



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

992

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 Soldiers Memorial Library  
other names/site number Free Public Library

2. Location

street & number 85 Main Street N/A not for publication  
city or town Hiram N/A vicinity  
state Maine code ME county Oxford code 017 zip code 04041

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.)

Earle J. Anderson 8/29/08  
Signature of certifying official Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Earle J. Anderson 10-16-08  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Osborn W. Beall

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
1	1	objects
2	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

Maine Public Libraries

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

None

**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 19<sup>TH</sup> & EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> C. AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS / Bungalow

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls CONCRETE (Cast Concrete Block)

roof STONE / Slate

other BRICK (Chimney)

WOOD (Eaves)

**Narrative Description**

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

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

SOLDIERS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

OXFORD COUNTY, MAINE

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## DESCRIPTION

The Soldiers Memorial Library in East Hiram Maine was erected in 1914-1915 based on plans developed by the Boston architects Robert H. Wambolt and Amos A. Lawrence. The diminutive building is located on Main Street, between Hiram and East Hiram, nearby villages of this southern Oxford County town. The library faces northwest and is set on a level, grassy lot of less than a quarter acre. (For convenience, the building will be described as facing north throughout the remainder of this narrative.) Hancock Street runs along the west edge of the property, and immediately south of this road is the Hiram Village Cemetery. At the northwest corner of the property is a large deciduous tree which shades two war memorials. The smaller of the two memorials features a bronze plaque affixed to a boulder, and to the west of this is a much larger, tripartite polished black granite stone set on a rough cut white granite base. Behind the two memorials is a flagpole embedded in a concrete pad on the lawn. The smaller memorial was installed in the 1950s to commemorate the service of six local soldiers who served during World War I, World War II and the Korean War. The larger memorial, which was installed in 2007, is inscribed with the names of all the local residents who served in the United States military since the Spanish American War. This tablet replaces an earlier memorial of wood, which was erected in 1943 but decayed over the years. Although the new memorial continues a long established tradition it is considered to be non-contributing due to its recent age.

The library is a rectilinear structure measuring 24 by 36 feet, to which is attached a 6 by 22 foot wide entry centered on the northern facade. It has a steep compound-hip slate roof through which a single two-flue chimney emerges at the center of the ridge. Both the walls and foundation are constructed of ornamental concrete block. The concrete blocks used on this building each contain one smooth face and one rusticated face. The exterior walls of the library exhibit the rusticated face, whereas the foundation, which protrudes approximately three inches, is laid with the smooth face to the exterior. On the corners of the Library, and under the eaves the smooth block face was used to form decorative quoins and a decorative frieze. On all sides of the building, under the broadly overhanging roof are exposed, wooden, decorative rafter tails. Two three-light cellar windows are set into the foundation wall on the east and west side of the building, and one additional sash and a steel bulkhead basement door are located on the south elevation.

The front facade of the Library is two bays wide, both of which are located in the entry projection. The front door is recessed in a small alcove at the east edge of the facade. The heavy oak door contains three elongated bottom panels topped with three shorter glass windows. West of the recess are a trio of eight-over-eight double-hung wooden sash set in a shared frame. Each side wall of the center entry section contains a single window, and on the western face of the front wall of the main portion of the building is stone plaque reading "Soldiers Memorial Library 1915." Another trio of windows is centered on the west wall, while the rear wall of the building has a single eight-over-eight window in the east bay, and another trio of windows in the west bay. Three window bays are evenly distributed along the east wall. The northernmost two of these bays are filled with a fixed eight-light

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(top) sash only, while the southern example contains a full size eight-over-eight window.

In plan, the Soldiers Memorial Library is divided into two primary rooms and several secondary spaces. The front door opens onto a small hall, which in turn accesses the book room in the southeast corner of the building, the reading room, which occupies slightly more than the western half of the building, and a staircase to the basement in the northeast corner. A massive cobblestone fireplace is located at the center of the partition wall between the book room and the reading room and is flanked on either side by doorways which once were filled with heavy, horizontal six-panel doors, which are now stored in the basement. The librarians desk is located in a nook west of the entry hall, in front of the three windows on the facade. A two-run staircase leads to the basement, which is split between unfinished utility spaces and another "L" shaped stack room which was updated in the 1980s. A massive, two-leaf bead board batten door in this room leads to the bulkhead.

The hall, front nook and reading room all feature a high coved ceiling. In order to accommodate the principal northern structural plate, which runs between the main building and central projection, the hall actually has two coved ceiling sections, one immediately inside the front door and a larger section over the remainder of the hall. The ceiling in the reading room curves to a rectangular flat panel defined by compound plaster mouldings with prominent reeding. In contrast, the ceiling of the book room is flat and lower in elevation. The walls of this room are lined with shelves and display cases, and two unmatched free-standing shelving units are positioned on the floor. Lower shelves encircle the walls of the reading room and the nook and are positioned below window sill level. A moulded wood cornice positioned at the top of the windows (and at the base of the cove) also skirts the room's walls. In the 'gap' between the reading room and the nook this feature becomes a fully cased beam, which continues through the partition wall into the entry hall. Wooden, reeded pilasters visually support this beam at the intersections of the nook and the reading room walls.

Throughout the main level of the library the floors are oak and the walls and ceilings are of plaster. Original, multi-armed brass electric lights descend from the center of each of the ceilings. The focal point of the building is the fireplace located on the west side of the partition wall between the reading and book rooms. Below a moulded wood mantle, the fireplace surround and hearth are composed of rounded cobblestones set in concrete mortar. The back and sides of the firebox are laid in brick. Above the mantle the protruding chimney stack is plastered. Affixed to the front of the stack is an approximately four by four foot bronze plaque listing the names of all the town's residents (but one) that had served as soldiers from the American Revolutionary War through the Spanish American War. This plaque is original to the building and according to a newspaper account cost \$500.00 when it was installed in 1915.

Although the library is furnished with several oak desks and Windsor chairs, there is no indication that a permanent, fixed librarian's desk or circulation desk was ever designed, envisioned, for

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installed in the building. A set of architectural plans and construction drawings (full-size profile layouts) are on file at the Soldiers Memorial Library. Close study of these documents reveals that the library was not constructed as fully specified by the architects.<sup>1</sup> Alternately, the plans on file may reflect an earlier draft of the building, but albeit are the only surviving documents. As depicted, the building was to have a higher foundation level, capable of containing not eight light foundation sash but eight-over-eight double hung windows. The design provided for a "future magazine and reading room" in the west half of the (well-lit) basement, and the heating plant and coal chute in the southeast corner (now the downstairs stack room). The lower level reading room was to feature another fireplace. (Three flues were detailed for the chimney but only two were built.) The fenestration on the east exterior walls also differs from the architect's design; originally an eight-over-eight window was to be positioned in the northernmost bay (over the stairs to the cellar), but this opening changed places with the southernmost window bay in the wall, allowing more light into the book room. The greatest level of deviation from the architects' plans are relative to the reading room fireplace. Wambolt and Lawrence envisioned a brick firebox with green marble cheeks and a classical enframing consisting of pilasters, entablature with composition molding, Georgian style over-mantle panel and an wide, moulded banner above the rooms' cornice which was to contain a dedication plaque or memorial. To either side of the fireplace were to be glass paneled French doors. Interestingly, the 'Plans and Elevations of Shelving,' for the shelves in the stack room were drawn by the Library Bureau, Boston, rather than by Wambolt or Lawrence.

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<sup>1</sup> The first floor plan for the building bears the name of Richard H. Wambolt, but the remaining elevations, cross sections, details and basement plan were drawn by Wambolt and Amos A. Lawrence.

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1915-1958

**Significant Dates**

1915

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation****Architect/Builder**

Lawrence, Amos A. and

Wambolt, Robert H., architects

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Soldiers Memorial Library is a one story, eclectic style building designed by the Boston architects Robert H. Wambolt and Amos A. Lawrence in 1914. Located in the Southern Oxford County town of Hiram, it was built with funds donated largely by Virginia Barker Jordan as well as local residents. The building is owned by the Town of Hiram and administered by a Board of Trustees. Within the realm of libraries in the state, the Soldiers Memorial Library is notable as one of only two constructed of ornamental concrete block. Within the town, the bungalow-type building is a landmark among the vernacular wood frame homes and commercial structures that line the streets. The Solider's Memorial Library is eligible for nomination to the National Register at the local level of significance under Criteria A and C as more fully explained in the Multiple Property Documentation Form titled "Maine Public Libraries." By virtue of the building's dedication as a memorial to the town's service men and women, Criterion Consideration F also applies.

The relatively small town of Hiram is located in the foothills of Maine's western mountains, between Sebago Lake and the New Hampshire state line. Settled by 1780, the town was incorporated in 1814, and its population farmed the intervals and developed small water powers along the Ossipee and Saco Rivers. The population of the three villages that comprise the town peaked in 1880 at 1452, a figure that decreased by more than a third thirty years later (and had only rebounded to 1423 people in the year 2000). The two principal villages, Hiram and East Hiram, are located only a mile apart along the banks of the Saco River.

Although the town had multiple stores, churches and two fraternal organizations during the nineteenth century, there was no organized library. In 1901 Hiram resident Cassandra Clemons Twitchell led the movement to establish a town library. Three trustees were appointed to oversee the administration of the library, and \$150 was appropriated by the town to procure books and print a catalogue. An additional \$75.00 worth of books were provided by the State. According to the first annual report of the library board, printed in the 1901-02 Annual Report of the Town, "a place for the books has been secured at the residence of Geo. W Clifford, and the library is now under the efficient charge of the librarian Mrs. Fanny M. Clifford." The report also thanked the residents of the town for their support, but urged them to think about erecting a library building. "We would also ask the people to give their support and aid in the erection of a suitable building for our town library. A fund of nearly three hundred dollars has already been raised for such a building, and work on the same will doubtless begin the coming spring." Accordingly, as recorded by local historian Raymond C. Cotton, "On April 27, 1901, it was voted to give the Trustees of the Public Library permission to build a suitable building on the schoolhouse lot of District No. 2 near the line of of Winfield Flye's land." (Cotton, p. 20). For some reason this arrangement fell through and work on the building did not commence. Again, in 1905, the Trustees "urge[d] the citizens to an earnest consideration of erecting a suitable building for our library, which to our minds is the most pressing need at present." (Town Report, 1904-05.) Although the collections grew during the library's first decade it was difficult for the Trustees to secure consistent lodgings for the collection, and it moved at least twice more. In the 1913 town report, the Trustees noted that after the resignation of the most recent

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librarian, Mrs. I. S. Lowell, they "found it impracticable to secure other quarters for the library and therefore the books were packed and removed to the townhouse." Later they designated another town resident as librarian and moved the books to her residence in East Hiram. In the same report the Trustees issued a plea for a dedicated library building.

While many are interested in the movement for a Library Building, we regret that many of our townspeople do not realize the value of a town library and the necessity of a suitable building. Eventually the town must own a library building, and until the town takes some concerted action in the matter it will be uphill work for the trustees and others interested to secure the needed funds for the erection of a building that will meet the wants and be a credit to the town. The trustees have a nucleus toward a building, one hundred and ninety-one dollars, (191) which is deposited with the Fidelity Trust Co. (Town of Hiram Annual Report, 1913-1914).

The previous year the Town had appropriated fifty dollars towards a building fund, but in 1914 the residents voted to set aside five hundred dollars for the building (in addition to the annual one hundred dollars appropriated for operating expenses). Donations were solicited and in that year \$5,250 was pledged. The largest donation of \$3000 (and many books) came from Virginia Barker Jordan, a Hiram native who resided in Portland. Jordan was the widow of James C. Jordan, the treasurer and general agent for the Star Match Company in Portland, Maine. Founded in 1866 the Company was the second largest producer of matches in New England, and the 1870 factory on Commercial Street was the first "fire-proof" factory with brick walls, a tin roof and concrete floor. Shortly after Jordan died in 1907 the Diamond Match Company Co. of New York bought out Star Match, presumably leaving Jordan's widow with a significant fortune.

The trustees of the Soldiers Memorial Library do not have any documents that record why or how Robert H. Wambolt was chosen as the architect. Wambolt had previously been in practice with the Boston firm of Bigelow and Wadsworth, and gained distinction as the principal architect of the Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts estate *Lilliothea* (circa 1905). Designed for George R. White, this was an elaborate, rambling French Chateausque mansion set on grounds sculpted by the Olmsted Brothers firm. By 1913, when Wambolt designed a Colonial Revival Style, upscale, eight-family apartment Building in Watertown, Massachusetts he had established his own practice in Boston. Periodically over the next ten years he partnered with the architect Amos A. Lawrence, establishing a formal practice with him between 1919 and 1922.<sup>2</sup> Later, in the 1920s Wambolt designed several parish halls and churches in Framingham, Worcester, and Watertown, but there are no other buildings attributed to him in Maine.

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<sup>2</sup> According to the COPAR catalogue, Wambolt practiced on his own from 1915-1917, and again from 1923-1932, and Amos A. Lawrence joined with Wambolt only during the years 1919-1922. However, two of the nine plans for the Hiram Library are labeled "Amos A. Lawrence and Robert H. Wambolt". Interestingly, while both of these plans show interior details (fireplace design and pilaster placement), they must date no later than 1915, as the interior of the building was complete when it was dedicated in that year.



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Although none of the plans for the Soldiers Memorial Library are dated, according to newspaper accounts, Wambolt started designing what he labeled the "Public Library Building Hiram Maine" in February 1913. Construction of the building began on August 12, 1914 and was dedicated the next summer. The following excerpt from *The Ossipee Valley Weekly* described the event.

Hiram is justly proud of its new public library, recently completed, and dedicated August 21 with fitting ceremonies (sic). It is called the Soldiers' Memorial Library and contains a tablet costing \$500 on which are inscribed the...names of all the soldiers from Hiram who enlisted in the Revolution, Aroostook, War of 1812, Mexican, Civil and Spanish Wars.

The building itself is a thing of beauty, calling forth words of praise from any beholder. The foundations and basement is concrete (sic), while the walls consist of concrete (sic) blocks in excellent imitation of stone. The roof is of Monson slate, all of which makes the building not only beautiful to look at but practically fireproof as well. From the street a broad concrete (sic) walk leads up to the concrete (sic) steps.

Inside, it is finished with hardwood floors, lighted by electricity and heated by a hot air furnace, while for the chilly days of late autumn and early spring when a furnace fire is not needed, a large, attractive fireplace of cemented rocks has been provided and adds its cheery and cozy touch to the light and airy rooms.

Sitting well back from the street, the building occupies a lot 67 x 116 feet, with fine lawns which gives a pleasing sense of spaciousness to the eye, while a 40-foot steel flagpole, costing \$47.50 adds its touch to the scene.

The Library, plans for which were started in February, 1913, was made possible through the generous gift of \$3,000, exclusive of many valuable books, by Mrs. Virginia Jordon (sic) of Portland, widow of the late James C. Jordan, and a former Hiram woman. The total cost to date has been \$5250 and it is probable that it could not be duplicated for less than \$8000, as most of the work has been done by local men who have cut down the expense as much as possible. (*Ossipee Valley Weekly*, September 2, 1915).

Written on the back of Wambolt's bound plans is the name 'O.S. Spring, Hiram'. Ormond Seavy Spring (1852 – 1940) was a carpenter who worked in his native town of Hiram for at least six decades. Identified in The Town Register as a carpenter in 1907, it is likely that he was the primary builder of the library, and may have been responsible for the alterations to the architect's plans for the fireplace, doors and basement. Wambolt and Lawrence provided full-size detail drawings on brown paper for the building's entrance, and for the cove ceiling and all the interior mouldings. Some of these drawings, which have been cut into sections (portions of which are missing), are marked by lines of pin-holes along the profiles, indicating that they were used by the carpenters as patterns to form plaster or plane knives.

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Clemons, Hubert W. A Bicentennial History of Hiram, Maine 1776-1976. (Hiram, Maine: Hiram Bicentennial Committee), 1976.

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"Hiram Rightly Proud of Its New Library," in *The Ossipee Valley Weekly*. September 2, 1915.  
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Howe, Samuel. American Country Houses of To-Day. (New York: The Architectural Book Publishing Company), 1915. [Article on Wambolt commission in Manchester, Massachusetts.]

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .17 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	19	355574	4860100
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	19		

3	19		
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	19		

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 CHRISTI A. MITCHELL, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

organization MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION date 18 April 2008

street & number 55 CAPITOL STREET, STATION 65 telephone (207) 287-2132

city or town AUGUSTA state ME zip code 04333-0065

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 \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundaries of the nominated property are depicted on the Town of Hiram tax assessors map U11, lot 23.

## **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The above described boundaries represent the entire parcel historically associated with the Soldiers Memorial Library in Hiram.

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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

ME\_OxfordCounty\_SoldiersMemorial Library\_001.tif

Photograph 1 of 6

Christi A. Mitchell

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

27 March 2008

North facade; facing south.

ME\_OxfordCounty\_SoldiersMemorial Library\_002.tif

Photograph 2 of 6

Christi A. Mitchell

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

27 March 2008

South and west elevations; facing northeast.

ME\_OxfordCounty\_SoldiersMemorial Library\_003.tif

Photograph 3 of 6

Christi A. Mitchell

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

27 March 2008

Exterior detail, northwest corner; facing southeast.

ME\_OxfordCounty\_SoldiersMemorial Library\_004.tif

Photograph 4 of 6

Christi A. Mitchell

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

27 March 2008

Entry way looking towards book room; facing south.

ME\_OxfordCounty\_SoldiersMemorial Library\_005.tif

Photograph 5 of 6

Christi A. Mitchell

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

27 March 2008

Fireplace and plaque in reading room; facing east.

ME\_OxfordCounty\_SoldiersMemorial Library\_006.tif

Photograph 6 of 6

Christi A. Mitchell

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

27 March 2008

Reading room; facing southwest.