# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

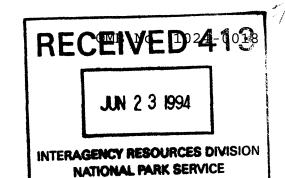
	Page		
	SUPPLEMENT	ARY LISTING RECO	RD
NRIS Reference Nu	mber: <u>94000768</u>	Date List	ed: <u>07/27/94</u>
Aldrich Free Publ Property Name	ic Library	Windham County	<u>CT</u> State
<u>N/A</u> Multiple Name			
		withstanding the nation documentation  Date of	
Signature of the			
Signature of the	======================================		
Amended Items in		riod of Significanc	 
Amended Items in  8. Statement of  The clarified beg	Significance: Per		- l of significance for th

Nominating Authority (without attachment)

NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property
historic name:ALDRICH FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
miscorre name
other name/site number:N/A
2. Location
street & number: 299 Main Street
not for publication: N/A
city/town: Plainfield vicinity: N/A
state: CT county: Windham code: 015 zip code: 06354
=======================================
3. Classification
Ownership of Property: <u>private</u>
ownership of froperty. <u>private</u>
Category of Property: <u>building</u>
Number of Resources within Property:
Contributing Noncontributing
Concribating Noncontributing
1 buildings
sites
structures objects
1 0 Total
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National
Register: 0
Name of related multiple property listing:N/A

4. State/H	Gederal Agency Certification	on		
As the desof 1966, a request for standards Historic Forth does	signated authority under that as amended, I hereby certified for registering properties places and meets the process in 36 CFR Part 60. In my not meet the National Region of Certifying official mahan, Director, Connecticut History	he Nation fy that to ility meets in the dural and opinion, ister Cri	hal Historic Preserchis X nomination nomination with the documentation of the professional requirements X the property X teria. See concepts 106/20/94	rvation Act on on of direments meets ont. sheet.
State or E	Federal agency and bureau			
In my opir Register o	nion, the property mee criteria See continua	ets ation she	does not meet the	National
Signature	of commenting or other of	ficial	Date	
enter deter Nati deter Nati remov	certify that this property sed in the National Register See continuation sheet. onal Register See continuation sheet. onal Register See continuation sheet. onal Register sed from the National Register sed from the National Register (explain):	er /	bell Sa	vge 7
	:======================================		gnature of Keeper	Date of Action
======== 6. Functio	on or Use			
======= Historic:	EDUCATION			
Current:	EDUCATION	 Sub:	library	

======= 7. Descrip	tion	=======================================	=======	======	=======	:====
	======== ral Classifi	cation:	=======	======	========	:====
Oueen An	ne	<del></del>				
		<del></del>				
Other Desc	ription: <u>N/</u>	'A				
Materials:	foundation walls	STONE WOOD		STONE: BRICK		
Describe p	resent and h	nistoric physical	appearance	e. <u>X</u>	_ See contir	nuation
	======= nt of Signif		======	======		:====
Certifying	official ha	s considered the erties: <u>state</u>	significa	nce of t		
Applicable	National Re	gister Criteria:	A,C			
Criteria C	onsideration	s (Exceptions) :				
Areas of S	ignificance:	ARCHITECTURE SOCIAL HISTORY EDUCATION				
Period(s)	of Significa	nce: <u>c.1890-c.19</u>	30			
Significan	t Dates: _	1895				
Significan	t Person(s):	N/A		_ _		
Cultural A	ffiliation:	N/A				
Architect/		lcox, Charles F., ouse ,Willis buil				
State sign	ificance of	property, and jus	tify crite	eria, cr	iteria	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Description Aldrich Free Public Library Plainfield, Windham County, CT

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The Aldrich Free Public Library (Photographs 1 and 2) is a 1 1/2-story clapboarded and shingled building built in 1895 in the Queen Anne style. The building rests on a foundation of large rusticated granite blocks, with a high brick basement story fully exposed on the east elevation and partially exposed on the other elevations. Two asymmetrically placed brick chimneys, with flared tops, rise high above the slate roof. The library occupies a corner lot in a mostly residential neighborhood on the outskirts of the village of Moosup, part of the town of Plainfield, Connecticut; the area is also known as Almyville, from the days when nearby woolen mills were active. Two similarly detailed, related buildings occupy other corners at this intersection: Milner Hall across High Street and a former residence of a mill manager farther east at the intersection of Main and Lake streets.

The library is a small building (approximately 33 by 40 feet overall) with an irregular plan. The basic block is a gable-roofed portion with the end facing south toward Main Street (Connecticut Route 14); the southwest corner is cut away below the attic story, which is supported on large sunburst-carved brackets (Photograph 3). A gable-roofed ell extends eastward toward High Street, with a large semi-circular bay window occupying most of its east elevation. Filling the angle between these two portions is a short rounded turret-roofed "tower" rising no higher than the peak of the main roof (except for its copper finial); it is nearly as large in plan as the main block of the building and extends outward from the plane of the facade. The building's asymmetrical plan results in an intricate roofline that is further complicated by a large gabled dormer centered on the west-facing slope.

The library's principal entrance is on the south elevation, reached by a set of six granite steps with rounded cheek blocks. The entry, which has its original oak panel-and-glass door, is sheltered by a porch with a shallow-pitched gable roof. The supporting posts are modern, a replacement for the original, which were clustered columns set on high pedestals, similar to the single engaged columns still in place at the back wall of the porch.

Windows are of several different configurations and most retain their original wooden sash, though aluminum storm windows partly obscure them. A large Palladian window is found in each of the shingled gables, with an even larger round-arched window on the first story to the right of the main entry. On the west and north (rear) elevations,

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Description Aldrich Free Public Library Plainfield, Windham County, CT

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there are bands of small nearly square windows high on the wall; these have hopper sash with small border panes. The walls of the tower and bay window are predominantly glazed; the openings on the basement story of the tower have rounded upper corners and are separated by slender engaged Corinthian columns. Other architectural features of note include window cornices and molded frames, keyblocks on the arched window openings, dentils along the projecting cornice above the basement story, paneled corner pilasters with Composite capitals, a leafy scroll carving in the frieze at the corners (Photograph 4), and brackets suggestive of exposed beam ends below the wide overhang to the attic story (similar brackets appear below the entry porch's roof). The words "PUBLIC LIBRARY" in raised letters are centered in the frieze below the south-facing gable, above the main entrance.

The interior of the library is largely original. There is a small vestibule just inside the entrance, beyond which are three large rooms. The walls are either lined with oak bookshelves or have an oak wainscot of one of two patterns, either narrow beaded boards or small raised panels. Also of oak and situated just to the right of the doorway as one enters is a counter and desk for the librarian, behind which is a small alcove lighted by the large arched window. In the east ell is a brick fireplace set into a paneled wall (Photograph 5). Rooms in the basement and attic were much more simply finished and today have walls of plywood paneling.

Although the library retains much of its original exterior ornamentation, a few details have been lost (Photograph 6). In addition to the replaced porch columns, exterior alterations include removal of applied festoons in the frieze of the tower and a balustrade with urns above the basement story of the bay window, the filling in of most of the basement windows with novelty siding, and the addition of a small enclosed porch for the basement entrance on High Street.

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

Aldrich Free Public Library Plainfield, Windham County, CT

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#### Summary

The Aldrich Free Public Library is significant as a product of the philanthropy which created civic and educational institutions throughout Connecticut in the period 1890-1930 (Criterion A) and as an example of the Queen Anne style of architecture (Criterion C). Built with gifts from two of the town's leading industrialists, David L. Aldrich and Edwin Milner, as well as smaller donations from dozens of other community residents and organizations, the building has housed a public library for almost 100 years, serving the village of Moosup and the surrounding area within the town of Plainfield. Like other small-town libraries built before 1900, the Aldrich Library employs a Victorian style of architecture, embodying many of the defining characteristics of the Queen Anne style: asymmetrical massing, extensive use of decorative woodwork, variegated exterior siding materials, and an eclectic combination of medieval, Classical, and Colonial-inspired details.

#### <u>Historical Significance</u>

Most of the small-town libraries built in Connecticut in the years 1890-1930 were financed largely through gifts from wealthy individuals, either residents who were the leading merchants or manufacturers in town or men who had made their fortunes elsewhere and chose to endow the locales of their childhood with such amenities as town halls, parks, and especially, public libraries. Such was the case with the Aldrich Free Public Library. When David L. Aldrich died in 1889, he bequeathed \$3,000 to build a public library, to be matched by contributions from others. Aldrich's partner in the firm that operated a large woolen mill in Moosup, Edwin Milner, immediately pledged The remainder was raised from a variety of donations and special events, with the Young Women's Christian Temperance Union being particularly active in raising money. Some of the events included a "Milkmaid's Convention," a "Gypsy Encampment," and a schoolchildren's carnival. A subscription list procured many donations, including numerous \$1 and \$2 gifts from ordinary residents. In 1893 the Aldrich Free Public Library Association was organized, and by 1895 enough money had been raised to fulfill Aldrich's request and complete the building, the cost of which came to \$6,156. Milner paid the final costs of construction so that the citizens' money, totaling \$1,100, could be used for books and furnishings, and he later deeded title to the land on which the building stood to the Association. The publisher of the

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

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local newspaper proclaimed the building "undoubtedly the finest structure in town, and one in which Moosup may well take a deal of pride."

The library opened on Washington's Birthday in February 1896. The Young Women's Christian Temperance Union donated its own library of 156 books to start the collection, as did several well-to-do Plainfield families. Plainfield at this time was a collection of mill villages, separated by areas of scattered farms, with the Moosup-Almyville-Glen Falls village the largest one. The library soon had several hundred titles and had subscribed to numerous periodicals. Although moralistic and self-improvement materials were especially well-represented, the library also made available a variety of general-interest, travel, and practical information for the residents of Moosup and vicinity, many of whom were millworkers of immigrant heritage.<sup>1</sup>

The library has continued as one of the village's major community institutions to the present day. In addition to lending books, the library at one time accommodated public-school classes and, from the beginning, it has made meeting space available to social organizations such as the Boy and Girl Scouts.

#### Architectural Significance

The Aldrich Free Public Library is an excellent, well-preserved example of the Queen Anne style of architecture. Thought by its proponents to resemble the architecture of English buildings during the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714), it was in reality the quintessential Victorian style, incorporating details eclectically drawn from various historic precedents, making use of extensive architectural woodwork (then becoming ever less expensive as steam-powered mills produced building materials on an industrial scale), and favoring asymmetry, complexity, and the picturesque. The Aldrich Library embodies all of these distinctive characteristics. The eclecticism of the style is epitomized in the combination of medieval details, such as the overhanging attic-story, with Classically inspired columns, dentils, and pilasters. The Palladian windows, reflective of the American Colonial Revival movement, serve to further the eclectic effect. period's taste for extensive ornamentation is evident in the use of two exterior siding materials and the plethora of decorative architectural woodwork such as engaged columns, cornice enrichment, and window moldings. Finally, the style's proclivity for the asymmetrical and

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

Aldrich Free Public Library Plainfield, Windham County, CT 8-3

complex is evident in both the plan and the intricate roofline. The complexity is also furthered by the variety and asymmetrical placement of windows and, on the interior, by the differing room sizes and the alcove.

The architect of the library was Charles F. Wilcox (c.1844-1905) of Providence (both Aldrich and Milner were Rhode Islanders, as were most of eastern Connecticut's textile-mill owners in that period). Wilcox is best known today for two buildings designed early in his career, the Italianate-style Congden Street Baptist Church (1874) and the Gothic Revival-style Third Baptist Church (1876), both in Providence. The builder of the Aldrich Library was Willis Rouse, a local Moosup carpenter.

#### NOTE

1. Two of Plainfield's other villages also have public libraries, though neither is housed in a building built for that purpose. Although the Aldrich Library was situated close to the two woolen mills owned by Milner (and Milner's own residence), it was open free to all residents. In the 1890s, the population of Plainfield was increasingly made up of French-speaking immigrants from Canada, though the millworkers, particularly in woolen mills such as Milner's, also included people of English and American ancestry.

9. Major Bibliographical References
X See continuation sheet.
Previous documentation on file (NPS):
<pre>_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been     requested previously listed in the National Register</pre>
_ previously determined eligible by the National Register _ designated a National Historic Landmark _ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
Primary Location of Additional Data:
<pre>X State historic preservation office    Other state agency</pre>
10. Geographical Data  ==================================
A 19 260800 4622350 B C D
<u>X</u> See continuation sheet.
Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.  The nominated property includes the parcel at 299 Main Street, recorded in the Plainfield Land Records, Vol. 27, p. 437.
Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet. The boundary includes the entire library parcel as given by Edwin Milner in 1896.
======================================
Name/Title: <u>Bruce Clouette and Maura Cronin, reviewed by John Herzan,</u> Conn. Hist. Commission Organization: <u>Historic Resource Consultants</u> Date: <u>January 3, 1994</u>
Street & Number: 55 Van Dyke Avenue Telephone: 203-547-0268
City or Town: <u>Hartford</u> State: <u>CT</u> Zip: <u>06106</u>

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Bibliography Aldrich Free Public Library 9-1 Plainfield, Windham County, CT

- Aldrich Free Public Library Association. Record Book, 1893 . Manuscript, Aldrich Free Public Library.
- <u>Commemorative Biographical Record of Tolland and Windham Counties,</u>
  <u>Connecticut</u>. Chicago: J. H. Beers & Company, 1903.
- Burgess, Charles F. Plainfield Souvenir. Moosup: C. F. Burgess, 1895.
- Maggia, Louisa. <u>The Aldrich Free Public Library: A Brief History</u>. Moosup: Aldrich Free Public Library, 1976.
- Obituary of Charles F. Wilcox. Providence Journal, July 14, 1905.
- Woodward, Wm. McKenzie, and Edward F. Sanderson. <u>Providence: A</u>
  <u>Citywide Survey of Historic Resources</u>. Providence: Rhode Island
  Historical Preservation Commission, 1986.

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Photographs Aldrich Free Public Library Plainfield, Windham County, CT

Photos-1

#### All Photographs:

- 1. Aldrich Free Public Library
- 2. Plainfield, Windham County, CT
- 3. Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
- 4. December, 1993
- 5. Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission Hartford, CT

#### Captions:

South elevation, camera facing northeast Photograph 1 of 6

East elevation, camera facing west Photograph 2 of 6

Detail of bracket beneath overhang, southwest corner, camera facing northeast
Photograph 3 of 6

Detail of pilaster and frieze ornament, northeast rear corner, camera facing southwest Photograph 4 of 6

Interior, east room, fireplace (portrait of David Aldrich over mantel), camera facing northwest
Photograph 5 of 6

Copy of view of library from  $\underline{\text{Plainfield Souvenir}}$  (1895), camera facing northwest Photograph 6 of 6