



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM**

**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a) and identify the section being continued. Type all entries. Use letter quality printer in 12 pitch, using an 85 space line and 10 space left margin. Use only archival quality paper (20 pound, acid free paper with a 2% alkaline reserve).

**A. NAME OF MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING**

Public Library Facilities of Wisconsin

**B. ASSOCIATED HISTORIC CONTEXTS**

Public Library Development in Wisconsin 1840-1940

**C. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Entire State of Wisconsin

See continuation sheet

**D. CERTIFICATION**

As designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

*[Signature]* \_\_\_\_\_ 9/18/90  
Signature of State or Federal historic preservation officer Date

State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Historic Preservation Division  
State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

*Bob Boland* \_\_\_\_\_ 11/15/90  
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register Date

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**E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS**

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Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

Public Library Development in Wisconsin 1836-1940.

Introduction

The statewide multiple property nomination for public library facilities of Wisconsin includes all buildings, including city halls and municipal buildings constructed specifically to accommodate local public libraries in their respective communities and any associated sites involved with the statewide system of library development. Most of the buildings are considered historically significant in the area of Community Development, as indicative of perceived local growth and culture "coming of age." The majority of the buildings are considered significant in the areas of Education or Social/Humanitarian History, recognizing their role in the local community as educational centers, cultural centers and/or repositories for special collections. A large number of the buildings are significant in the area of Architecture as fine local representatives of types and periods of construction (many in the Neoclassical or Prairie School styles), and some as significant works by Wisconsin or library-specialist master architects.

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The public library is today among the most prominent of local civic institutions in Wisconsin. Virtually every community of significant population across the state has a public library facility, often housed in its own building and serving as a local community center. Historically, it is often difficult to define and characterize the public library, however, because of the changing concepts of public libraries and institutions for their administration in American and Wisconsin history.

The concept of a "free" public library was virtually unknown in Wisconsin until 1870, when methods of community custodianship and funding, or the accumulation of private wealth to permit philanthropy, had been achieved. However, in many places across the state there existed an earlier form of public library service maintained by library associations, lyceums, young men's associations and similar organizations.(1) The habit of community book exchange had been established early in the history of most settlements, although accessibility of the collections was often limited by lack of available space and attendance, membership fees, understood or stated policies about the segments of the population who were eligible for use, and in larger communities, the availability of monies for maintenance and expansion of the collection and staff. Beginning as early as 1836, when the Wisconsin Territory was created, there were established at least 153 organizations in at least eighty-two Wisconsin municipalities.(1) Although early on little attempt was made to keep accurate records of such numbers, at least 56 such institutions had been chartered by 1870 alone.(2) Frequently these institutions were derived from an 18th century New England prototype, transplanted to the Midwestern frontier by New England emigrants.

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Historical Context

It was characteristic of the public library movement in Wisconsin as in the nation that early leadership was assumed by the "Yankee" elite, whose stated concern for the educational betterment of the population was actually a thinly-veiled paternal and moral remedy for the social ills of an increasingly urban, multi-ethnic society. Early advocates of public libraries worked almost exclusively in Yankee communities, elsewhere it would appear that few attempts were made to attract interest in the movement, and those attempts that succeeded were but marginally effective.(3)

Many of Wisconsin's public library associations shared common origins. While the earliest libraries were privately housed in the homes of prominent citizens, the public library associations usually were subscription or membership organizations. An informal group, or more often, an existing society or organization gathered a few books, solicited donations, and opened a "reading room," either in rented quarters or in a member's front parlor. The new "library" was either a subscription affair, in which members purchased stock in exchange for borrowing privileges, or an association library, to which members (or the public at large) paid an annual membership fee or weekly borrowing charge. The association "reading rooms," which continued to be developed well into the late 19th century, were located in a vast array of building types from municipal and commercial buildings to private homes, club rooms and common storefronts. In late 19th century Wausau in northern Marinette County, the local library association "reading room" was housed above a Main Street restaurant and tavern and doubled as a meeting room for local businessmen. In Superior, the Superior Library Association established their community's first library/reading room in 1869 in former masonic lodge rooms. After disbanding in 1873, reading room activity was reactivated by the local lodge of the Knights of Good Templar and later the private Endion social club (circa 1880).(4)

The participation of men, as founders of local library associations as well as librarians, often characterized the early library movement, although in later years women's groups began to take on an increasingly commanding role. Among the many local voluntary associations in Wisconsin that were responsible for library facility establishment were such groups as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, local literary clubs, businessmen's clubs, fraternal lodges and women's clubs. Women's Clubs, for instance were instrumental in establishing libraries and reading rooms in Columbus, Colfax, West Allis, Plymouth, Wausau, Antigo and Waupaca.(5)

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Historical Context (cont.)

The majority of the organized library associations were of a temporal nature, however, born to disappear almost immediately. The mere love of books and learning without the substantial support of public or private monies was insufficient to maintain a library through both good and bad times. "By the turn of the century the Wisconsin literary landscape was dotted with the wreckage of such associations."(6)

Some of the organizations, however, endured, often for 10 to 20 years or more, accumulating collections substantial enough to become the nuclei of subsequent public library development in their localities. Some of the longer-lived groups included the Columbus Library Association (1876-1901); the Janesville Young Men's Association (1865-1882); the La Crosse Young Men's Library (1868-1888); the Milwaukee Young Men's Association (1847-1877); and the Waupun Library Association (1858-1904).(7)

In a number of communities, collections donated by these, sometimes overtaxed, local library associations were readily assumed by the local municipalities in later years; the collection housed in rooms of a municipal or commercial building. The city might also pay for the services of a librarian, often the person formerly responsible for the operation of the reading room setup. The community of Waukesha was representative of this trend. In 1896, the Beacon Lights Women's Club had its library in the home of Miss Fannie Ellis. Men were allowed to use and support the library. In 1909, the collection was moved to a municipal building and Miss Ellis was hired as librarian. Within the next few years the city's Carnegie Library was completed and the collections moved into their final home.(8)

Increasingly during the later part of the 19th century members of local library associations, though by no means all of them, began to feel that truly "public-sponsored" libraries would be the most effective instrument in the development of a stable state library system. In 1836 the territorial legislature authorized the establishment of a state library. Thirty-two years later, in 1868, the first state authorization for free town library support through taxation for book purchases was passed.(9) Language entitling cities and villages to do likewise was added in 1872. The Wisconsin Public Library Act, as it was officially known, (Wisconsin State Statutes Chapter 20) was passed largely through the interest and effort of State Assemblyman and active member of the Janesville Young Men's Assoc., Alexander Graham of Janesville, WI.(10)

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Historical Context (cont.)

As it read in 1876, the law authorized municipalities to establish libraries with tax levies placed on assessed properties within their boundaries, to be approved by popular vote and governed by a nine-member board; such libraries or reading rooms were to be "forever free" to inhabitants of the locale.(11) The general structure was essentially that of the New England social library, as well as that of previous associations.

The bills passed the legislature easily, although with no large citizen support, but only gradually did they begin to take an effect. In the first 20 years following the passage of the act, only thirteen "legal" public libraries were established in the state, although several "illegal" association libraries are known to have begun operation, continuing a tradition that had existed in Wisconsin since the territorial era.(12) That an unknown number of communities felt no need to comply with state enabling legislation as it stood at various points in the development of Wisconsin library legislation underscores the lax attitude toward library format in the state. Although the organizational structure had been legally specified, the "free public library" as an institution did not become fixed until the turn of the century, especially thanks to the efforts of the Wisconsin Free Library Commission and the Carnegie Foundation. The 1872 law, as amended, was to remain the basic library law in Wisconsin until the middle of the twentieth century.(13)

It was fortunate that in the later nineteenth century when private library associations could no longer sustain the movement and facilities alone, and public library sponsorship was still in its infancy, that the phenomenon of library philanthropy arose (best represented by the contribution of steel magnate Andrew Carnegie). Bridged by this substantial source of support, often including the provision of free library buildings, it was far easier for the latter-day educated and well-bred cultural "missionaries" of the library movement to provoke the necessary tax support to maintain local libraries into the twentieth century.(14)

Along with the great prosperity of the late 19th century industrial era in Wisconsin had come the changing attitude that the American businessman could and should support the cultural and recreational institutions of his community as a concrete demonstration of his "public spirit." Any organization or institution, which could be regarded generally as useful to the community appeared to have a legitimate claim on his purse. The support of libraries in particular appears to have been highly regarded as evidence of public spirit. The monetary facts of

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Historical Context (cont.)

19th century library philanthropy in Wisconsin were simple enough. During the last third of the century, former residents or former residents of the state gave or bequeath more than \$900,000 to found or maintain public libraries.(15) Between 1882 and 1900 sixteen Wisconsin individuals made or announced large-scale gifts to or for public libraries in their home communities. The donors, and the amounts they gave are listed below:

Andrew G. Tainter	Menomonie	\$190,000
Zalmon G. Simmons	Kenosha	\$170,000
Mrs. Marshall Harris	Oshkosh	\$ 75,000
Mrs. Samuel S. Vaughn	Ashland	\$ 75,000
Cadwallader C. Washburn	La Crosse	\$ 50,000
Elisha D. Smith	Menasha	\$ 32,000
John J. Williams	Beaver Dam	\$ 30,000
Isaac Stephenson	Marinette	\$ 30,000
Philetus Sawyer	Oshkosh	\$ 25,000
James Aram	Delavan	\$ 20,000
James Mead	Sheboygan	\$ 20,000
Rufus Kellogg	Green Bay	\$ 15,000
Delos Rensselaer Moon	Stanley	\$ 12,000
Mrs. Caroline Metcalfe	Milwaukee	\$ 10,000
Thomas B. Scott	Merrill	\$ 10,000
J. D. Witter	Wisconsin Rapids	\$ 10,000

(16)

The total amount of these gifts was \$774,000. Thirty-nine other persons gave amounts ranging from one thousand to eight thousand dollars to make up the total value of \$900,000. To place this figure into clear perspective, it should be noted that pre-eminent library donor Andrew Carnegie's 60 plus gifts to Wisconsin libraries surpassed \$1,045,000.(17)

With the exception of Mrs. Metcalfe's gift, which was for books on the fine arts, these large-scale gifts were all used for both buildings and collections. In addition, the gifts also included special endowments for all but three of the libraries: Green Bay, Marinette and Milwaukee.(18)

The motivations behind the giving of such generous gifts were frequently as diverse as the people who made them. The memorialization of a deceased relative was a common stimulus, as was the case with the donations of Harris, Simmons, Tainter and Vaughn. As a result the elaborate edifices constructed were perhaps of higher

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Historical Context (cont.)

financial priority than the quality or breadth of the collections to be housed inside. In several cases, such as with Marshall Harris, Elisha Smith and John Williams, the contributions were associated with longstanding interests in the affairs of local library associations. In general, however, the available records do not clearly indicate the hidden motives of the donors, except that of general concern for the benefit of the residents of the community, particularly the youths.

In a number of instances conditions were attached to the donations, which often diminished their totally benevolent nature. The gift of Emaline Vaughn, for example, stipulated that "no infidel or atheistic works are allowed here or can ever be placed on these shelves...anarchistic and spiritualistic works are excluded, also low grade french fiction."(19) Vaughn's philanthropy included an element of social control that enabled her to dictate the types of literature that the citizens of Ashland should be exposed to.

In 1896, a Wisconsin Free Library Commission report stated that there were 28 free libraries in operation in the state. By 1922, that figure had jumped to 211 libraries containing over 1,620,000 volumes. A major factor in such a rapid increase in the number of libraries statewide was the philanthropy of steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, whose donations resulted in the construction of 64 libraries in Wisconsin and over 1,679 throughout the U.S., at a cost of over \$40,000,000.(20)

Unlike other private philanthropists who donated funds for library construction in the state, Carnegie did not make any stipulation as to what books could be placed on the shelves, nor did he require that his name be associated with the building, although most Wisconsin communities receiving his money did name the building after Carnegie. Absolute requirements to be met before the formal approval of a grant by Carnegie were only two: the community had to provide an adequate site for the building and had to agree to support the public library through an annual maintenance appropriation equal to 10 percent of the total amount of the grant. By 1908, however, Carnegie had begun to require that the receiving community send plans for the building before construction began. In 1914, he also began to require the submission of a letter signed by the mayor of the community promising that the costs of the proposed building would not exceed a specific cost. (21)

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Historical Context (cont.)

Carnegie clearly believed that philanthropy was an obligation of the rich, but he also believed that those gifts should not be passively received. Carnegie stated, "I do not believe that the community which is not willing to maintain a library had better possess it. It is only the feeling that the library belongs to every citizen richest and poorest alike, that gives it a soul...."(22) Carnegie's building program greatly served to reinforce the beliefs that the library should be a truly public institution.

The donations of the Carnegie program for libraries in Wisconsin ranged in value from approximately \$6,000 (Arcadia) to \$50,000 (Racine) for single buildings. The majority of the grants totalled between \$10,000 and \$20,000. When requested, advice on suitable floor plans and interior appointments to aid in the construction of efficiently organized libraries was also available. In addition to the 64 communities that constructed libraries with Carnegie grants, six communities asked for funds, but were subsequently unable to go through with their plans. The reasons given by the communities of Kewaunee, Monroe, New Richmond, North Milwaukee, Portage and West Bend for not going through with library construction included an inability to raise the required 10 percent local matching funds, rising building costs, and the demand for monies above the which the Carnegie program was willing to offer.(23)

The Midwestern states of Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri and Ohio participated enthusiastically in the Carnegie library building program. This region ranked first in the number of communities receiving Carnegie grants and in the number of Carnegie buildings, and second in the total amount of funds received. Nationally, the Carnegie foundation made the greatest number of grants in the period from 1901-1905, and the largest number of Carnegie grants to Wisconsin communities matches those years.

The allocation and distribution of Carnegie grants for library construction ended in 1917 with the advent of World War I. None the less, the notion that every "self-respecting" town should have its own public library had become increasingly ingrained into the civic consciousness of communities as a result of the Carnegie dominated years. In many cities, the public library had become a badge symbolizing a certain level of cultural sophistication and stability. In keeping with an era distinguished by monumental civic architecture made popular by the Chicago Columbian Exposition and the City Beautiful movement, communities saw the public library increasingly as a way of publically proclaiming their vitality and stature.



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Historical Context (cont.)

The debate as to whether philanthropy or taxation was the more dependable source of support for the establishment and maintenance of public library institutions raged through the last decade of the 19th century well into the 20th, among those people of Wisconsin who were concerned about public library development. Both points of view had their proponents. On one side, supporters emphasized that private support had been tried in numerous communities, but subsequently failed because enthusiasm could sustain a small institution for a short while but ultimately it would be left hanging. The other side felt strongly that libraries were not a proper subject for taxation, but should be supported by the donations of those citizens who are peculiarly able to do so and of generous character. Increasingly by the end of the First World War and generality of opinion on the subject seems to have been one of pessimism about the continued prospect of generously "donated" libraries, and a shifting of the burden onto the tax-paying elements of a local community.(24)

The Wisconsin Free Library Commission was one of the earliest and strongest proponents of this viewpoint, trumpeting the value of free, publically-sponsored library facilities. Lutie E. Stearns, dynamic spokesperson for the Commission, had voted the organization's opinions repeatedly, that collective efforts ("growing out of the sacrifice of the people") were ultimately more valuable than individual generosity to the establishment and perpetuation of a strong and vital library system in a community.(25)

The Wisconsin Library Association and its successor, the Wisconsin Free Library Commission (WFLC), designated by Wisconsin law in 1895, was the principal body that worked statewide to promote the establishment and improvement of public libraries in Wisconsin. Reflecting the (Yankee) moral tone of the earlier local associations, the leaders of the Wisconsin Library Association saw the library movement as especially important in the intellectual and moral development of children and young adults, and acculturating immigrants. Frank Hutchins of Beaver Dam, who with Lutie Stearns of Milwaukee was the principal leader of the statewide library movement, characterized the mission of the association as alleviating the "stagnant and lifeless" quality of Wisconsin's more than eight hundred villages and hamlets, which were "sodden with monotony."(26) The Wisconsin Library Association followed in the wake of the national movement, after the organization of the American Library Association (1876), and the New York State Library Association, founded by Melvil Dewey in 1890.

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Historical Context (cont.)

Despite extensive travel and speaking by Stearns and intensive organizational activity and legislative lobbying by Hutchins, the WLA drew few dues-paying members to its annual meetings. The largest supporter of the organization was Senator James A. Stout of Menomonie, who later sponsored the Library Commission bill. It was that later Wisconsin Free Library Commission which was to have the greatest statewide impact, particularly in its informational service to libraries operating after 1900. Establishment of professional standards and training for librarians and staff, and promotion of county library systems and traveling libraries in the rural areas of the state through the 1950s were the direct result of WFLC activities.(27)

Appointed by the governor, the WFLC was an advisory body whose members served without pay.(28) Its expressed propose was to "give advice and counsel to all free libraries in the state and to all communities which may propose to establish them." In 1904, the Commission included the Honorable James Stout, Lucy (Mrs. Charles) Morris of Berlin, University of Wisconsin President Charles R. Van Hise, State Superintendent Charles P. Cary, and Reuben G. Thwaites of the State Historical Society.(29) Lutie Stearns was one of the Wisconsin Free Library Commission's most active members. In 1894, She volunteered her time to the WLA and was instrumental in the legislation that created the Free Library Commission in 1895. Upon its creation she was appointed to the Commission's first session. In 1897, she became the Commission's first paid staff member, a position she would retain until 1914. Also as a member of the Wisconsin Federation of Women's Clubs (WFWC), Stearns recruited hundreds of women to the library movement across the state.(30)

As an example of the professional work of the Commission, in Black River Falls the WFLC forced the library there to acquire a card catalog and organize its 1,200 volume collection to make it accessible to the public. In Boscobel, Stearns spent two weeks cataloging books and training volunteers to work in the library. From 1899 to 1939, the WFLC in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin, ran the state's only library school which trained librarians, standardized library organization policies and attempted to professionalize librarianship or "library science." In 1921, under urging by the Commission, the state legislature passed a law stipulating that after 1923 anyone appointed to a library position must hold a library certificate indicating that they had been trained in library science.(31)

More credit is almost certainly due the Wisconsin Free Library Commission, whose programs brought the public library idea to towns throughout the state. Wisconsin's Commission ranked with those of Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska as having exerted, in the words of one contemporary observer, "an especially strong influence on recent library development."

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Historical Context (cont.)

Over 100 years have passed since some of Wisconsin's earliest libraries were built. The movement that created them grew out of national and regional trends in economics and society as much as it reflected local initiative. The broad trends have left an enduring imprint locally on communities across the state. The town library today is viewed as a necessary civic service, functioning not only as a tool for education but also as an important element of a community's self-image. The fact that so many of Wisconsin's library buildings are still extant, many still used for their original purpose, attests to their enduring value both as libraries and as physical demonstrations of community participation in a cultural movement of national scope and importance.

Footnotes

1. Colson, "Public Spirit at Work: Philanthropy and Public Libraries in 19th Century Wisconsin," Wisconsin Magazine of History, Spring 1976, p. 192.
2. Colson, "The Public Library Movement in Wisconsin, 1836-1900," 1926, pp. 88-89.
3. Shera, Foundations of the Public Library, 1949, p.238.
4. Lusignan, City of Superior Intensive Survey Report, 1983, pp. 121-123.
5. Site file at Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, various dates.
6. Colson, "Public Spirit...", p. 192.
7. Ibid., p.192.
8. Howard Needles Tammen & Bergendoff, Final Report Intensive Historic Resource Survey -- City of Waukesha., 1982, pp.85-86.
9. Lester, "The Library Movement in Wisconsin," Wisconsin, Its History and Its People., 1924, p.412.
10. Colson, "Public Library Movement in Wisconsin, 1836-1900", 1926, pp.220-221.
11. Lester, p.415.
12. Colson, "Public Spirit...", p.256.

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Historical Context (cont.)

13. Ibid., p,221-223, 225-226.
14. Garrison, Cultural Missionaries: A Study of American Public Library Leaders, 1876-1910., 1973, p.viii.
15. Colson, "Public Spirit...", p.194-5.
16. Ibid., p.198.
17. Ibid., p.198.
18. Ibid., p.198 ; Reports, of Wisconsin Free Library Commission, 1896-1902.
19. Ashland Press, Nov.24, 1888; Wisconsin Journal of Education, 26:35 (Feb 1896); Colson "Public Spirit...", p.207.
20. Bobinski, Carnegie Libraries, 1969. p.3
21. Ibid., pp.40-47.
22. Ibid., p.43.
23. Colson, "Public Spirit...", p. 208-209;  
Bobinski, Carnegie Libraries, p.58, 124-130.
24. Ibid., pp.208-209.
25. "Wisconsin Supplement," Library Journal, 21:182 (April 1896)
26. Colson, Public Library Movement..., p.293.
27. Wilcox, The Wisconsin Library Association, 1966, pp.6-8.; Tannenbaum, "The Library Career of Lutie Eugenia Stearns.", WMH, Spring 1956 (Vol.39 No.3)
28. MacLeod, Carnegie Libraries in Wisconsin, 1968, p.27.
29. Wisconsin Free Library Commission, 1904, p.1.
30. Tannenbaum, "...Career of Lutie Eugenia Stearns." pp.159-165.; Steinschneider, 1983, p.140.
31. Wyatt, "Education", Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, 1986 p.5/3.

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## F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

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### I. Name of Property Type: Free-standing Public Library Facilities

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#### II. Description:

The most highly visible and and recognizable building type associated with the historical context of public library development in Wisconsin is the free-standing public library facility. In describing this property type it is important to remember that first and foremost the structure is a storehouse for books and written materials and a facility for their quiet and functional use. However, above this these public "reading rooms," whether public or privately funded, are also strong, emotional expressions of civic pride and status. (continued)

#### III. Significance:

The free-standing Public Libraries make up the largest and most highly recognizable resource type within the historical context of Public Library Development in Wisconsin. These properties will normally fit into one of two critical criteria for National Register eligibility. Under Criterion C the structures may be architecturally significant because they represent the distinctive characteristics of a particular period, building type or method of construction, or are the work of a major architect of regional or local stature. Under Criterion A it may be (continued)

#### IV. Registration Requirements:

An example of the property type will be eligible for listing in the NR under Criteria A or C, as either a representative example of a type or period of construction, the work of a master architect, or for its significant historical associations. Particular historical areas of significance will include Community Development, where information reveals that the resource was indicative of perceived local growth and "coming of age," and Social Humanitarian History or Education recognizing the role of the site in the local community as educational center, or cultural center and social focal point.

Specific evidence from primary and secondary sources is quite important in documenting and supporting these findings and should not be simply assumed.

**Integrity:** Under the best circumstances the library facility will have remained in continual use and the physical characteristics embodied within the property type will have remained relatively unchanged. Most library sites, however, will have experienced some renovation over the years, particularly to public spaces. Certain changes have been common throughout the property type. The growth of book collections and the expansion of public services have forced many library facilities to convert the former basement "lecture room" into a children's room, thereby leaving the entire upper floor of the adult library. Constantly changing systems of library organization have prompted the frequent dismantling of original bookstack areas. The former stacks are made into additional reading (continued)

  X   See continuation sheet

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  X   See continuation sheet for additional property types

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II. Description (cont):

All but a few of the free-standing libraries built in Wisconsin were erected between 1895 and 1920, the period during which the public library movement in this country experienced its greatest growth. The buildings of this period are remarkably similar in plan, massing and style, representing a clearly identifiable type of small to medium-sized public building. A property type which first emerged at this time.

Plan: The typical space program for these properties featured reading rooms or reading areas for children and adults, a sizable administration desk or counter area from which the librarian handled all public service, a stacks area for the book collections, and an office or work room area. These library functions normally took place on one floor. In addition, a room for lectures, community meetings and other educational programs was normally felt to be a necessary adjunct to the library facility. The majority of the libraries are one-story in height. The main library space commonly occupies the main floor and is set atop a high, raised basement containing the lecture room(s) and various staff work areas. A prominent front stoop or "ceremonial" entrance leads up to the main story. The raised basement was an almost universal feature of early 20th century designs, particularly in Carnegie grant buildings. In the few two-story examples that were designed, the basement is removed and the second floor area is used to house the lecture room as well as other areas devoted to special purposes or collections.

The plans of the libraries generally fall into one of a small number of distinctive forms. The smallest libraries are usually simple rectangles. The principal story, devoted to library services was contained in a single open space on the interior. The entrance is commonly through a closed vestibule located in the center of one of the long sides; the vestibule either projecting from the front of the building or into the interior space. The book collection is kept in wall shelves around the perimeter of the interior with a central librarian's desk facing the entrance. With the growth of the collections, free-standing bookshelves were often introduced creating semi-secluded alcoves within the general reading areas. Such plans are normally found in the smallest communities maintaining library facilities in the state, or in smaller branch libraries which formed part of a major city-wide system.

A second group of libraries, generally slightly larger than the above mentioned, also feature open interior plans. They differ however by having a bookstack at center rear behind the librarian's desk. An office (enclosed) or workroom and a secluded reference area or study alcove can often be found flanking the bookstacks. In some cases the stack area projects slightly from the rear of the building, creating an irregular building outline.

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II. Description (cont):

Within a third group of libraries, the interiors are no longer single spaces, but instead are divided into distinct rooms. In shape, the buildings are still rectangular and symmetrically planned with an entrance through the center of the long side. The majority of these examples are clearly divided into two zones, each with three parts: a front zone composed of a central entry hall and public service area flanked on either side by reading rooms, and a rear zone comprised of a central bookstack with private office space and reference areas located in the corners. In grander examples the main entry area may take on a ceremonial treatment with the addition of a high vaulted ceiling or dome. In spite of their compartmentalization, the interior spaces often retained a dramatic sense of spaciousness with wide connecting openings featuring tall archways or columned portals.

The final group of libraries is best described as eclectic. Still featuring the identical functional spaces, their locations in the overall floor plan became shifted based on specific collection requirements, user needs or organizational factors. H, U, and T-shaped plans, still based on central public service areas and entries become common plan forms. Special conditions brought about by corner sites also effect building layout. These plans are normally reserved only for larger libraries or those distinguished by specific donor or sponsor requirements. In many cases these facilities also include such non-standard rooms as auditoriums, special collections areas, photo or painting galleries, and women's club/society meeting rooms.

Massing & Elevation: Responding to interior controls, the overwhelming majority of library facilities are rectangular blocks with symmetrical front facades. The roof shapes include concealed, parapeted roofs, hipped forms, and simple side gables. Perhaps the most characteristic feature of both large and small facilities is the presence of a prominent entrance pavilion, usually occupying the center bay of a three or five-bay facade. In classically-inspired designs the entrance pavillion can take on grand proportions, with fully detailed entablatures and columned entries. One of the most noticeable characteristics of the fenestration is the large amount of wall area, particularly on the facade, devoted to window openings. Natural light was a highly valued resource and large expanses of windows was typical. In the smaller facilities where shelving was placed along the exterior walls the window areas were more limited, although in the Prairie School designs of the early 20th century this factor lead to the popularity of the continuous "ribbon" window located high up on the wall just below the eaves.

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II. Description (cont):

Materials: In keeping with the desired need to demonstrate permanence and strength through the building image, and a physical need to protect valuable collections, the preferred exterior building material for most libraries was masonry. Brick was used for most buildings and cut stone where scale and finances allowed. Exterior trim in stone, terra cotta or stucco was quite common and richly detailed wood interiors were the norm. Sizable fireplaces often provided the reading room areas with a comforting atmosphere. In donated philanthropic libraries, memorials to the generous donors were often noted by prominent name stones on the exterior or enriched ornamentation in the interior, normally around the main fireplace (bust, carved overmantel, portrait).

Siting: Nineteenth century library facilities were more likely to be located within the downtown commercial district, but 20th century library planners increasingly regarded such sites as inadequate, preferring instead central locations free from excessive noise and traffic and with adequate natural lighting. A location on the edge of the downtown district or one block removed from the bustle of "Main Street" was the more desired location. In addition, this land was generally available at a much lower premium than valuable commercial space downtown. Many libraries were sited much like their private dwelling neighbors in the center of amply landscaped lots, in keeping with their image of open, public-use facilities. In larger cities, the library site may be part of a larger civic complex that might include a museum building, auditorium, city offices, or post office.

Style: While examples exist of late 19th century Richardsonian Romanesque and Italianate-influenced designs, they are by far the minority. Quite clearly the most popular stylistic form encountered in Wisconsin public library facilities is the Neoclassical. Made popular by the Chicago Columbian Exhibition during the last decade of the century, the neoclassical style was widely accepted as a logical building style for public libraries, dramatically symbolizing democracy, civic self-esteem and maturity. Communities unable to support the costs of monumental neoclassic piles often chose a debased classical form utilizing stylistic details only at the main public entrance or the windows. Other communities turned to Georgian or Colonial Revival forms seeking the same public image.



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II. Description (cont):

A second category of stylistic forms commonly applied to library facilities in the state strove for a more informal, friendlier attitude, and was generally reserved for the more smaller-scaled facilities. Specific stylistic interpretations included medieval gothic designs, English Tudor cottages, and simply based American Craftsman structures; all exposing a rich palette of natural materials and colors. In Wisconsin, due mostly to the influence of architects Claude & Starck, the Prairie Style also saw wide acceptance. Prairie School libraries across the state represent to many students of Wisconsin architecture one of the state's richest resource types.

Visually, little distinction can be made between libraries of Carnegie, private philanthropic or public origins. Carnegie libraries may be distinguishable by a prominent plaque bearing the magnate's name, but generally stylistic and descriptive forms can be found in a mixture of buildings of various types. While privately-donated facilities (Carnegie included) are often larger in scale, many communities have built publicly financed facilities of notable scale and visual intensity. (1)

III. Significance (continued)

shown that the library facility is associated with significant contributions to the broad patterns of local or statewide history, specifically for the role it played in the community as an educational center, cultural center and repository for special collections. (See below for specific areas of significance.)

The heyday of library development from 1895 to 1920 brought to communities across the state a valuable and multi-faceted tool for the education and acculturation of its citizens. By the late 19th century many Wisconsin communities had gone well past the frontier stage of development and reached a point of self-sufficiency and stability that permitted citizens to address qualities of life beyond the simple needs of making a living in a raw land. Subsequently, public demands for quality civic amenities such as public library facilities began to be increasingly voiced.

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III. Significance (cont):

The overall trend of public library establishment in Wisconsin seems to have been greatly influenced by the population and age of the communities themselves, strongly suggesting that a certain degree of civic maturity was required as a "medium" for library organization. It would appear that in the institution of the "public library" many communities found a way of clearly dramatizing their "newly acquired" stature as a fully established community, while also providing for a sorely needed cultural amenity. Public library facilities, regardless of community size, are particularly representative of the important historical issue of civic involvement in community-wide social and cultural development. Specifically, they pinpoint a distinctive publically-sponsored or sanctioned way of dealing with the social needs of the community.

Specific areas of significance attributable to library sites will include Community Development, where information reveals that the community felt the library to be an important indicator of the attainment of a certain level of "civilization." In other words, the establishment of the library was the result of a concerted public or private effort to develop within the community those amenities deemed necessary to the health and stable growth of the area. Other areas of significance are Social/Humanitarian History or Education, where the library can be shown to have played a significant role in the general history of efforts to promote the cultural and educational welfare of the local community. As a tool for cultural development the public library has become an accepted instrument of invaluable nature, serving the broadest cross-section of constituents. Its particular role in the specific community being evaluated is of direct concern to the nomination of the individual library facility.

While it is important to place the site within the larger statewide context of public library development based on the source and date of the library establishment (Carnegie grant, private donation, public sponsorship), the context within which the individual site is evaluated should not be limited to only those broad patterns of development. It is extremely important to recognize the local significance of the facility. Specific documentary information about the events, activities and associations that made the individual local library important are essential to the evaluation process. Evidence from primary and secondary sources should be utilized to support the various areas of significance for a specific site.

Architectural significance: Public library facilities commonly represent highly visible examples of conscious, civic activity. In many smaller communities they can often represent one of the few architecturally sophisticated, architect-designed

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III. Significance (cont):

structures in the area. In the case of privately-sponsored libraries, donated through the generosity of turn of the century philanthropists, the completed structures were often seen more as private memorials than public amenities, and their outward appearances were meant as public displays of wealth and munificence.

In almost all cases the public library facilities of the boom era (c. 1895-1920) were designed to be showpieces and thus their visual presence was an important aesthetic factor. It is understandable then that a large percentage of Wisconsin's public library buildings will be potentially significant in the area of architectural design, either as fine examples of distinctive styles or the work of master architects.

The 19th century library movement witnessed construction espousing the latest fashions in style and decoration. To the wealthy philanthropists, who sponsored most of the free-standing library construction during the period, library design became a clear means of outward presentation of privately-held tastes as can be seen in the magnificent Mabel Tainter Memorial in Menomonie or the 1882 La Crosse Library donated by C. C. Washburn. The Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893, however, changed dramatically the public's concept of "correct" civic architecture. The principal styles and forms illustrated by the large body of early 20th century examples are predominantly Neoclassic in origin, ranging from ornate Beaux Arts piles to muted neo-Georgian forms. With their formal symmetry, rich use of expensive materials, and imposing scale, even the smallest of these properties carry with them a dramatic architectural presence.

While Neo-classical forms dominated, a second, smaller grouping of architectural interpretations revolved around a more romantic image of small-town compatibility and open access. Among the romantically-styled libraries constructed in the state included various period revival designs, medieval and English Gothic structures, and the more Americanized Craftsman and Prairie School designs. In general the romantic stylizations were noted by their distinctive detailing, fanciful rooflines, and an overall sense of visual activity and playfulness. The Prairie style designs in particular were strongly identifiable by their overriding horizontal emphasis, including broad, spreading roof planes, ribbon windows beneath overhanging eaves, and geometric motifs. In general, these forms represented a much warmer alternative to civic architecture.

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III. Significance (cont):

Well known for their domestic architecture in the Madison, Wisconsin area, the architectural firm of Louis W. Claude and Edward F. Starck achieved a regional reputation through their numerous commissions to build small libraries. The firm developed a functional plan, with balanced open interior spaces, high windows above built-in book shelving and a useful basement. The simplicity of the usually dark interior woodwork played against the light plaster and geometric panes of glass. In several cases, especially before 1908 and after 1916, exteriors in eclectic, Neoclassic styles were used. However, the firm's stature is based on the development of exteriors in the Prairie Style, with strong emphasis on the horizontality of brick walls and spreading hip roofs. The Rhythmic grouping of windows was enhanced by their geometric patterns in softly colored leaded glass. Early in their association, Claude & Starck developed a much sought-after expertise in these small symbols of community interest in their cultural identity and whether funded by Andrew Carnegie or another source they designed at least 39 of these buildings in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois and Washington from 1903 to 1925. Their importance in the state can also be seen in the number of similar, functional designs built subsequent to their efforts in neighboring communities. In addition the firm authored a well-read pamphlet on their design philosophies as regarded library design and construction, which was felt to have had a significant impact on regional design in the state.

IV. Registration Requirements (continued)

areas and the bookshelves are dispersed throughout the main floor. In many cases; substantial growth has necessitated the construction of sizable additions. On the whole such alterations will not normally detract from the eligibility of a site. Where additions or alterations totally obscure the main facade(s) or dwarf in scale the original structure, integrity can be said to have been destroyed and NR eligibility seriously threatened.

In the case of branch libraries being established in separate locations throughout a community, the associated historical significance for each isolated property will need to be evaluated within its own context. In certain instances the significance of the resource to a particular neighborhood or section of the city may be of such quality or importance to suggest eligibility based on evaluation within the context

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IV. Registration Requirements (continued):

of that localized area as well as the city on a whole. Specific documentation should attempt to uncover such connections, for proper evaluation.

A number of former library structures have been given new life through adaptive reuse as museums, public offices or cultural centers. By their self-enclosed nature and distinctive settings and orientations, these former library sites have been able to maintain both a continuum of "public use" and visual integrity, which has served to sustain a relatively high degree of historical integrity. In cases where reuse has totally obliterated the integrity of use, setting and interior spacial arrangements, as in housing rehab or commercial reuse, serious doubt must be cast on the NR eligibility of the site.

The general aspects of physical integrity which must be analyzed in order to determine qualification refer directly to those factors noted in the Description section: spacial proportions (inside and out), physical setting, window fenestration, orientation and integrity of major facades, formal entry sequence and materials.

(1). [For additional discussion of public library design philosophy and building typology please refer to An Architectural and Historical Survey of Public Libraries in Iowa, 1870 -1940. Dennett, Muessig and Associates, Iowa City, 1980. This report in association with the Wisconsin library survey served as the basis for the descriptive statement of Free-standing Public Library Facilities.]

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Section number  F  Page  9  Residences of Associated Historical Figures

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I. Name of Property Type: Residences of Associated Historical Figures

II. Description:

One property type which merits NR consideration because of its associations with the Public Library movement in the state are those sites which serve as the homes and residences of significant, influential promoters of the statewide library system in Wisconsin. Residential properties can include single-family homes, duplexes, multi-family apartments, boarding houses, or commercial properties with associated residential areas.

Within this property type there are no specific descriptive characteristics which would differentiate these residential properties from any others in existence in their respective communities.

III. Significance:

The efforts of a relatively small group of people had a sizable impact on the development of the public library system in Wisconsin. The interests and efforts of these individuals generally went beyond local philanthropy to advocacy at a regional or statewide level. While local communities may have had individuals whose efforts were instrumental in the growth or establishment of a local library facility, in most of these cases the actual library building itself is perhaps the best representation of their work and efforts. The specific resources intended to be considered under this property type are designated as those properties whose owners have had broader impacts on the Wisconsin library system.

Much of the growth of the concept of a public library system in Wisconsin was the result of the efforts of dedicated educators and intellectuals, particularly at the turn of the century, who believed in the important social value of the "public library" to teach and acculturate the populace. The development of local libraries was not a federally or state mandated program. Instead it was an outgrowth of privately initiated stewardship for the cultural aspects of our society. Organizations such as the 1895 Wisconsin Free Library Commission in particular were successful because of the work and dedication of significant individuals. Their efforts were far more successful than any of the state's broad, sweeping programs.

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Significance (continued)

Of particular note should be the residences of such acknowledged advocates as Alexander Graham of Janesville (an early proponent and sponsor of 19th century library legislation); Frank Hutchins of Beaver Dam; and Miss Lutie E. Stearns of Milwaukee (widely traveled lecturer, advisor and trainer, and early 20th century leader of the statewide library movement).

Each of the above mentioned persons, as well as many potential others, served a prominent role in the historical development of a significant aspect of Wisconsin's cultural and educational system. Their work built the foundation for growth and expansion that would be carried on long after their deaths. Their places of residence should be considered of potential NR eligibility under Criteria B for association with significant contributions to important patterns in our past history.

IV. Registration Requirements:

The specific National Register criterion under which examples of this property type should be considered for eligibility will be Criterion B: association with the lives of persons significant in our past. Areas of significance will include Social/Humanitarian History and Education.

In evaluating the NR significance of the properties associated with these individuals the historical time frame within which the person exerted his or her greatest influence should be one of the most crucial associative factors. Childhood homes, transient living accommodations, or final resting places should not be considered of primary significance, rather it is the residence kept by the individual during their prime era of influence that should be evaluated. As with all buildings the general NR criteria for building integrity must be taken into consideration. Specifically, does the building physically represent a resource that would be recognizable to the resident in question were they to view it today.

Substantiation of the historical efforts of the individuals by primary and secondary sources which provide a more historical perspective is necessary to validate any evaluation of significance. In the case of political personalities, it must be shown that their efforts went beyond the normal execution of their prescribed duties. The simple sponsoring of a bill without extensive public interaction or political exchange would not be considered of significant value.

Special consideration should be given to locally significant sponsor and/or donors if it can be shown that no historic library facilities are extant and that the residence would best represent the individual's efforts towards the development of a public library program in the locality.

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Section number   F   Page  11  Municipal Building/City Hall Libraries

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I. Name of Property Type: Municipal Building/City Hall Library

II. Description:

Public library facilities can take the form of reading room areas located within larger municipal buildings or city halls. In many communities across Wisconsin it was economically infeasible for the local government, without outside funding, to undertake the construction of a separate library facility in the city. An inability or reluctance to raise sufficient tax revenues, or an uncertainty as to public demand were often given as reasons for the decision not to build a free-standing facility. In other cases, the size of the collections with which many community libraries started did not always justify the construction of a sizable free-standing structure immediately.

For those reasons and others a significant number of late 19th and early 20th century public library facilities were housed in specifically designated or built sections or rooms within a larger municipal building or city hall structure. In most instances the municipal building within which the "library rooms" were located looked not unlike any of the other city or village hall structures found throughout the state.

Little outside evidence was usually visible to announce the existence of the library areas within these structures. This is particularly true during the 19th century when the establishment of public libraries in the state was still in its youthful stages and even smaller patronage. Increasingly during the early decades of the 20th century, however, libraries located within municipal buildings began to take on more identifiable features. The size of the library areas were usually quite a bit larger than their 19th century predecessors, often including separate lecture areas or even children's rooms. The early twentieth century (up to c. 1940) saw the inclusion of library facilities as an integral part of the initial planning and design of many smaller city and village hall facilities. Physical changes on the exterior might be noted by the existence of a separate entry or a distinctive identification panel inset into the building. In many of these cases the library areas competed for space with the fire and police departments and other city offices in a single building which attempted to centralize all public services. (See Clinton Village Hall, 1913). The siting of such property types was generally identical to any city hall or village hall facility - normally directly adjacent to the downtown commercial district.

The interior spaces are usually disposed in a similar manner as in free-standing facilities of a comparable scale. Central to the generally open floor plan was the staff work station or librarian's desk. Reading areas were usually arranged to one



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II. Description (continued):

or both sides with stack areas either 1) intermingled with reading tables, 2) lining the walls or 3) secluded to an area off of the main librarian's desk. Adjacent rooms may provide space for special collections, lecture rooms, private reading areas, or staff offices. Interior finishes remain variable with the presence of abundant natural lighting from sizable windows a common feature. No particular architectural styles are specifically associated with Municipal Building Libraries other than those commonly associated with the building type.

As the public library system in Wisconsin attained sizable proportions by mid-century the only remaining communities which maintained library rooms within municipal buildings rather than in self-contained buildings appeared to be those of relatively small scale - normally under 1700 in population. It is unlikely that such property types would remain extant within significantly larger communities.

III. Significance:

Municipal Building/City Hall Libraries constitute a distinctive physical resource within the historical context of public library development in Wisconsin.

In many instances they represent a significant intermediate stage in the development of a public library system within a community, serving as the first or temporary quarters for a newly established library collection. Many represent the first direct public or municipal involvement in a city-wide "free" library program. Upon taking over the sponsorship of a former library association's collection, cities commonly turned over or dedicated specific city hall space for the use of public reading rooms. In other cases, most significantly during the first half of the 20th century, the municipal building library was the desired end result of a newly initiated library program and civic building program.

Property types conforming to the descriptions outlined above should be considered for NR eligibility based on their historical significance in the areas of Politics/Government and Social/Humanitarian History or Education. As with free-standing library facilities, municipal building libraries represent significant attempts by a community of people to develop the important social and cultural tools deemed necessary for healthy and stable development. These resources need to be evaluated for their role as significant local community education and cultural centers.

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III. Significance (continued)

Viewed against the instability of semi-public library association "libraries," municipal building libraries represented a certain degree of community maturization. During the 19th century in particular the city hall library functioned as a signpost to other communities that stability and cultural "coming of age" was at hand. Taken in association with their roles as important central operation centers, many of the examples of this property type can be considered significant in the areas of Government and Politics, where they represent a distinctive way of centralizing community operations and public services in a compact, highly functional package.

IV. Registration Requirements:

Representatives of this property type would be eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for their associations with contributions to significant patterns within the historical development of the Wisconsin public library system. Specific areas of significance would include Politics and Government and Social/Humanitarian History or Education.

Most important to the evaluation of such resources is the verification of the integrity of the library quarters. Since in general we are dealing with only a room or series of rooms within a larger structure, it is essential that the library area retain its historic integrity in terms of 1) location, 2) layout/design, and 3) function. A former library room later adapted for reuse as municipal offices offers little historic or associative potential for understanding the library system as it existed and cannot be considered eligible. Likewise, a city hall whose "library rooms" have been vacated and left empty because of a move to newer quarters cannot be considered significant solely for the commemorative fact that it once was the site of the library.

In the case where the inclusion of the library space was a specific, premeditated aspect of the original building design, more leeway can be given for the integrity of the interior spaces and layout where other factors such as exterior design can relate significant contextual information.

Regardless of physical integrity, the resource should be evaluated in the context of overall library development within the community. If the particular site housed the library collections for only a limited time, perhaps only while awaiting the completion of a free-standing facility, then its significance must be questioned, particularly if the free-standing facility is still extant and retains integrity.

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IV. Registration Requirements (continued)

If the site was one of only several similar locations occupied by the local library over the course of several years, it should be evaluated for historical and physical integrity against the entire body of other sites. In all cases primary and secondary documentation is a necessary requirement to substantiate any claims to historical significance.

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Section number   F   Page  15  Public Reading Rooms

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I. Name of Property Type: Public Reading Rooms  
(Free Libraries, Library Associations)

II. Description:

One of the basic property types integral to the understanding of public library development in the state is the public reading room. Unlike the fully organized public library facilities of the latter 19th and 20th centuries, the "reading rooms" were more like informal club rooms handed the responsibility for maintaining the distributing various sized collections of books and current periodicals. The collections themselves could range from privately-held but publically available collections to growing municipally owned collections. Housed in the broadest range of building types, Public Reading Rooms could be found in commercial storefronts, public hall (often above commercial sites), private residences, school facilities and private meeting halls or clubrooms made available to the public.

Physically, the property type is distinguished only by its interior appointments and specific spatial arrangements. Similar to small free-standing library facilities, the reading rooms consisted of reading tables and chairs dispersed among series of small bookcases or desks, and a librarian's station. In elaborate "rooms" the organization and layout could be quite formal, but generally informal settings were the norm and often quite preferred. Facilities commonly consisted of only one or two rooms with little or no space for large meetings or lecture except with the rearrangement of furniture. From the exterior "reading rooms" would be indistinguishable from other neighboring structures except perhaps for a prominent sign or posting on the building itself. The location of such facilities was quite often directly downtown within ready access of what was commonly a predominately male clientel. In instances where female groups were charged with the operation of the public reading rooms, site location might reflect a more residential nature away from the dirt and activity of the downtown area. Locations were almost always quite central to the bulk of the population however.

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(Free Libraries, Library Associations)

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II. Description (continued)

Historically, the well documented constant changing of reading room locations within a single community points out the fact that few permanent physical accouterments were common among the reading room facilities.

Mostly a 19th century phenomenon, in isolated locations especially in the far northern regions of the state, the establishment of public reading rooms in rented quarters or temporary locations was carried on well into the twentieth century. In addition, in communities with large numbers of "branch" library facilities, the informal public reading room was a common choice for a temporary facility designed to serve a localized clientele for a brief period until permanent accommodations could be made.

III. Significance:

Public Reading Rooms reflect one of the earliest stages in the growth and development of public library systems. As such, they are historically significant for the information they can provide concerning the foundations and very beginning of public library movements in communities across Wisconsin, as well as the data they can offer concerning the broader patterns of overall statewide development. Analysis of these historic resources can offer insight into the diverse trends which served as the starting point for many local programs (or their end points), whether they be local library associations, private clubs, local philanthropy, or early public sponsorship. This particular property type is uniquely important to the understanding of the development of a system which presently represents, in cities across the state, one of our most visible civic institutions.

The property type "Public Reading Rooms" should be evaluated for significance in the area of Social/Humanitarian History, representing in most instances the efforts of small communities struggling to attain a degree of civic stability and cultural sophistication during an era of burgeoning growth.

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Section number F Page 17 Public Reading Rooms  
(Free Libraries, Library Associations)

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IV. Registration Requirements:

The property type Public Reading Rooms is considered a historically significant resource and should be evaluated for NR eligibility under Criterion A for associations to events significant to the understanding of the broad patterns in our cultural history, specifically the development of local public library systems in Wisconsin. The specific area of significance associated with the sites should be Social/Humanitarian History or Education, reflecting the significant role of the individual properties as cultural and educational centers and the base for a much broader system.

Since we are dealing specifically with a limited space located within a structure not necessarily designed for public use it is extremely important that the "library" or "reading room" space maintain integrity of design and location. Interior features and any exterior features marking the space as a reading room facility (i.e. bookcases, open reading areas, sufficient natural lighting, space for staff work, signage...) should be extant to some degree. Sites known to have once housed reading rooms cannot be evaluated simply on their commemorative value if no historical features remain. In some instances, however, historic library association reading rooms have become the physical basis for present libraries such as the private collections of a religious or ethnic group or a small social organization. In such a case the retention of historical functional context might be apparent and provide at least the basis for further evaluation.

Normally only the first step taken towards the development of a larger library system, in some communities the public reading room was the only step recorded in a failed attempt to establish a public library program. The historical significance of such sites, if retention of some integrity is present may be stronger. In communities where public reading room locations were numerous, careful examination based on both physical integrity and relative historical importance is required. Primary and secondary source documentation reviewed in context with the overall patterns of local library development as well as other simultaneous efforts may reveal weaker or stronger candidates for potential nomination.

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G. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS (continued)

historical libraries in each community; correspondence initiated through an article published in CHANNEL DLS, the Division of Library Services periodical, asking further assistance; systematic searches of local historical literature, particularly county and city histories; inventory searches to locate sites mentioned in bibliographical sources and published library lists; site-specific research; review of currently completed Intensive Survey Reports sponsored by the State Historical Society; and review of the well researched Iowa library survey publication.

The period of significance was determined based on the decision to include the fullest possible range of sites associated with the extensive and highly complex public library movement in Wisconsin. The large span of years enabled the review and analysis of sites representing the earliest private library reading rooms and library association organizations as well as the full-scale public libraries of the early 20th century boom period in library construction, providing a complete picture of the significant development patterns within the historical context. The property types were chosen - based on survey information - to include both those facilities which served directly as library facilities in the most common sense and those of associative value which enable a more insightful analysis of the overall Wisconsin system.

The standards of integrity were based primarily upon the visual and historical analysis of known library sites, including those already on the NRHP. In addition, some evaluation criteria were based on a generalized concept (arrived at from experience with the overall statewide survey) of what could reasonably be expected to be uncovered in the field through subsequent intensive study.

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**G. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS**

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Discuss 1) the basis for determining the geographical and temporal limits of property type, and 2) the methods used to determine the requirements for listing related properties in the National Register.

This multiple property nomination is the result of an historical and architectural survey of Wisconsin public library buildings begun by the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Division in 1983-84. In coordination with the ongoing development of the state's RP3 documentation. The survey was conducted by two Preservation Division staff members, Diane H. Filipowicz and P. R. Lusignan. The project focused initially on identifying all library buildings erected prior to 1940 designed specifically to serve as "free" Public Libraries, or associated with the larger development of a statewide system of library services.

Information was gathered principally from the following sources: a letter and questionnaire was distributed (Dec. 1983-March 1984) to the nearly 400 libraries listed with the Division of Library Services of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction requesting information about and photos of pre-existing and extant  
  x   See continuation sheet

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**H. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

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See continuation sheet.

  X   See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation related to this property type:

<u>  X  </u> State historic preservation office	<u>      </u> Local government
<u>      </u> Other State agency	<u>      </u> University
<u>      </u> Federal agency	<u>      </u> Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**I. FORM PREPARED BY**

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