the rear includes the book stacks, office/workroom and reference spaces. The Farnsworth library, as built in 1903, followed this form exactly; however, the reference room has since been lost due to the 1993 addition and installation of an elevator.⁴⁸

Summary Statement of Architectural Significance

The 1993 addition⁴⁹ notwithstanding (which was designed according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards), the 1903 Farnsworth Public Library is a very good and intact example of the Neoclassical Revival style of architecture, which was also dubbed--in reference to library design--as Carnegie Classical. Furthermore, the building retains a significant degree of interior integrity through its largely unaltered floorplan and, thus, continues to exemplify a typical library layout from the turn of the twentieth century. Finally, the subject structure stands as the city's best and most intact example of the Neoclassical style, featuring elements of the style along not only its entrance elevation, but along all four building facades. Therefore, based on the preceding information, the Farnsworth Public Library is considered eligible for the National Register under Criterion C: Architecture.

Period of Significance

The Period of Significance related to Criterion C: Architecture (including as a Property Type) is 1903, which reflects the building's date of construction.

Registration Requirements

The Farnsworth Public Library meets the registration requirements for Free-Standing Library Facilities

⁴⁸ "Public Library Facilities of Wisconsin," MPD, F1-2.

⁴⁹ As mentioned earlier, the 1993 addition was designed by CPR Associates, Inc., architects and engineers, Appleton, WI. The building's lead architect was Green Bay native, Greg Douglas. Following graduation from Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC), Douglas worked at an engineering firm in Texas. He eventually moved back to Wisconsin, where he worked at CPR Associates, during which time he became a registered architect. In 2000, Douglas took a position with Miron Construction and began their Design-Build Services department. As of 2015, Douglas served as president of construction innovation at Miron and was that year's recipient of the NWTC's Distinguished Alumni award, Kara Leiterman, "NWTC Honors Alum and Miron Construction Vice President," NWTC News, 4 November 2015, Available online at www.nwtc.edu/about-nwtc/news/2015/november/nwtc-honors-alum-and-miron-construction-vice-president.html, Accessed October 2016.

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specified in the Multiple Property Form under the following Criteria:

- 1) Criterion A: The Farnsworth Public Library served an integral role in the development of the community of Oconto, as an educational and cultural center for the city.

- 2) Criterion C: Designed by well-known Green Bay architect Henry A. Foeller, the library is a very good and highly intact example of the Neoclassical Revival style of architecture in the City of Oconto.

Summary Statement of Significance

As identified immediately above, the Farnsworth Public Library is locally significant under both Criterion A: History and Criterion C: Architecture. Regarding Criterion A, since its construction and dedication in 1903, the library continues to serve as an important educational center for Oconto residents, as well as area communities without a library of their own. Additionally, and regarding Criterion C, the building stands is a very good and highly intact example of the Neoclassical Revival style of architecture, of which there are no true comparisons in the City of Oconto. The 1993 addition notwithstanding, the building's strict symmetry, its dominant portico entry and colossal columns, as well as its classically inspired dentils and egg-and-dart trim, all combine to provide for an excellent and largely unaltered example of the style. Lastly, the building retains a significant degree of interior integrity through its largely unaltered floorplan and, thus, continues to exemplify a typical library form and floorplan from the turn of the twentieth century.

Archaeological Potential

Although no archaeological deposits have been reported on the property, the archaeological potential for the parcel remains unassessed. However, any archaeological remains on the lot were likely to have been disturbed by the construction of the building, and its addition, as well as the adjacent parking lot.

Preservation Activities

No specific historic preservation activities have been pursued by the library board, however, it is very clear that they had a desire to preserve the building's historic character at the time of the 1993 addition. The institution's records regarding the addition very clearly include a copy of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, when the addition was being considered. It is hoped that this National Register nomination will increase awareness of the library and its history, and help to inspire interest in preserving this significant historic resource.

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Acknowledgements

The Fuldner Heritage Fund paid for the preparation of this nomination. The endowed fund, created through a generous donation by the Jeffris Family Foundation and administered by the Wisconsin Historical Society, supports the nomination of historically and architecturally significant rural and small town properties.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary is described as follows: Beginning at the parcel's southeast corner, near the intersection of Main and Michigan streets, thence northwesterly along the property line for 247 feet, then north for 144 feet, thence southeasterly for 117 feet, thence south for 24 feet, thence east for 130 feet, thence south for 120 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary is justified as follows: The boundary equates to the current legal description for the property, which is described as follows: Lots 3 & 4, Block 8 of Brunquest's Second Addition, City of Oconto, along with the parcel known as 2 CSM 217, as recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds, Oconto County.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Name of Property: Farnsworth Public Library

City or Vicinity: Oconto

County: Oconto

State: Wisconsin

Name of Photographer: Traci E. Schnell

Date of Photographs: September 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI

Number of Photographs: 11

Photo #1 (WI_Oconto County_Farnsworth Public Library_0001)
South/entrance elevation with 1993 addition at left, view to north

Photo #2 (WI_Oconto County_Farnsworth Public Library_0002)
South/entrance elevation, view to west northwest

Photo #3 (WI_Oconto County_Farnsworth Public Library_0003)
East (left) and north (right) elevations, view to southwest

Photo #4 (WI_Oconto County_Farnsworth Public Library_0004)
1993 addition, west (left) and south (right) elevations, view to northeast

Photo #5 (WI_Oconto County_Farnsworth Public Library_0005)
West (left) and south/entrance (right) elevations, view to east northeast

Photo #6 (WI_Oconto County_Farnsworth Public Library_0006)
Portico pediment detail, view to north

Photo #7 (WI_Oconto County_Farnsworth Public Library_0007)
Interior: front entrance, view to southwest

Photo #8 (WI_Oconto County_Farnsworth Public Library_0008)
Interior: entrance bench seating and view of Childrens' Room ceiling, view to southeast

Photo #9 (WI_Oconto County_Farnsworth Public Library_0009)
Interior: Children's Room wood wainscot and window trim, view to south

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Photo #10 (WI_Oconto County_Farnsworth Public Library_0010)

Interior: Fireplace in General/Adult Reading Room, view to northeast

Photo #11 (WI_Oconto County_Farnsworth Public Library_0011)

Interior: Basement level, Original Childrens' Room table, view to southeast

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- Figure 4: 1993 Addition to Farnsworth Library, Lower Level.
- Figure 5: 1993 Addition to Farnsworth Library, Upper Level.
- Figure 6: Farnsworth Public Library, Exterior. Postcard image, circa 1910.
- Figure 7: Library, East/Children's Room. Photograph, 1904.
- Figure 8: Library, West/General Reading Room. Photograph, 1904.
- Figure 9: Library, Circulation Desk to south. Photograph, 1904.
- Figure 10: Library, Circulation Desk to north. Photograph, 1904.
- Figure 11: Kellogg Public Library, Green Bay, WI. Photograph, 1987.
- Figure 12: Arabut Ludlow Memorial Free Library, Monroe, WI. Photograph, 1976.
- Figure 13: West End Branch Library (1899), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Designed by Alden & Dow, Streetview image.
- Figure 14: West End Branch Library, Image and plan in *The Architectural Review*, 1902.

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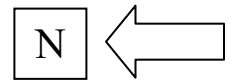
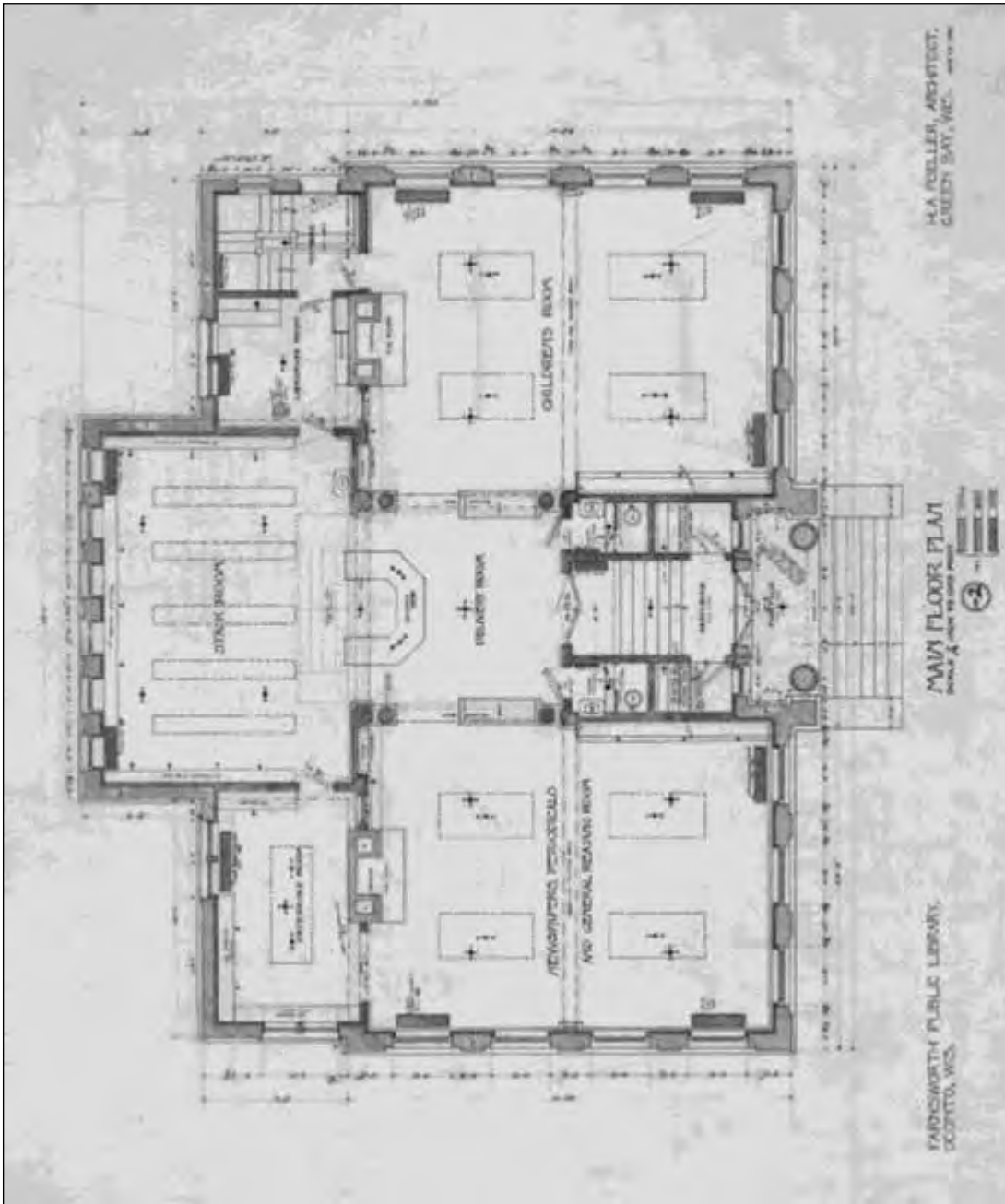


Figure 1: Library, Original Plans, Main Floor. Original plans courtesy of Berners-Schober Associates, Inc., Green Bay, WI.

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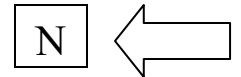
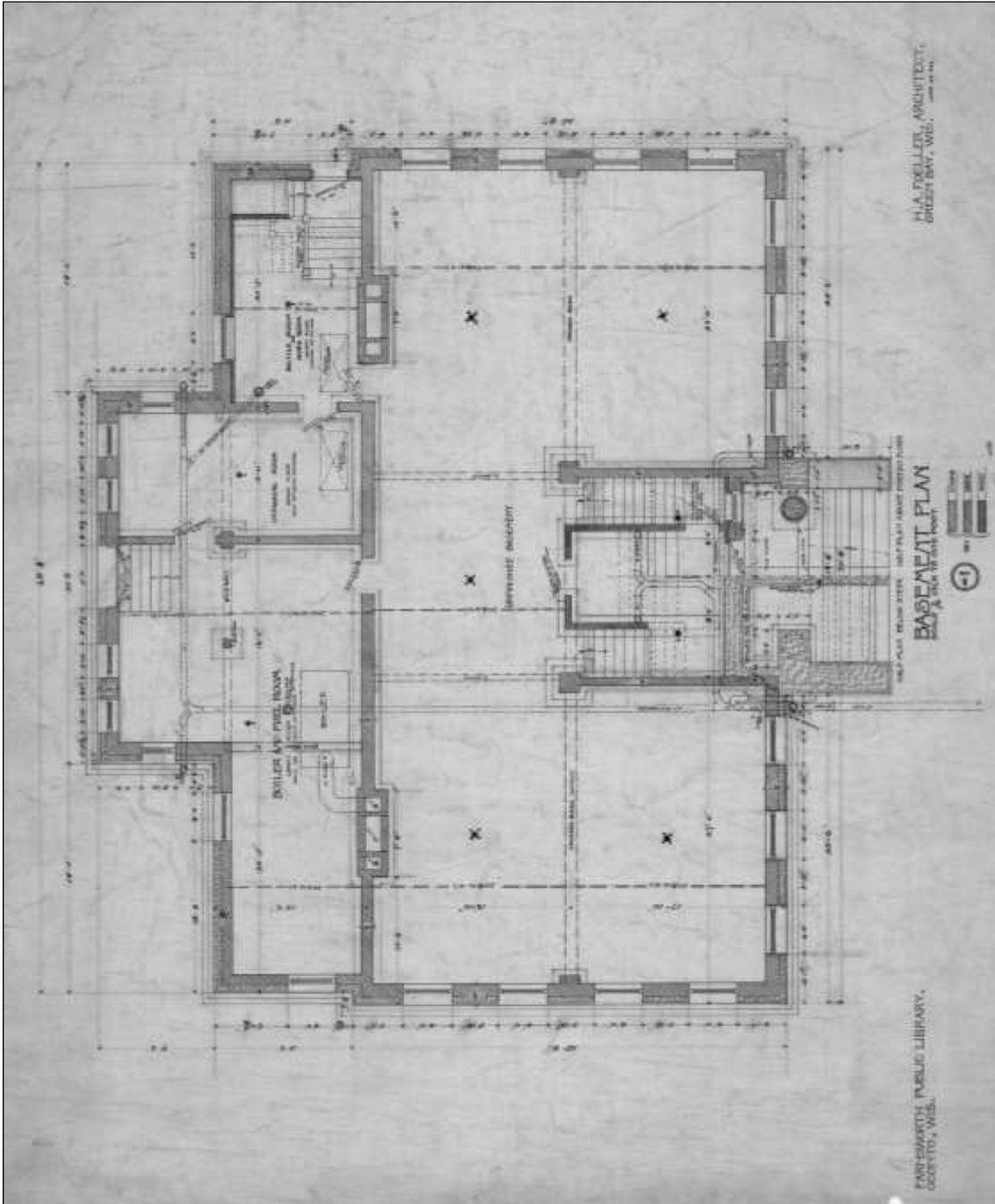


Figure 2: Library, Original Plans, Basement Plan.

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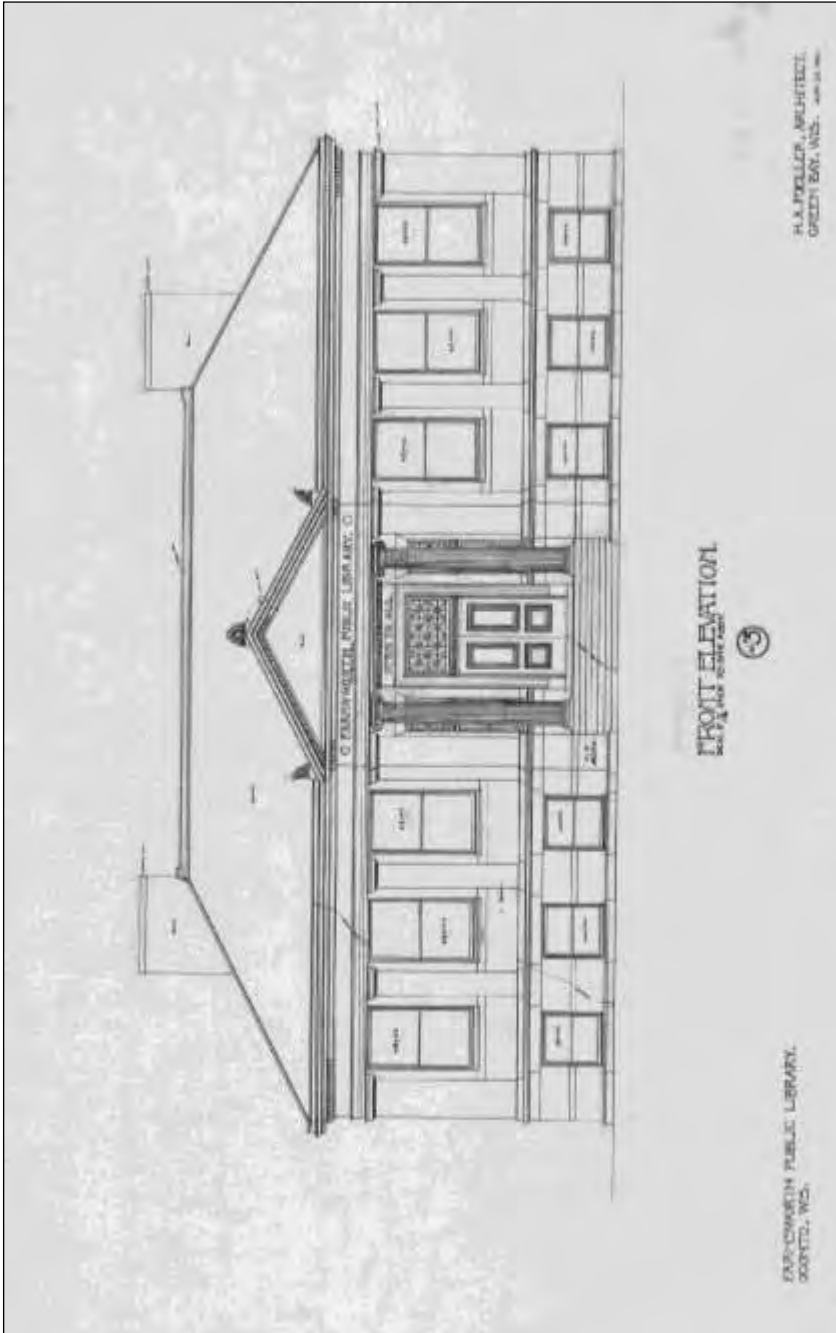


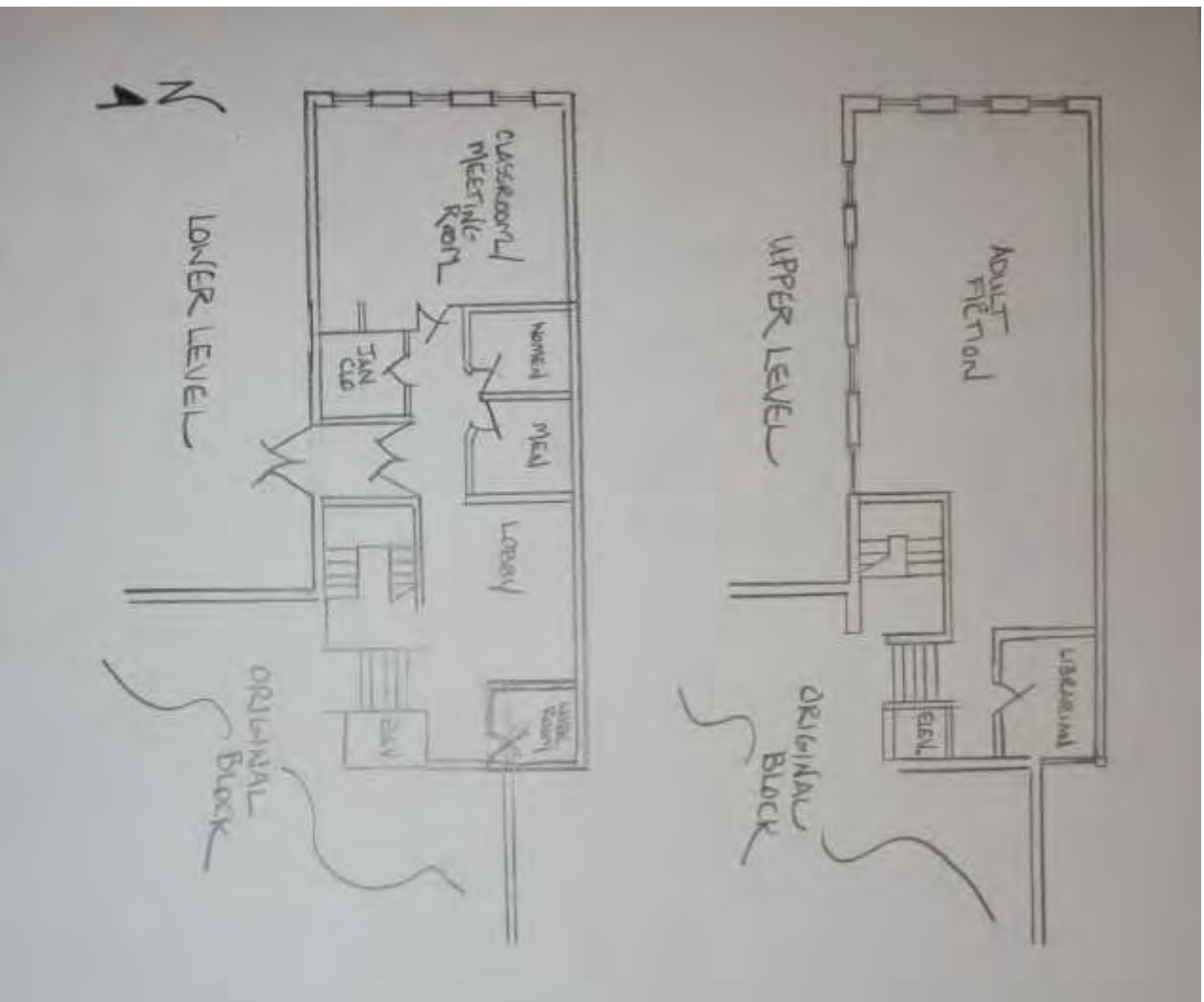
Figure 3: Library, Original Plans, Front (south) Elevation.

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Figures 4 & 5: 1993 addition. Not to scale but proportional.

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Figure 6: Farnsworth Public Library, Postcard image, Ca. 1910.

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Figure 7: Library, East/Children's Room, Photograph, 1904.



Figure 8: Library, West/General Reading Room, Photograph, circa 1904.

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Oconto, Oconto County, Wisconsin



Figure 9: Library, Circulation Desk, View to entrance. Photograph, 1904.



Figure 10: Library, View to Circulation Desk (north). Photograph, 1904.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Farnsworth Public Library
Oconto, Oconto County, Wisconsin



Figure 11: Kellogg Public Library, Green Bay, WI. Designed by Henry A. Foeller in 1901, Completed 1903. 1987 photograph included in the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database (WHPD), Available online at www.wisconsinhistory.org, Accessed October 2016.



Figure 12: Arabut Ludlow Memorial Free Library, Monroe, WI. Designed by Claude & Starck; Completed 1904. 1976 photo included in WHPD. Library building now serves as the Monroe Chamber of Commerce.

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

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Farnsworth Public Library
Oconto, Oconto County, Wisconsin



Figure 13: West End Branch Library (1899), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Image from Google Streetview.



Figure 14: West End Branch Library, Plan and image in *The Architectural Review*, Vol. IX, No. 1, January 1902, page 53.



FARASWORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

1966



FARNSWORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

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DANGER
KEEP HANDS OFF
OF BOOKS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 11/7/2017 Date of Pending List: 12/5/2017 Date of 16th Day: 12/20/2017 Date of 45th Day: 12/22/2017 Date of Weekly List: 1/5/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 12/21/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Edson Beall Discipline Historian

Telephone _____ Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



WISCONSIN STATE SENATE
DAVE HANSEN
 SENATOR – 30TH DISTRICT



July 26, 2017

State Capitol P.O. Box 7882 Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882 Phone: (608) 266-5670



Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board
 c/o Peggy Veregin
 Wisconsin Historical Society
 816 State Street
 Madison, WI 53706

BY:

Dear Ms. Veregin,

I understand that the Farnsworth Public Library in Oconto, WI is being nominated as a historic place in the upcoming meeting on August 18th, 2017. I am pleased to offer my support for the nomination of the Farnsworth Public Library to the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and National Register of Historic Places.

Located in Oconto, WI, the Farnsworth Public Library has been serving residents of the city and surrounding towns since opening its doors in 1903. But the organized library dates back even further to March of 1878, when Oconto locals organized the Oconto Library Association in order to gather and circulate books around the community. It wasn't until December of 1901, when George W. Farnsworth offered to build the city the library it deserved. By 1886 there were 1,120 books in the collection and this collection of resources has grown to over 20,000 today. It not only serves the local residents, but continues to be the center of a traveling library system around the entire county.

While the library has seen technological advancements and structural updates in order to better serve the growing community, the purpose and importance of the Farnsworth Public Library has not changed. It continues to be a center of learning and activities for people of all ages throughout Oconto.

For these reasons and more I am proud to support to library's nomination to the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and National Register of Historic Places.

Thank you for considering the Farnsworth Public Library in Oconto, WI to be added to the Wisconsin State Register and National Register of Historic Places. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have regards to my support.

Sincerely,

Dave Hansen
 State Senator

DH: beh



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



TO: Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this Thirtieth day of October 2017, for the nomination of the (Farnsworth Public Library) to the National Register of Historic Places:

- 1 Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
- 1 CD with NRHP Nomination form PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination form
- 11 Photograph(s)
- 1 CD with image files
- 1 Map(s)
- 14 Sketch map(s)/figures(s)/exhibit(s)
- 1 Piece(s) of correspondence
- Other:

COMMENTS:

- Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do or do not constitute a majority of property owners
- Other: