

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any 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 Paul Pratt Memorial Library

other names/site number Pratt Historic Building (preferred), Cohasset Free Public Library

2. Location

street & number 106 South Main Street  not for publication

city or town Cohasset  vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Norfolk code 021 zip code 02025

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Brona Simon

7/26/06

Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Date

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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Patrick Andrus

Date of Action

9/7/2006

Pratt Historic Building  
Name of Property

Norfolk, MA  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

(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	1	buildings
0	0	sites
2	1	structures
1	3	objects
4	5	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: Library

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

DOMESTIC: Multiple dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:

Colonial Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls BRICK

STONE

roof SLATE

other CONCRETE

WOOD

**Narrative Description**

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

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Cohasset (Norfolk), MA**Section number 7 Page 1Summary Paragraph

The Paul Pratt Historic Building, formerly known as the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, is a single-story brick building in the Colonial Revival style designed by local architect Edward Nichols and built in 1902, fronts on South Main Street in Cohasset, Massachusetts. The building is located on a slight rise south of the Cohasset village center, while to the rear the lot slopes away steeply to Jacob's Meadow below. The original building is a modified Greek cross plan, the prominent hipped-roofed rectangular mass of the building crossed by a secondary axis of a monumental pedimented front portico and rear bookstack. The granite front foundation connects to a granite retaining wall that continues the line of the front wall of the building and supports the front walks and driveway, while the majority of the basement level of the building is brick, at a lower grade below. A rectangular flat-roofed two-story 1963-64 addition, of similarly buff-colored brick, fits into the corner between the northern and eastern arms of the building and partially wraps the rear bookstack. The building has prominent round-arched and keystoned recessed windows on the ground floor, with simpler rectangular windows on the basement level (paired and banded together in the addition). The crossing of the building is surmounted by a squat square wooden tower that holds a tall octagonal wooden lantern with a copper roof, surrounded by a wooden balustrade with corner posts topped by urns. The lantern lights the rotunda below, the central circulation point of the building's interior, which contains four large murals depicting Cohasset's history, completed in 1946 by Boston painter MacIvor Reddie. Although the building has been reconfigured several times since the period of significance, the basic floor plan of the ground floor remains unchanged: a large reading room to the north, vestibule to the west, small reading room and alcove to the east, and librarian's room, delivery room, and bookstack to the southeast and south. Rich interior woodwork, elaborate molded plaster cornices and ceilings, and a fireplace remain intact on this level of the building. The building also retains important elements of library building technology, including a separate 4-story fireproofed bookstack with Luxfer prism glass window transoms. Besides storage, the basement level contains two private apartments with separate access from the rear by a side walkway, installed in 2004 by its current owner, the Cohasset Historical Society. The building is generally in good condition, little altered since its period of significance, and has historic integrity in terms of setting, design, materials, location, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Location and Setting

The Pratt Historic Building is located atop a rise and faces west-southwest, fronting on an upland stretch of South Main Street in the South Shore Massachusetts town of Cohasset. The rectangular upland western section of the property, which according to the Assessor's map contains 24,630 square feet, slopes at the rear steeply toward the east. The eastern lowland section, 23,400 square feet, is within a coastal wetland named Jacob's Meadow, almost at sea level. The lowland section is triangular, its shape established in an 1893 survey by two drainage ditches which converged at a tributary of the James Brook. At each end of the original building, and in line with the front wall, a retaining wall of Quincy granite extends parallel to the front foundation and marks a clear division between the higher, landscaped street level front yard and the much lower level of the meadow bank beside and behind the building. The front line of the property also slopes downward moderately toward the south, from 22 to 15 feet above sea level, as South Main Street descends along a stretch that originated as an artificial causeway across the southern part of the meadow in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. James Brook, a small but

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significant stream, bisects Jacob's Meadow and travels eastward to empty, by way of a tidal gate, into Cohasset Cove and Cohasset Harbor beyond. Once much larger, Jacob's Meadow is now primarily the interior area of a block surrounded by (clockwise from the north end), Brook Street, Elm Street, Border Street, Summer Street, and South Main Street. Many of the properties fronting on the surrounding streets contained rear extensions into the meadow, which today is an even stand of tall marsh grass and reeds in standing water. With the exception of the town's wastewater treatment plant (accessible by a long lane from Elm Street), built within the marsh and visible from the rear of library, the interior of the marsh remains an historic open space.

While the property's eastern boundary is within Jacob's Meadow, land use surrounding the property to the north, south, and west is generally residential. The building is set back about 75 feet from South Main Street. The unrelated dwellings on each side are set back equally as far from the street, while those elsewhere along the street are much closer to the curb. The immediately adjacent residential neighborhood on South Main Street is primarily 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century dwellings, with only two 20<sup>th</sup> century houses: a "foursquare" from the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a post-World War II ranch style now modified to have a second story. Adjacent and nearby dwellings face South Main Street and have small landscaped front yards. Historic architectural styles of nearby dwellings include Greek Revival, Cape Cod Cottage, small 19<sup>th</sup> century 1½ story front gable side-hall houses, and a Tudor Revival style parish rectory for St. Anthony's Roman Catholic Church. The meadow is named Jacob's Meadow for Capt. John Jacob, prominent public figure in early Cohasset and an early grantee of the meadow. His house (98 South Main Street, MHC#21), ca. 1710 but considerably altered, is adjacent to the building on the north side. A short block behind the houses facing the Pratt Historic Building on South Main Street runs the right of way of the former Duxbury and Cohasset Railroad, long abandoned but now in the process of being redeveloped by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) as the Greenbush Commuter Rail line.

**Exterior: 1902-03 Building**

The Paul Pratt Memorial Library building is a modified Greek cross plan, the prominent hipped-roofed rectangular mass of the building running parallel to South Main Street. It faces west-southwest (from here on in this text, this direction will be simplified to west, and all others changed accordingly). This dominant axis is crossed by a secondary axis of a monumental pedimented front portico and flat-roofed rear bookstack. The polished granite front foundation connects to a rough-hewn granite retaining wall that continues the line of the front wall of the building and supports the front walks and driveway. The rest of the basement level walls of the building are brick, at lower grade below. A rectangular flat-roofed two-story 1963-64 addition, of similarly buff-colored brick and slightly lower profile, fits into the corner between the northern and eastern arms of the building and partially wraps the rear bookstack. Overall, the building is a single tall story at the front elevation and generally two at the rear and sides, with a partial attic. An internal stack space, however, is four stories in height, and the section of the addition attached to it is three stories. The basement or lower story is not visible from the street; it now holds two moderate-income single bedroom apartments constructed by its current owner, the Cohasset Historical Society, as well as storage for the society.

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The foundation and front basement wall are granite, while the rest of the basement walls, and the walls above, are buff brick with Indiana limestone trim. The polished molded watertable line of the front façade continues around the rest of building as a foot-wide beltcourse between the basement level brick wall and the brick wall above. The upper-story brick wall is slightly inset from the line of the basement brick wall, with the profile changing at the watertable/beltcourse. The addition has a plain concrete foundation and continues the wide beltcourse between floors with a matching flat concrete band on its western and northern façades. The bricks in the original building are set in a uniform alternating stretcher bond, while those in the addition, of a similar buff color but more highly glazed, are set in a stretcher bond with every sixth row alternating headers and stretchers. Quoins of alternating deep red brick define the two southeastern corners of the building, rising to just below the watertable/beltcourse on the southern wing, and just above it on the eastern wing. Below the roof eaves on all four sides of the original building, and lining the front-facing gable of the portico, is a cornice supported by prominent dentils, a wide unfigured frieze, and a simple architrave; this cornice also holds a copper eave trough. The addition also has a cornice and architrave, but the cornice is shallower and the architrave narrower.

The principal roof is hipped and sheathed with slate, a ca. 1960 replacement for the original copper roof. Barely visible from the front, a low rectangular brick chimney (with a limestone cap) pierces the roof on the eastern side of the southern wing, its long side aligned with and parallel to the wall, further anchored to the roof with a tent metal cricket. A matching chimney, symmetrically placed in the north wing, was removed in the 1963-64 addition. Both the bookstack and the addition have flat roofs, each covered with a rubber membrane. A square metal roof hatch in the eastern side of the northern wing (not far from the chimney) allows roof access from the attic. A squat square wooden tower, holding a tall octagonal wooden lantern cupola with an octagonal copper domed roof, surmounts the crossing of the building. A wooden balustrade, with turned balusters and square paneled corner piers, each topped by urn and finial, defines the top of the tower and frames the lantern. The balustrade has deteriorated, and the loose northeast vase has been removed and stored in the book delivery room until it can be repaired. The 12-light windows in the lantern have been fixed in place, and each is topped with a 5-light fanlight window. The lantern has a copper domed roof, with a shallow cornice, a wide unfigured frieze, and a simple architrave, similar to that of the main block below. The tower and lantern have been covered with metal siding. A gilded mackerel weathervane with directional arms, which originally surmounted the cupola, was removed and taken by the departing town library to its new library facility on Ripley Road; only the metal rod remains.

The symmetrical single-story front façade of the original building, which faces to the west and fronts South Main Street, has nine bays organized into three roughly equal parts (**Photographs #1 & 2**). A center pavilion extends forward slightly, while each of the side pavilions has three bays. In all six of the side bays on this façade, tall recessed windows are defined by a round brick relieving arch with limestone keystones, sills, and impost course stops. Window sashes are one-above-one double-hung, with a half-circle transom hopper window above. Below each window in the basement level, a short opening of the same width as the windows above is cut into a polished granite foundation and fitted with a deeply recessed hopper sash. The molded and sculpted watertable and foundation projects forward nearly four inches from the brick wall. Two pairs of brick engaged columns, with limestone bases and capitals, define the center pavilion and frame the wide front doorframe and

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the two narrow, one-above-one double-hung windows with arched hopper transom tops that flank the entry bay on each side. Between the center two brick columns, the front door has a limestone surround of two fluted pilasters supporting a tall entablature, undecorated except for a simple egg-and-dart molding. The semi-circular fanlight transom once held a heavy iron fanlight grate, now stored in the attic. The current undersized door is a later replacement for the original paired doors shown in the architect's blueprints, and is flanked by wood infill on both sides. The door itself is wooden, with two large panes of wire-reinforced glass and a pivoting bar handle. A brass mailbox attached to a wooden base and an oval brass plaque with a raised "106," both installed since 2003, occupy the second brick pilaster (directly north of the front door) at chest height.

The central portico dominates the building's tri-partite front façade, ridge roofed, forming the front entryway to the building. Four tall, unfluted Ionic columns of concrete support the portico roof, unevenly spaced with two on each side of the entry; their spacing matches that of the brick engaged columns in the center pavilion. A low flight of four granite steps extends the full width of the portico. The columns rise from square limestone plinths and round bases, while the Ionic capital is intertwined with an egg-and-dart band. The front-facing gable of the portico has a cornice supported by dentils, a wide frieze inscribed PAUL PRATT MEMORIAL LIBRARY, and a simple architrave. The brick tympanum has a roundel with a limestone surround and compass-point keystones. Set into the roundel is a black-faced clock with a brass schooner base design, fitted with brass hands and brass hour bars and numerals (3, 6, 9, and 12). The raking cornice of the tympanum also has a row of dentils. Suspended from the ceiling of the portico is a large six-sided gold and black electric lantern, hanging from a conduit and supported by three decorative chains. A wide concrete wheelchair ramp with two-bar pipe railings, installed in 1977, attaches to the north side of the porch and parallels the front façade before turning west toward the circular front drive. Two similar two-bar pipe railings, installed in 1977 to replace similar previous railings, line both sides of the front stairs between the inner columns. Two openings under the north and south sides of the portico, of the same shape as the other basement windows, were filled in when the ramp was added in 1977. At least one of these openings would have been the coal chute to the former coal room directly below.

East of the front retaining wall, the end facades of the original north and south wings are nearly identical. They are each two stories high above grade and three bays wide. Copper downspouts, set in about a foot from the east and west ends of the façades, frame these end facades. The upper windows are identical to those in the upper story of the front façade: tall recessed windows defined by a round brick relieving arch with limestone keystones, sills and impost stops. The window sashes are one-above-one double-hung, with a half-circle transom hopper window above. On the basement level, however, the windows are simple rectangular recesses with a subtle brick flat (gauged) arch above and limestone lintel below. In the north wing these windows are fitted with six-over-six double-hung sash, while the south wing basement windows were replaced with simple one-over-one double-hung sashes, fitted with aluminum storms, in 2004. Although not shown on the original blueprints, a much smaller, higher window on the basement level of the north wing, squeezed between two existing windows, appears to date from the original build. It has an identical but proportionally smaller arch and blends seamlessly with the surrounding wall; the bricks around this window show no sign of having been disturbed for a later insertion, and the window would have lighted a toilet room that dates from 1902-03 but was removed in the 1977 renovation.

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The three remaining rear façades of the original building are similar to the side façades. The eastern side of the south wing is two bays wide. The windows on both levels are identical to those of the south facade, except that the northernmost basement level window here is, instead, an original doorway. The current metal paneled door, two tall and narrow lights over two tall and narrow panels, is a replacement for a similar wooden door and was installed in 2004. A louvered metal vent has been inserted between the flat arch above the door and the watertable/beltcourse above. The south wall of the bookstack has one single bay, its windows narrower than those in the main axis of the building. The bookstack windows have a fixed upper casement and a fixed fanlight of Luxfer glass blocks, with movable lower casements. A single copper drainpipe attaches to the western end of this wall, near the doorway in the adjacent wall. The east façade of the bookstack still retains three of its original four center window bays, the windows identical in description to those on the south side of the bookstack. All the bookstack windows have aluminum storms.

The 1963-64 rear addition was designed with simple rectangular windows with flat brick arches and stone sills, fixed sashes above and movable sashes below (**Photograph #3**). Of its four façades, the southern façade has a single three-story bay, the basement level vestibule door topped by windows for an intermediate level restroom and the current upper floor restroom in the three-story room stack. The eastern façade has the most windows of the addition, in five bays. At the southern end, a single casement window lights the intermediate level restroom, while a bay of two windows, tall above short, lights the back hall and the staircase. The northern 3/5 of the façade contains three wide paired windows, giving an almost ribbon window light into the two main levels of the addition. The northern façade of the addition is blank, with no doors or windows. The western façade of the addition has a ribbon of four windows on each level. The outside two windows on the lower level were blocked in with white painted panels during the 2004 renovation. Also during that renovation, the addition's basement level fixed and movable sash windows were replaced with simple one-over-one double-hung windows.

Other Manmade Exterior Elements

The rough-cut stone retaining wall that connects to and continues the line of the front foundation on both sides of the building is dark Quincy granite. On both sides it is a three part construction, with a higher wall next to the building, a square pillar, and then a second shorter wall panel. On both sides, this retaining wall is capped by a row of three large blocks of light-colored Beechwood Granite from the former Tiffany quarry in the village of Beechwood, in southwestern Cohasset. The edges of the upland lot are defined by stacked stone retaining walls, presumably also dating to the first construction and infilling of the lot, between the street and the library. The lawn simply ends atop these low walls at the edges of the lot, and along the entire upland section of the property; the neighboring lots are a foot or more lower than the library lot. The north lot line retaining wall may contain stones from a former wall that curved across the lot's truncated northwest corner in 1901, when the Snows gave the land to the library. An old stone wall 34.5 feet in length, running northeasterly to southwesterly, cited as "an old stone wall" in 1891, forms part of the north-central boundary of the lot. It appears to remain intact in the dense brush at this corner of the lot. The northwest corner of lot today has a distinctive square granite pier, three feet high, with a concrete cap. This pier is not visible in this location in early photographs of the library, but a nearly identical pier (now missing) appears in photographs of the southwestern corner of the lot after the library was built. Plot plans show that the single pier was in place at the northwest corner before the

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1977 renovation. Two wooden utility poles, immediately adjacent to the roadway on the front of the lot, carry a number of utility lines; they (or similar poles) are visible in the 1908-09 photographs of the library. For the purposes of this nomination, the Foundation Retaining Wall, the Old Stone Wall, the North Lot Line Retaining Wall and the South Lot Line Retaining Wall are contributing structures, and the Northwest Corner Stone Pier is a contributing object.

A semi-circular driveway, both ends of which join South Main Street, provides vehicular access to the front of the building. Dating from 1902 and originally gravel, it was paved ca. 1960, at which time, presumably, the granite curbing was also added. This wide driveway serves as a parallel parking area, and directly in front of the building holds a new (2004) four-car parking space for tenants of the two basement apartments. For the purposes of this nomination, the Front Driveway is a contributing site.

Several miscellaneous objects have appeared on the lot since the period of significance. A short fiberglass flagpole with a fiberglass base sleeve occupies the corner of the front lot between the ramp and the front drive. A wooden coupling attached to the flagpole at knee height carries a small brass plaque that reads "In Memory of E. Lawrence Parker, Jr." Immediately in front of the flagpole is a semicircular bench formed from a single block of rough-cut granite. The 1977 plot plan shows a circular tree well in this spot; and no earlier photographs show a flagpole. In 2004, as part of the redevelopment of the basement into two apartments, the side walkway was regraded and repaved, new railings installed, and nine new light bollards added, leading from the southwest corner of the lot to the two rear doorways. Since 2004, a gable-roof portable garden shed was erected near the northeast corner of the new wing. A new wooden signpost in the middle of the semicircular front lawn holds a wooden signboard that reads "Cohasset Historical Society 1928, The Pratt Building 1903." For the purposes of this nomination, the Memorial Flagpole, Stone Bench, and Signpost are non-contributing objects, the Rear Walkway a non-contributing structure, and the Garden Shed a non-contributing building.

Interior: 1902-03 Building

According to the blueprints, the ground floor of the original 1902-03 building was designed with two large reading rooms to the north and south, flanking a central rotunda. The southern reading room was further subdivided into an alcove and librarian's office along its eastern wall. Directly across from the vestibule was the rear book delivery room, a narrow hallway leading into the third floor of the four-story stack room. Despite a rear addition off the larger north reading room and several renovation campaigns, this basic ground floor layout remains remarkably intact.

**The Rotunda:** The main circulation hub for the building is the rounded octagonal rotunda. Listed clockwise beginning in the west, the walls of the rotunda contain the doorway to the vestibule, a paneled wall with a window into the front lightwell, the doorway to the north reading room, a bookcase set in a paneled wall, the doorway to the book delivery room, a bookcase set in a paneled wall, the doorway to the south reading room, and the doorway to the basement (a small flat-topped doorway to the southwest). Excluding the latter, the four large doorways have arched tops with wood-trimmed soffits. Each of these eight doorway or wall sections is

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framed by a pair of tall wooden pilasters (eight total), with simple Tuscan capitals. Above the wooden pilasters is a well-developed entablature of cornice, frieze, and architrave, complete with astragal, cyma reversa, and dentils. At this height the rotunda is no longer nominally octagonal, but clearly circular; this entablature completely encircles the rotunda. Behind and upward from the entablature cornice, eight tapering column-like soffits rise from paneled bases to a central oculus. All of these trim details above the pilaster capitals are molded plaster stained to match the wood trim below. The oculus itself is fitted with a metal framework of concentric rings of oval shapes, fitted with wavy frosted glass.

The entrance doorways from the rotunda to the north and south reading rooms have arched fanlight transoms with metal tracery, the outer ring of the fan a row of bullseye lights. The Cohasset Historical Society recently discovered in storage, restored and reinstalled the original double wooden doors leading into the north and south reading rooms. Each of these four doors has three deep-set lower panels, a large glass light from waist to head level, and a pair of square panels above. A large crescent-shaped paneled wooden librarian's counter, the center section of which dates from 1903, is located just to the east of the rotunda's center. According to the blueprints, this counter originally closed off the book delivery room from the rotunda. By 1977, it was in front of the doorway to the librarian's office (where the southeast bookcase is today); during that 1977 renovation it was moved a second time, to its current location, and the ends extended.

In 1946, the exceptional architecture of the rotunda was further enhanced with a series of four murals depicting important vignettes of Cohasset's history, painted by Boston and Cohasset artist MacIvor Reddie. When read clockwise, beginning at the northwest corner, they tell a chronological story. The captions read,

1614—CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH IS KNOWN TO HAVE ENTERED COHASSET HARBOR;  
1670—SURVEYOR LIEUT. JOSHUA FISHER OF DEDHAM LAID OUT EACH MAN'S ACRES;  
1778—MRS. DANIEL "RESOLUTION" TOWER CARTED WATER FOR CORN DURING A  
DROUGHT;  
COHASSET HARBOR DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

The latter view of Cohasset Harbor, in the southwest corner, shows Tower's Main Wharf during the height of the town's nineteenth century maritime era, as well as the mackerel schooner "E.A. Lombard" of Tower Bros. Co. at its customary mooring just off Tower's Lumber Wharf, Border Street. In style, the murals are reminiscent of the murals produced by the WPA for public buildings during the previous decade.

**The North Reading Room:** In his description of the building, architect Edward Nichols noted that the interiors of rooms of the original building are "paneled to the height of the windows with birch in mahogany color, with birch floors." The largest of the ground floor rooms, the north reading room retains much of its elaborate decorative plan and surfaces. Although both wings have three bays of windows on the west facade, Nichols added a fourth bay to balance the interior of each reading room: a blind window adjacent to the center axis of the building (roughly in line with the outer brick engaged columns of the center pavilion). These blind windows, like the built-in bookcases, are fitted with two rows of peg holes on each side so that moveable

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shelves can be placed at whatever levels necessary. The walls have elaborate recessed-panel wainscoting below and simple plaster walls above. Below and between most of the windows on the western side are built-in bookcases, again decorated with recessed panels on the sides. Along the north end of the room, these built-in bookcases are double-sided peninsular structures that extend approximately twelve feet into the room. A thin trim-band runs the perimeter of the room and joins the tops of the arched windows at the level of the architrave; each window has a prominent hood above this level, a classical frieze and cornice. Along the room's south wall, the doorway into the rotunda is slightly shorter, the top of its cornice ending just beneath the bottom of the trim-band, and the two side doors well below the trim-band. The east wall of the former north reading room, which once held a center fireplace mantel flanked by two windows, now contains a two-part opening into the 1963-64 northeast rear wing, the northern 3/5 of which is fitted with shelving. A simple wooden soffit and trim, stained to match the rest of the room, lines this later opening.

Both north and south reading rooms have high ceilings well lighted by the large exterior windows, but they also have large hanging fluorescent light fixtures. These boxy brass fixtures appear to date from the 1930s, given the Art Deco styling of their metal frames and their wavy translucent glass panels. The electrician repairing the lights reports that replacement ballasts and panels are impossible to obtain. The ceiling has a prominent plaster cornice with dentils and a center design of nine large panels surrounded by a raised lattice plaster pattern; all the plasterwork is painted white. The fluorescent lights hang down approximately eight feet from the ceiling, centered in the four corner panels. The floors in both reading rooms and the rotunda are currently carpeted; presumably the birch flooring remains beneath the carpet. Four of the original radiators remain in place. The Cohasset Historical Society uses the north reading room as a combination working and display area and the existing built-in library wooden shelving for exhibits.

**The South Reading Room:** The south reading room is smaller than its northern counterpart, as the architect separated off the eastern third of the wing for the alcove (to the south) and librarian's office (to the north). The south reading room shares many distinguishing details with the north reading room: paneled wainscoting, a fourth blind window fitted with shelves, and original radiators. Proportional to the room's smaller size, the ceiling is lower and the frieze-and-cornice hoods are missing from above the windows. The trim band in this room ties together the tops of the windows and doors, while also supporting the plaster cornice immediately above. The plaster ceiling in this room has nine recessed panels—eight rectangular panels and a circular center panel, as opposed to the larger square panels in the north reading room—tied together with raised latticework. In addition to the four hanging brass light fixtures with Art Deco detailing—rectangular in this room as opposed to the larger square fixtures in the north reading room—this room has a large octagonal brass light fixture in the center, with a later replacement shade. This reading room has very few built-in bookshelves, and the richly paneled wainscoting gives it a distinctive character. A window-like frame on the north wall of this room, originally another blind window fitted with a bookshelf, now provides light for the front stairway through two later frames fitted with wire-reinforced glass. In place of an arched window transom above, this fixture has two quarter-circle hinged doors that originally opened into a (now removed) storage space. Both of these arched northern wall openings have applied decorations—carved laurel wreaths tied with ribbons—in the frame above the transom. The Cohasset Historical Society uses this room as a meeting and activity room.

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**The Alcove:** In the southeast corner of the south reading room, a large basket-handle arch with a wooden keystone opens up the wall into the alcove. Carved Roman Doric wooden pilasters placed atop paneled waist-high piers frame the surround of this arched opening between the south reading room and its alcove. The corners above the arch contain applied wreath carvings similar to those in the north wall of the south reading room, except that they combine the wreath and ribbon motif with the torch of knowledge. The walls of the alcove have built-in bookcases and paneled wainscoting rising to about ten feet in height, higher than elsewhere. The paneled northern wall of the alcove features a large decorative manteled fireplace. The fireplace has a broad wooden mantelshelf supported by large scroll brackets and a row of dentils below the shelf. Below the shelf, the firebox (built of long narrow yellow Roman bricks) has a variegated yellow polished marble surround and hearth, framed by an eared architrave applied to the wall paneling.

**The Librarian's Office:** This small room is the northern third of the eastern third of the southern wing. Originally this was the library's main office, and opened to the circulation desk at the perimeter of the rotunda. That rotunda doorway has since been replaced by a bookshelf wall. The room still has two other original doorways, to the south reading room and to the book delivery room. More recently it served the library as a periodicals shelf room. It has a trim band architrave and a simple plaster cornice. Both the librarian's office and the alcove have a single suspended brass fluorescent light fixture, similar in vintage and design to those in the reading rooms, but tapered instead of box-like on the sides to better diffuse the light. It has a single eastern-facing window and a single radiator.

**The Book Delivery Room:** This back hallway, lined with shelving, is a circulation nexus and has always served as the main link between the library and the separate stack room. The room has a trim band architrave and a simple plaster cornice. This room is separated from the stack room by sliding paneled metal fire door, faux-painted to give it a grained wood appearance. Originally automatic, the door is now manually operated.

**The Stack Room:** The stack room, the rear (eastern) arm of the cruciform building, is a four-story structure designed as a fireproof separate volume to protect the books in case of a fire in the main building. In the 1977 renovation the third floor—the floor on the same level as the ground floor of the library—became the staff librarians' main office. Presently this level houses the Historical Society's office and archives. Originally each of the four levels of the stack room held rows of metal stack bookshelves; only the bottom two floors of bookshelves remain. The floors of the top three bookstack levels were originally translucent glass panels, to more thoroughly diffuse the light throughout; today the glass panels remain only in the level between the first and second floors; the top two glass floors have been replaced with solid flooring for office expansion. Above the main office, the top floor of the stack contains another office. It retains a simple plaster cornice without a trim band. The bookstack has a mix of wall and floor radiators in the lower levels and later baseboard heaters above, as well as later fluorescent lights, usually bare bulbs. The booklift, connecting the four levels, is now in the northwest corner of the bookstack, moved from its original site in the southeast corner. A distinguishing feature of the bookstack is the interior metal stack staircase in the southwest corner, its utilitarian nature

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alleviated by its green color and two-bar railing with curled-end bar panels. It has eight to nine treads per level and three top winders. Despite the changes in the library, the lower two levels of the stack room have continued to be used for their original purpose since the library was first built.

The windows of the stack room deserve special description. On the exterior, aligned on the rear façade with the windows in the rest of the building, the bookstack has two levels of windows to light four levels of bookstack. On the interior, each level of windows lights two levels of bookstack. Two or three towel-bar shaped iron guards are attached to the window frames on the second and fourth levels to keep staff from accidentally kicking into them or damaging them with book trolleys. The bookstack windows retain their fixed Luxfer transoms, casements of small prism-glass blocks, in both the upper sash and fanlight above. Several of these prisms at the third level are stamped LUXFER. These louvered glass blocks, designed specifically for industrial, commercial, and institutional uses, are set in three-part fixed metal sashes. Each upper sash has 54 blocks, arranged in three horizontal sections, each section six blocks wide by three blocks high, with more blocks in the fanlight above.

**The Vestibule and Basement:** Except for its molded ceiling, the vestibule was removed in 1977-78, when the front winder staircase and restroom were also demolished and replaced by a wide metal winding staircase down to the basement level with a lightwell above. The vestibule was rebuilt as a walled bridge across this gap, with large reinforced glass side windows. The lightwell is further lit by the two small center pavilion exterior windows, the large window in the south reading room, and windows installed in the rotunda and north study room to replace the former stairwell doorways from those rooms.

The basement is now divided into four discrete areas, as a result of the 2004 renovation: bookstack, two apartments, and storage. It was originally an area of partially heated spaces used primarily for the coal furnace and storage. Over the years, as the coal furnace gave way to fuel oil and a newer, smaller furnace, the furnace area was restricted to the central room. In 1977 much of the older furnace was removed and a smaller heating plant installed in a small mechanical room at the east central part of the basement. The rest of the basement walls were removed, and the basement became a large, multilevel children's area. In 2004, the area under the southern wing and southern half of the rotunda was converted to a separate apartment, Unit #1, while the lower level of the addition became Unit #2. Both units use former secondary rear exits as their main entries; no new doorways were cut into the building façade. Each one-bedroom apartment has a kitchen and bathroom, and either a combined (Unit #1) or separate (Unit #2) living room and dining room. The walls are metal stud construction, with plywood subflooring. The old windows were replaced with similar double-hung windows; two of the four windows in the western wall of the 1963-64 addition were replaced with blank panels.

The remainder of the basement, under the north wing and north half of the rotunda, is storage for the Historical Society. Freestanding shelves line the former coal room under the portico. The stone and brick exterior walls are visible on the interior, the brick painted white. The structural relieving arches over the basement windows in the northern wing, three rows of header bricks, are visible on the interior, but not the exterior façade. The basement level floor, covered in carpet, changes levels several times by a series of broad single steps; the lowest level is the mechanical room, under the book delivery room.

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**The Attic:** Since the 1977 renovation that demolished the front stairway, access to the attic is gained only through a locking hatch cut into the upper wall of the top level of the bookstack. Most of the attic has a large brick kneewall, which supports the wooden framework of the roof rafters and trusses. The attic is floored, with the two side levels higher than the middle, since the ceilings in those rooms are higher than the ceilings of the rooms around the rotunda. The octagonal drum of the rotunda occupies the center of the attic; a wooden ladder on its south side climbs to a ramp placed across the roof of the dome of the rotunda, which leads into the bottom of the lantern through a hatch in its side. The interior of the lantern has vertical boarding below the windows and horizontal boarding above. A staging in the center of the lantern provides partial protection for the leaded glass light below and supports an electrical fixture with a single bulb that provides nighttime illumination within the lantern. Below the staging, the floor of the lantern is open, to provide illumination to the dome below through the leaded glass oculus. The center panel of the oculus is unglazed to allow ventilation. Among the interesting details in the attic is the chimneystack of the alcove fireplace, which emerges through the ceiling as an east-west axis rectangle, and turns 90 degrees as it climbs to the roof, to emerge above the roof as a north-south rectangle. The tympanum of the front portico is open to the attic, with the limestone blocks evident atop the triangular brick pediment. The box that formerly held the clockwork for the tympanum clock is still in place, although the clock was long ago replaced with a smaller electrical motor. In the front hallway, the landing and top two winders of the former staircase remain.

**The Addition:** The 1963-64 wing, a simple two-story rectangle with a southern extension, has three main vertical volumes: two stories of large, uncolumbed space; a separate two-story staircase volume in the southwestern corner; and a small three-story single-room southeast extension. The large room on the upper floor of the addition is now a storage area for the Cohasset Historical Society's extensive collection of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century costumes and accessories. Existing metal library shelving has been adapted to hold large acid-free boxes and clothes stored on hangers. The top floor of the extension, originally a librarian's office and accessed from the third story of the bookstack, became the main unisex restroom in the 1977 renovation, accessed from the addition. The middle level, formerly the librarian's restroom and accessed from the second level of the bookstack, is now a staff kitchen and storage. The ground floor is a rear vestibule, a common area used mostly by the rear apartment tenant, but available as an emergency exit from the bottom level of the bookstack or the addition staircase.

Changes Since the Period of Significance

Four major construction campaigns have occurred since the period of significance: a gradual updating in the late 1950s and three architect-designed reconfigurations in the decades since. Despite these changes, most of the architecturally significant elements of the building's exterior and interior remain intact. The architect for the 1963 building addition was Cohasset resident Horatio Williams Beal of the firm J. Williams Beal, Sons, Granger & Poskus of Boston; the contractor the Ambrosia Construction Company of Quincy. The architect for the 1977 renovation was Maurice Nathan Finegold of Anderson Notter Finegold Associates, and the contractor Constantino and Farley of Burlington. The architects for the 2004 conversion of the building were James F. Rissling and Jim Sandell of the firm Carr, Lynch and Sandell, Inc.

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In the half decade after the close of the period of significance (the years immediately preceding 1962), the Board of Directors made several significant changes to the building: replacing the copper roofing with a new slate roof and copper gutters, pointing and waterproofing the bricks, building a new fireproof boiler room, installing the building's first hot water heater, laying new vinyl flooring, replacing shades with drapes, regrading and rebuilding the front lawn, blacktopping the driveway, and regilding the weathervane.

The 1963-64 renovation fitted a 28 x 55-foot rectangular brick block into the northeast corner of the building, extending significantly beyond the northern wall of the original building and slightly wrapping the eastern stack wing. Closing off two bays of windows and a door on the east side of the north wing and a single bay on the north side of the east (bookstack) wing, the addition was primarily a large single room on each floor, with a large interior circulation staircase in its southern end. Where the addition overlapped the bookstack slightly, covering the northernmost of the four windows on the east side of the bookstack, it provided a small three-story room stack containing, from top to bottom, a librarian's office, restroom, and vestibule. The resulting southeastern corner of the addition tied into the formerly walled-off bookstack, and its floors generally matched the bottom three floors of the stack. All three rooms were accessed from the stack room, while the bottom vestibule also provided an additional exit from the basement level of the new wing. The most significant change to the formal interior spaces of the original building was the demolition of the northeastern chimney and the formal fireplace mantel and wall in the northern reading room, to provide access to the new addition.

The 1975 renovations to the library included the demolition of the former restroom and narrow winding staircase at the west entrance, and their replacement with a broad semicircular metal staircase to the basement, surrounded by a light well lined with reinforced-glass windows. The ceiling of the vestibule was retained, while the floor was converted to a bridge across the light well. The furnace area in the basement was confined to a small rectangular room adjacent to the bookstack in the east central section. The rest of the interior basement walls, aside from support pillars, were removed, and the window openings at the sides of the front portico blocked in. The top two levels of the bookstack shelving and flooring were removed and replaced by two levels of solid-floored offices. The former librarian's office in the southeastern corner of the addition was converted into a public restroom, now accessible from the addition and not from the stackroom office. A wheelchair access ramp was installed parallel to the north wing of the library, attaching to the north side of the portico. A new access hatch to the attic was cut through the top floor of the bookstack, to replace the attic access lost at the front of the building.

When the Paul Pratt Memorial Library vacated its former building in 2002, it took with it the mackerel weathervane that originally surmounted the cupola, for installation at the new library facility at Ripley Road (the former Osgood School). After the Cohasset Historical Society, a private non-profit organization, acquired the property from the Town of Cohasset in 2003, they launched an ambitious plan to convert some of the basement space not needed for their collections or programming into housing for qualified moderate-income senior citizens. The 2004 project built two apartments into the existing spaces at the Paul Pratt Library, Unit #1 in the bottom floor of the new addition, and Unit #2 in the south side of the basement of the original building. The kitchen in Unit #2 occupies the southern half of the area under the rotunda. As part of the project, the

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contractor also built four parking spaces for the apartments, on the western side of the circular driveway, over former lawn space directly across from the front door of the building. The new parking spaces were covered with bituminous concrete and lined with granite curbing; sections of the curbing were also reset to accommodate a wider driveway. The walkway to the back door was regraded and also covered with bituminous concrete paving. A new galvanized steel pipe handrail, painted black, lines the entire outside length of the path, including the forked section (to the separate unit doors) at the bottom. Black metal bollard lights light the path.

### Condition

Because of the focused renovation and updating projects of the last few decades, the building is in good condition. The only area obviously in need of repair and restoration is the balustrade around the rooftop lantern.

### **Archaeological Description**

While no ancient Native American sites are known on the property, sites may be present. Five Native sites are known in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the property generally represent locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for the presence of ancient sites. The building is located on a small parcel (less than one acre) that is split with upland in the western half and tidal meadow named Jacob's Meadow in the eastern half. The upland parcel, on which the building is situated, includes a level to moderately sloping slight rise or hilltop containing well drained soils formed in friable glacial till, stones and boulders, and originally included a ledge outcrop in front of the building. Jacob's Meadow, which is subject to tidal flooding is drained by James Brook; located less than 1,000 feet from the property. James Brook drains easterly to Cohasset Cove and Cohasset Harbor, both located within one-half mile east. In spite of the information presented above, the potential for locating significant ancient Native American resources on the property is low. Construction of the building, which has a basement, blasting to remove the ledge outcrop, and several stages of grading would have destroyed any Native American resources that were located on the property. The latter conclusion is supported by the fact that each of the activities described above occurred on the upland portion of the property, about one-half of the nominated area.

A low potential also exists for locating historic archaeological resources on the property. Despite the existence of South Main Street as a road before the 1670 Land Division and the location of Capt. John Jacobs (second) house a short distance north of the building, no residences, barns, outbuildings, or occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) have been identified on the property. The site was generally known as unbuildable prior to construction of the library. Grading of the property, which can be documented as late as the 1960s, would have also destroyed any historic archaeological resources located in the area.

(end)

Pratt Historic Building  
Name of Property

Norfolk, MA  
County and State

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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

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

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- EDUCATION
- ARCHITECTURE
- ART
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

- 1902-1956
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

- 1902 library constructed
- 1946 Reddie murals unveiled
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

- Nichols, Edward
- Reddie, MacIvor (mural artist)  
(see continuation sheet)

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

- Cohasset Historical Society
- \_\_\_\_\_



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**8. Architect/Builder (cont.)**

Clark, Warren F.

Beal, Horatio Williams

Finegold, Maurice Nathan

Carr, Lynch and Sandell, Inc.

Ambrosia Construction Company

Constantino and Farley

Mason and Frey

**Summary Statement**

The Paul Pratt Historic Building, at 106 South Main Street in Cohasset, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C at the local level in the areas of education, architecture, and art. Distinguishing features of this town landmark include the octagonal lantern with its copper roof and wooden balustrade, and the central Ionic portico and clock with its schooner motif. Under Criterion A the property possesses significance for its association with Education, particularly the formal establishment of private and public library facilities for the Town of Cohasset. Erected in 1902 to house both the private Paul Pratt Memorial Library and the Cohasset Free Public Library, and expanded in 1963-64, the building served as a center for community education for nearly a full century, before becoming the home and headquarters of the non-profit Cohasset Historical Society in 2003. The property meets the eligibility requirements under Criterion C for Architecture, for its bookstack technology, Luxfer prism glass, Beechwood granite, and as a significant local example of the Colonial Revival style, notable for its scale, excellent state of preservation, and period details. Architecturally the building is significant also as the largest and finest known design of Edward Nichols, a Cohasset native and Boston architect active in Cohasset during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Finally, the property meets the eligibility requirements under Criterion C for Art; its rotunda holds four murals painted in 1946 by prominent Boston artist MacIvor Reddie to depict episodes of Cohasset's history. The building possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**The Setting: Town and Neighborhood**

Cohasset is located in Norfolk County, on the Atlantic Ocean shoreline twenty miles southeast of Boston. Bordered by the Plymouth County towns of Hull on the northwest, Hingham on the west, and Scituate on the south, Cohasset is 31.47 square miles (only 9.9 square miles of which is land). The town is built on rocky outcrops and sandy ridges covered with forests and dotted with numerous ponds, marshes, and swamps, which empty by short rivers into Massachusetts Bay. The western third of the town is primarily open space, much of it state and federal government land: Great Swamp, Whitney Woods Reservation, the U.S. Military Reservation, Wompatuck State Park, and the Aaron River Reservoir. The shoreline is broken into numerous peninsulas, islands, and bays (especially Straits Pond, Little Harbor, and Cohasset Harbor), and has two public beaches and a yacht club. The population is densest along the shoreline, in the town center, and along several inland

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roadways, which serve small villages such as Beechwood. Cohasset is bisected by MA Route 3A, which was a primary road from Boston to Cape Cod from 1931 until 1962, when it was replaced by Route 3, which bypassed Cohasset. Many residents work in Boston and commute to the city by car, bus, or commuter boat from Hingham. The 2000 census recorded 7,261 inhabitants, up slightly from the 1990 population of 7,075.

The first recorded contact with Europeans in town history occurred in 1614, when Captain John Smith of Virginia visited the harbor on a trading mission and fought with its residents, the Quonahasset Indians. Named after the site ("Long Rocky Place" in the Algonquin language), the tribe was decimated by plague in 1617. In 1632 English settlers established Hingham, and in 1636 they began making land grants in its eastern extreme, by then known as Conahasset, with its uplands used for pasturage and its lowlands primarily for cutting salt hay. Most of the upland area was parceled out to Hingham residents by 1670, when government surveyor Lieutenant John Fisher began laying out property lines and the road system. By 1700, the first ships were built at Ship Cove and farmsteads established. Cohasset gradually separated from Hingham, building its first meetinghouse in 1714, officially becoming the 2<sup>nd</sup> Parish and 2<sup>nd</sup> Precinct in 1717, hiring its first clergyman in 1722, and finally incorporating as Cohasset in 1770. By this time, the major town industries were farming, fishing, and shipbuilding. Commercial fishing vessels operating out of Cohasset increased from eight in 1737 to thirty in 1768, with a similar rise in support industries such as barrel making, carpentry, and salt-making. The Massachusetts Humane Society established the first volunteer lifeboat in America in 1807 in Cohasset, to rescue those imperiled in shipwrecks off its rocky shore. The worst wreck occurred in 1849, when the Irish brig *St. John* foundered and killed 99. Although jobs on Cohasset mackerel schooners attracted many Portuguese settlers in the 1800s, the fishing industry peaked in 1848, and in 1883 the last ship built in Cohasset set sail.

Cohasset had no stagecoach connection to Boston until 1815, but by the 1840s it began to gain a reputation with hunters and summer visitors, especially after its railroad connection to Boston, through Braintree, in 1849. Late 19<sup>th</sup>-century improvements included the first public wells in 1886, first central school and public electrical system in 1891, and the first public telephone in 1895.<sup>1</sup> In the 1880s, Bostonians began to build large mansions on its picturesque shoreline. In 1898, town minister and historian E. Victor Bigelow wrote, "The character of this town as a suburb and summer resort, to the exclusion of industries, has become fixed."<sup>2</sup> The 1905 Cohasset population was 2,727, according to the 1908 directory. By the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the Paul Pratt Memorial Library was built, Cohasset had a significant summer population of Bostonians. The 1908 Cohasset directory has a separate list of summer residents that runs to five pages, and includes, just in the first three letters of the alphabet, prominent names such as Bates, Bigelow, Codman, and Coolidge. Albert Cameron Burrage maintained one of his summer residences here: The Carabels, on Nichols Road. Boston trains stopped

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<sup>1</sup> David H. Wadsworth, *A Brief History of Cohasset 1614-2000* and *A Capsule History of Cohasset*, undated pamphlets published by the Cohasset Historical Society.

<sup>2</sup> E. Victor Bigelow, *Narrative History of the Town of Cohasset, Massachusetts* (Cohasset: Committee On Town History, 1898), 538.

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at one of three stations, Beechwood, Black Rock, or North Cohasset. Residents could worship at one of three Congregational churches, at St. Stephen's Episcopal with its famous carillon, or at St. Anthony's Roman Catholic. At the back of the directory, the seating plans of a half-dozen Boston theaters were reproduced in full.<sup>3</sup>

The Pratt Historic Building is on a hilltop just south of the village center of Cohasset, in an area known as Jacob's Meadow. Although Jacob's Meadow once extended a block to the west of South Main Street, that area has been more heavily developed, and Jacob's Meadow today is defined as the interior of the area ringed by (clockwise from the northwest) Brook, Elm, Border, Summer, and South Main streets. Like that of the library, many of the lots in this area are deep, extending from the border street into the heart of the Meadow. Nicholas Jacob was an early Hingham official who claimed the meadowland around 1640, and Lieutenant Joshua Fisher named the wetland after him in his 1669-72 land survey. Directly north of the site of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Nicholas Jacob's grandson Captain John Jacob (1679-1755) built a house in 1710, the first on this meadow, and expanded it in 1754. During the nineteenth century the Lincoln family lived there, apparently replaced the former house with another one (Jacob-Lincoln House, 98 South Main Street, MHC # 21), and possibly operated it as an inn before selling it in 1930s. "By the late eighteenth century the perimeter of Jacob's Meadow was dotted with residences, many of them built for citizens active in the maritime industry," which was headquartered at nearby Cohasset Harbor.<sup>4</sup> The site previously included a large stone outcrop on the western end (in the semicircular lawn area west of the driveway), a lot line that bisected the current lot, and a steep drop towards the meadow in the middle. Divided between two lots, the site was largely unbuildable and does not show any indication of previous construction in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cohasset maps. Standing water in the middle of the meadow has prevented further intrusions into its interior, including curtailing 20<sup>th</sup> century development along Sankey Road. In the Great Gale of November 1898, much of Summer Street and part of South Main Street just south of the library site were overrun by floodwaters. Neighboring Border Street was not only inundated, but also rendered impassable afterwards by lumber, debris, and several boats.<sup>5</sup> A recent architectural survey of this block notes, "The pattern of development along the perimeter of the meadow has preserved the meadowland intact for over three-and-a-half centuries. The unique collection of built and natural historic resources embodies Cohasset's maritime, social, educational, and commercial history."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 1908 Hingham and Cohasset Directory, Cohasset Public Library.

<sup>4</sup> PAL (Public Archaeology Laboratory), *Cohasset Area (A) Form A, Jacob's Meadow*, 2000; part of *Survey of Above Ground Historical Assets of the Town of Cohasset* (Part of the EIR for the M.B.T.A.). Pawtucket RI, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Oliver W. Howe, "The Great Gale of November 27, 1898, in Cohasset," pp. 604-614 in George Lyman Davenport and Elizabeth Osgood Davenport, *Genealogies of the Families of Cohasset, Massachusetts* (Cohasset: Committee On Town History, 1909).

<sup>6</sup> PAL (Public Archaeology Laboratory), *Cohasset Area (A) Form A, Jacob's Meadow*, 2000.

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Cohasset (Norfolk), MASection number 8 Page 4The Establishment of Libraries in Cohasset

Libraries in Cohasset go back at least to 1792; books bearing the inscription "Social Library of Cohasset 1792" were later found in the collections of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library.<sup>7</sup> Five Cohasset women formed the Washington Library in 1832. Both early libraries were "semi-public collections of books, which were in reality small stock companies open only to the holders of the stock."<sup>8</sup> Cost of each share was twenty-five cents, there was a small, added assessment, and anyone could become a stockholder. The Washington Library merged into the Social Library on January 15, 1844. The ensuing organization was called the Union Library. Although it continued for three more decades, it was little used.

In 1878 the Legislature authorized the towns of Massachusetts to appropriate money for library purposes, and, at the urging of the Cohasset School Committee, the town established a committee to start a public library.<sup>9</sup> The 1879 Town Meeting voted to establish the Cohasset Free Public Library, and appropriated \$300, to be matched by private funds. The board first met on April 30, 1879. The first librarian was retired Cohasset deep-sea Captain John Warren Bates, who had been among the founders of the Public Library. Located in a room in Town Hall, the library housed only several hundred books. By 1902 the Cohasset Free Public Library had grown to more than 7,500 books and occupied several rooms at Town Hall.

An active promoter of the concept of a central library was Reverend Joseph Osgood, pastor of the town's First Parish Church, who served on the committee that proposed a central library. He also had been instrumental in establishing the town's first central school building, the Osgood School, which was named for him in 1891. Reverend Osgood was Pastor of Cohasset's original Parish for more than fifty years and was a respected community leader.

In 1902 Cohasset built the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, at 106 South Main Street, on land given by Samuel T. Snow. Sarah and Harriot Pratt, unmarried daughters of Cohasset tradesman Paul Pratt, gave the money to build Cohasset's first central public library. Though the Paul Pratt Memorial Library was a private institution, a second, smaller library function existed in the same building and on the same shelves, named the Cohasset Free Public Library. Upon completion of the new building both libraries opened to Cohasset citizens and the community had its first modern centralized library. Later, branch libraries were established and maintained for several decades in the Beechwood (1913-1961) and North Cohasset (1912- ca. 1963) sections of the town for the convenience of residents at a distance from the main library. In 1969 the private and public libraries legally

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<sup>7</sup> Charlotte S. Tower, "Library Story of Cohasset," Unsourced article dated 2 November 1934. Paul Pratt Memorial Library/Cohasset Free Public Library clipping file, Cohasset Historical Society, Cohasset.

<sup>8</sup> The Rev. Charles W. Merriam, *Dedictory Exercises at the Opening of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Cohasset, Massachusetts* (Addison C. Getchell & Son, 185 Franklin St., Boston, 1903), 3.

<sup>9</sup> Excerpts from the Cohasset Town Report, in the Cohasset Free Public Library Trustees Minutes, 1879-1928. Cohasset Historical Society. Interestingly enough, the initial committee was specified to contain "five gentlemen and four ladies," a requirement later ignored.



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combined as a free public library, taking the name of the former private Paul Pratt Memorial Library. In 2003 the public library facility moved from this building to a vacant former schoolhouse renovated to house Cohasset's public library, and the Cohasset Historical Society bought the building and property at 106 South Main Street for use as its headquarters building and museum of local and area history. Although the name "Paul Pratt Memorial Library" moved along with the library's books, the former library building is currently called the Pratt Historic Building.

The Paul Pratt Memorial Library

Paul Pratt, for whom the 1902-03 building and its private library were named, was a son of Samuel and Betsy (Lincoln) Pratt of Cohasset. Born in Cohasset on May 17, 1788, he attended school in locally, and then moved to Boston to learn the trade of house building with housewright Joseph Eustis. On October 31, 1809, at age twenty-one, he married Eustis' daughter, Anne. Some twenty-five years later, with six children, Pratt returned to Cohasset and resided on South Main Street, building his own house (still extant; 190 South Main Street, MHC # 414) in 1848. After operating a small store in Cohasset, Paul Pratt was one of the three organizers of the Cohasset Savings Bank in 1845 and became its first President. He also helped Cohasset establish one of the earliest high schools in the state, in 1841. He died in his hometown on August 31, 1853, after telling his daughters that he wanted to start a permanent library in Cohasset.<sup>10</sup>

The two youngest daughters of Paul Pratt provided the money to establish a library facility. Sarah Sigourney Pratt and Harriot Eustis Pratt were born on November 7, 1815, and January 8, 1819, respectively. Educated at the Mayhew School in Boston, the Pratt sisters were active in the Unitarian Church and many other Cohasset charities, and read widely. Sarah Pratt had been a member of the first Cohasset Free Public Library board, in 1880. They remained unmarried and lived in their parents' house until their deaths (Sarah on August 1, 1896 and Harriot on April 9, 1898). The bequest that enabled the creation of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library was in the fifth paragraph of the seventh article of the will of Harriot Pratt. Paul Pratt's original bequest to surviving descendants was "something less than \$20,000" but the Pratt sisters increased their share; ultimately Harriot Pratt's will provided half of her estate for construction of a library building, or about \$40,000.

The will also specified that the library's Board of Directors should include (1) the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, (2) the Minister of the First Parish (3) the Minister of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congregational Church, and two specific men, James Longley and Randolph Knapp, who then would choose two added members. Since Knapp had died by that time, Samuel T. Snow (donor of the land) was picked in his place. Thus the first Board of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library consisted of Philander Bates (Selectman), Rev. William Roswell Cole (First Parish), Rev. E. Victor Bigelow (Congregational Church), James Longley, Samuel T. Snow, and chosen by the members, Charles A. Welch and Abraham H. Tower. The first officers of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library were President Samuel T. Snow, Treasurer James Longley, and Clerk William Cole. The first meeting was held in

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<sup>10</sup> *Dedicatory Exercises at the Opening of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Cohasset, Massachusetts* (Addison C. Getchell & Son, 185 Franklin St., Boston, 1903), 5-6.

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Selectmen's office, Town Hall, on February 3, 1900. In the following month the library was incorporated and the Trustees became Directors.

Land for the site of the new library building was given by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Thomas Snow, who resided across South Main Street (93-95 South Main Street, the Worrick-Snow House (1796+), MHC #310). The deed from Samuel T. Snow to Paul Pratt Memorial Library is recorded in Norfolk Registry of Deeds, Book 904, page 215. The deed is dated August 7, 1901 and is accompanied by a plan of land by D.N. Tower, dated June 1893. Samuel T. Snow, born July 18, 1824, was a son of Cohasset deep-sea Captain Samuel and Betsey (Pratt) Snow. Captain Samuel Snow's wife Betsey was a sister of Paul Pratt, and daughter of Samuel and Betty (Lincoln) Pratt. Captain Samuel Snow's name originally was Salvador Sabate y Morell, born at Villaseca, Tarragona, Spain in 1790. He had come to America on Captain Ephraim Snow's vessel and became a naturalized citizen at Cohasset on April 9, 1816. A Master Mariner, he was lost at sea in October 1825. Son Samuel Thomas Snow was Treasurer of the Revere Copper Company of Boston, and served as first President of the Board of Trustees of the new Paul Pratt Memorial Library. He had spent summers in Cohasset in the South Main Street house earlier owned by his father (the Laban Worrick House) since about 1866. Samuel Thomas Snow died in Boston on November 11, 1901, before the Paul Pratt Memorial Library was completed.

After the death of Samuel Snow in 1901, Selectman Philander Bates replaced him as President of the Board of Directors. Director and Treasurer James Longley donated the decorative clock in the tympanum of the front pediment. One of the final steps in preparing the library for opening was the removal of the stone ledge in front and the filling of the lot up to the front foundation. Director Charles A. Welch paid for "the expense of having the ledge blown off in front of the building."<sup>11</sup> Early photographs show the completed library and retaining wall standing high above the level of the surrounding landscape. Board president Philander Bates, who was also the Superintendent of Streets for Cohasset, reported "the filling in of the lot in front of the building was given in my charge by the trustees. Work was commenced in February [1903] and continued as weather permitted until the ledge was blasted, and lot filled with gravel and stone, loamed and seed sown, expending over \$3,100, which was paid out in various sums to the town's laborers and owners of teams, gravel, stone loam and sods."<sup>12</sup> Constructing, grading, and furnishing the new library cost \$35,000. The old library closed at Town Hall on April 4, 1903, so the books could be catalogued for the new library.

By 1903 the Paul Pratt Memorial Library (the building) and the Cohasset Free Public Library (the books) were in full cooperation with each other and operating together in the new building. Apparently some townspeople had misgivings about the arrangement. The Directors of the former and the Trustees of the latter reached an agreement, which they published in a circular, whereby the books would be housed in the new library building

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<sup>11</sup> *Dedicatory Exercises at the Opening of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Cohasset, Massachusetts* (Addison C. Getchell & Son, 185 Franklin St., Boston, 1903), 8.

<sup>12</sup> Report of Superintendent of Streets, Cohasset Town Report, 1903, 80.

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for a trial period of three years, but remain the property of the town. The boards also pledged that the Paul Pratt "is not and never was intended to be a private library; it was designed for the use of the whole town, and its givers never for a moment dreamed of the possibility of two libraries." In 26 other Massachusetts city and town libraries, they pointed out, "Libraries are successfully run" by "a self-perpetuating body of directors."<sup>13</sup>

The library opened to the public on July 13, 1903, with simple dedicatory exercises. The dedicatory remarks, made by several persons having close association with the new library, give a clear illustration of why the community leaders thought a town library was important at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Rev. Charles W. Merriam noted, "The library shall be the people's university for that vast majority who cannot or do not go to college and do not have well-selected libraries of their own." The goal would be that of improvement of self and of surroundings through education provided by the books available in the library. "We have here an excellent library that is the product of Cohasset money, Cohasset architecture, and Cohasset devotion; that has been an evolution and not a revolution."<sup>14</sup> Rev. William R. Cole concluded his dedicatory remarks by saying, "Such, then, is the work of the public library of to-day; to nourish and maintain the interest of the community in the products of human genius, to stand side-by-side with the public schools, and by its instructions in literature, art, science, history and the fictions of the imagination, make possible the culture of the higher and broader life for all the people." Dr. Oliver H. Howe concluded his remarks by saying, "To cultivate and broaden the mind, to bring it in touch with the best principles of humanity, the world over; to enlarge and enrich the imagination, to strengthen and ennoble the whole life by bringing it in contact with what the best minds of all ages have produced; to seek out the highest ideals and to elevate the whole moral nature; these are the things which make for true and right living, and these are the things in which the public library ought to be largely instrumental." The early leaders of the public library movement in Cohasset set large goals for their new library.

The new library saw circulation double in its first year. Besides the new building, this increase was attributable to several changes. For the first time, children were allowed to take out books. Secondly, "each person is allowed two books, provided only one is fiction."<sup>15</sup> For much of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Head Librarian was Charlotte Sophronia Tower. A daughter of prominent ship owner, marine chandlery owner, and merchant Newcomb Bates Tower and Sophronia Lawrence (Parker) Tower, she was born May 25, 1876 and retired from the Library in 1946. She had begun work at the library in 1903 as a cataloger, and worked there until 1911. She returned to the library in 1930, as Assistant Librarian to Librarian Annie N. Keene, and in 1934 became Head Librarian. At her retirement she donated the four historical murals painted by MacIvor Reddie that grace the walls of the rotunda. Charlotte S. Tower was a sister-in-law of the building's architect, Edward Nichols. She died in 1978 at age 102 years. Following Charlotte S. Tower as Head Librarian was former Assistant Librarian Sarah Heywood, whose tenure extended for 22 years until her retirement in 1969. Replacing her the Board

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<sup>13</sup> "To the Citizens of Cohasset," circular, Paul Pratt Memorial Library/Cohasset Free Public Library clipping file, Cohasset Historical Society, Cohasset.

<sup>14</sup> *Dedicatory Exercises at the Opening of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Cohasset, Massachusetts* 13.

<sup>15</sup> "Report of the Librarian for the Year Ending Dec. 31, 1903," *Cohasset Town Report*, 1903.



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chose an instructor of Library Science at Northeastern University, Richard Hayes. In more recent years Head Librarian Richard Hayes oversaw the extensive 1976 alterations. It was Librarian Hayes who, in the mid-1980s, also guided the Cohasset library's entry into the patron-usable computer network called Old Colony Library Network, now linking numerous community libraries on the South Shore. Richard Hayes retired at about the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The "Paul Pratt Memorial Library" was the name of the private component of the dual public-private library operation. Under terms of the 1975 transfer by gift of the library plant to the town, the name Paul Pratt Memorial Library was to be used as the name of the newly combined municipal library, and this change was made under Article 53 of Town Meeting, held on April 9, 1980. The deed from the Paul Pratt Memorial Library Trustees to Town of Cohasset, conveying the property and assets of the private library to Town of Cohasset, is recorded in Norfolk Registry of Deeds Book 5195, Page 253. The deed is dated December 29, 1975. This established the Paul Pratt Memorial Library as a public library and eliminated the private status of the library.

During the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century the grounds of the library building were maintained by the Cohasset Parks Department then by its successor the Town's Department of Public Works, assisted by members of the Library Trustees who were members of local Garden Clubs. Future design and maintenance of yard and gardens will be the responsibility of the current owner, the Cohasset Historical Society.

After a century of service as Cohasset's town library building, the 1902 Paul Pratt building was discontinued as a public library, declared surplus property, and in early 2003, sold at public auction to Cohasset Historical Society for \$739,000, to be used by the Society as its headquarters. Conveyance of the building from Town of Cohasset to Cohasset Historical Society occurred on March 28, 2003, with deed recorded in Book 18531, Page 146 in Norfolk County Registry, Dedham MA. The name Paul Pratt Memorial Library continues to be used by the new library, which converted the abandoned former Osgood School on Ripley Road into a new, larger town library. At a special town meeting in October 1998, voters approved the redevelopment.<sup>16</sup> At least one other southeastern Massachusetts town, Duxbury, recently converted a school into a new library, and saw the former library building adapted for the historical society.

The current owner of the building, the Cohasset Historical Society, numbered among its founders in 1928 some of the same individuals who played major roles in founding the Paul Pratt Memorial Library in 1903. Dr. Oliver H. Howe, a member of the Free Public Library Trustees, was a founding member of the Historical Society and its first President. Edward Nichols, architect of the Library building, designed the Society's seal—still used—showing Capt. John Smith's visit to Quonahasset in 1614. Today the Historical Society follows the mandate to "Preserve and Present" the history of the town, and its headquarters building is symbolic of the most effective idealism of the town's leaders of a century earlier. Education and cultural improvement remain as worthy goals

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<sup>16</sup> Jacqueline M. Dormitzer, *Narrative History of Cohasset, 1950-2000*, Vol. 3. (Cohasset: Committee On Town History, 2002), 326.



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and the Society, no less than its library predecessors, seeks to educate and to improve the cultural well being of the town that it serves. This mission is the continuity between the old and the new in the Paul Pratt building.

**Criterion A: Education**Educational Context: Philanthropists and the Development of the Town Library

Perhaps no building type attracted more attention from American philanthropists during the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries than the library. Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) funded 1,689 libraries in 1,419 towns and cities across the United States in the years between 1886 and 1919. Certainly Carnegie was the most ambitious of the library builders, but many other wealthy men did the same, usually for their hometowns. In 1876-79, a decade before Carnegie, Charles Bower Winn financed the building of the Winn Memorial Public Library, in Woburn, the first of four Massachusetts libraries designed by H.H. Richardson. Massachusetts was a leader in the construction of public libraries. In 1852, Boston was the first large city to build a free public library, and three decades later its Renaissance Revival-style replacement (1887-95)—by McKim, Mead, and White—forever linked libraries with the ideals of Renaissance art and humanism.<sup>17</sup> By 1894, Massachusetts had 179 public libraries, more than any other state (44% of the 400 nationwide; New York state was a distant fourth, with 11). In 1898, 110 of the public libraries in Massachusetts were the direct result of a bequest or donation.<sup>18</sup> At the dedication of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Amos Tilden praised Cohasset: "I congratulate the town to-day that this library is not the gift of a Carnegie or a Rockefeller, but comes from one who was born in this town, and who, with his family, was identified closely with its life and welfare."<sup>19</sup>

Definition of the library type was a contentious process. Early on, small towns struggled with the basic purpose of a library. Like the first Cohasset Public Library, these buildings were often multi-purpose affairs, combining the functions of library, lecture hall, historical museum, town offices, and art museum. Carnegie received library requests that included space for restaurants, gymnasiums, Y.M.C.A., and even a Confederate War memorial. Community size was also important; communities under 1,000 persons rarely were able to afford the maintenance of a library building, much less to raise the funds to build one and hire a librarian. At the same time, librarians began forming associations, publishing journals, and seeking to be recognized as a profession. They constantly waged battles for efficient design and space for flexibility against architects and building committees who were sometimes more interested in building an impressive box for the library.

In the wake of the Boston Public Library and the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Italian Renaissance Revival and Beaux-Arts derived styles predominated in library design; Colonial Revival style

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<sup>17</sup> Donald E. Oehlerts, *Books and Blueprints: Building America's Public Libraries* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 35.

<sup>18</sup> Theodore Jones, *Carnegie Libraries across America: A Public Legacy* (New York: Preservation Press/John Wiley, 1997), 15-16, 127-28.

<sup>19</sup> *Dedicatory Exercises at the Opening of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Cohasset, Massachusetts* (Addison C. Getchell & Son, 185 Franklin St., Boston, 1903), 21.

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designs such as that at Cohasset were fairly uncommon. Theodore Jones surveyed a thousand Carnegie libraries and found that classically derived styles accounted for 79% of those built.<sup>20</sup> Peter Harrison's Redwood Library (1748) in Newport, Rhode Island, is the oldest library structure in the United States still dedicated to its original purpose.<sup>21</sup> The entrance to the Redwood Library, a pedimented portico supported by four columns, perched atop a flight of steps, has remained an icon and been used repeatedly in the design of town libraries such as the Paul Pratt Memorial Library in Cohasset. Harrison copied the design, generally, from an English edition of the works of Andrea Palladio. For many Americans, this Greek temple entry was as essential a symbol of library design as the brand-name logo atop a pole outside a gas station is today. Architectural historian Abigail Van Slyck found the temple front in 68% of 85 Carnegie libraries that she sampled.<sup>22</sup>

Town libraries appealed especially to civic-minded women such as the Pratt sisters. Van Slyck notes that the closing of the American frontier in 1890 shifted American energies from founding new towns to developing existing ones. Often the impetus for a town library was a women's club; in 1933 the American Library Association "credited women's clubs with initiating 75 percent of the public libraries then in existence."<sup>23</sup> Libraries were seen as a public symbol of women's societal role of transmitting culture, and the small-town library became a public version of the private home, symbolic "municipal housekeeping." Arguments for libraries often carried a moral tone, as the buildings were championed as alternatives to the dime novel, the street gang, and the speakeasy. Founding small town libraries provided women with avenues for social change that did not threaten the male status quo, as their efforts easily could be co-opted by male philanthropists, building committees, and town councilors. The Pratt sisters provided the funding, but after their deaths the library was run by a male board that hired a female librarian to run the library. With their gift, the unmarried sisters carried on the family name, not through progeny, but through philanthropy. Van Slyck notes that town libraries were not just educational institutions, but profoundly social ones as well.

Criterion C: Architecture

The architect for the original building was Edward Nichols of Boston and Cohasset (Despite a check of all the records pertaining to the construction of the original building, no record can be found for the original contracting company.). The Paul Pratt Memorial Library is significant for its bookstack technology, Luxfer prism glass, Beechwood granite, Colonial Revival style architecture, and as the most important building designed by Boston and Cohasset architect Edward Nichols.

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<sup>20</sup> Theodore Jones, *Carnegie Libraries across America: A Public Legacy*, 61.

<sup>21</sup> George S. Bobinski, "Libraries," *Built in the U.S.A.: American Buildings from Airports to Zoos* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1985), 108-111.

<sup>22</sup> Abigail A. Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 127.

<sup>23</sup> Abigail A. Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture, 1890-1920*, 125.

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Within its Colonial Revival shell, the Paul Pratt Memorial Library shows a library building representative of a number of trends in library design and architecture. The predominance of the reading room as the main volume of the library was typical for its time, while the side alcove with its fireplace hearkened back to the libraries designed by H.H. Richardson two decades before. The absence of a children's section is not surprising, as city libraries often barred children until the 1890s; rooms designed for children were a development of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The technological innovations of the building are evident in its **bookstack**, an independent structure designed to carry the weight of heavy books. Henri Labrouste designed the first bookstack, "a self-supporting iron skeleton within a masonry building," in the 1850s, as an addition for his 1843 Bibliotheque Sainte-Genevieve in Paris.<sup>24</sup> Ware and Van Brunt designed the first American bookstack, an addition to Gore Hall at Harvard, in 1876, and Van Brunt pioneered the "T-plan" for Frederick Rindge's Cambridge Library. The popular and easily expandable T-plan design featured a bookstack located off the center rear of the horizontal block of reading rooms. More likely to be seen in a large public library, by the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the bookstack became a standard accessory of the large American city or university library. Patrons, barred from the stack, would request books from library staff, who would retrieve them and bring them to the book delivery room. Cyrus Eidlitz's Buffalo Library (1884-87) was the first building in America to replace the metal flooring of the bookstack with glass panels, like those that remain on the second floor of the Cohasset library. Steel bookstack skeletons like that at Cohasset began to replace iron skeletons in the 1890s. Because they were independent of the larger structure, bookstacks often took advantage of the latest advances in fireproofing technologies, such as the automatic fire-door at the Paul Pratt. Standardization in the bookstack industry soon led to agreed dimensions on shelf length and material, floor heights, and aisle width, in order to fit the most books into the smallest space. Bookstack ceiling heights became standardized at about 7.5 feet, partly because they easily fit two stories of books into the average fifteen-foot library floor level, thus alternately matching floor heights in multiple-story buildings. This design also reduced stair climbing by library staff. Bookstacks remained popular, especially in larger or research libraries, until the 1950s, when a parallel movement that sought open stacks arranged by topic and completely accessible to patrons finally triumphed.

Library design through the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century tried to maximize the daylight available to readers. Gore Library at Harvard, for example, in 1891 was the first building on that campus to install electric lights. Before that date, because the fire hazard in libraries precluded gaslight or candles, Gore would close at dark, even if that meant 4 p.m. in the winter.<sup>25</sup> Early electric lighting was sometimes dim or unreliable, and cruciform plans and large windows such as those at the Paul Pratt Memorial Library maximized the natural light in each room. Another architectural innovation was the **Luxfer prism glass** blocks, such as those used in the bookstack windows. The sawtooth ridges on the inside of these square glass blocks were designed to disperse light in horizontal paths widely throughout dark interiors. Founded in 1896 and known by 1898 as the Luxfer Glass

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<sup>24</sup> Donald E. Oehlerts, *Books and Blueprints: Building America's Public Libraries* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 22, 50.

<sup>25</sup> Bainbridge Bunting and Margaret Henderson Floyd, *Harvard: An Architectural History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), 45.



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Prism Syndicate, the company took its name from Latin words “lux” for “light” and “ferre” for “carry.”<sup>26</sup> Its first offices were in the Rookery building in Chicago, and an early associate was architect Frank Lloyd Wright, who in 1897 patented 41 designs for Luxfer glass blocks (though only one was produced). In 1901, Luxfer opened branch offices in New York and Boston. By 1906, Luxfer had sixteen branch offices nationwide and over 12,000 buildings had used its prism windows and transoms, awnings, skylight prisms, pavement prisms, sheet prisms, or fireproof windows.<sup>27</sup> Besides transom windows for stores, offices, and factories, the company specialized in sturdy glass pavement systems to light cellars and tunnels. In 1915, the company pledged, “Luxfer prisms are made of the finest quality pressed crystal glass by a special process. They will not turn purple and give a false light value to objects; they are absolutely clear and will remain so indefinitely.”<sup>28</sup> The Luxfer company was bought out by a competitor in the 1920s, and lighting advances soon rendered the blocks obsolete. Whether Luxfer technology was used in other libraries is unknown; certainly the Paul Pratt Memorial Library constitutes an early use of the technology in a Massachusetts building.

As a Cohasset native, architect Edward Nichols was aware of a significant and unique Cohasset resource, **Beechwood granite**. On each side of the building, the front retaining wall of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library is capped by a row of three large rough-cut blocks of light pink Beechwood Granite from the former Tiffany quarry in the village of Beechwood, in southwestern Cohasset. This granite, “found to be superior to the pink granite of Rhode Island,” was discovered at about the same time as the construction of the library by William W. Bates, on the Whitcomb Lot behind the Sanford Damon house in Beechwood.<sup>29</sup> Large blocks of the granite were hauled to Quincy by 20-horse teams for cutting and polishing for foundations and monuments. After most of the pink granite had been removed, the quarry was sold to Louis C. Tiffany of New York, who continued to quarry some stone from the site. Called “Cohasset Granite” by experts, the stone’s “polished face is very attractive and by its variety of color well adapted for interior decoration. The product is used entirely for monumental and memorial purposes and interior church work.”<sup>30</sup> By the start of WWII, the quarry had been abandoned, the derricks removed, and the land was sold to the U.S. Government. These granite blocks at the Paul Pratt Memorial Library appear to constitute the earliest documented use of Beechwood or Cohasset Granite.

The architect for the Paul Pratt Memorial Library was **Edward Nichols** (1864-1933). Edward Nichols descended from early Hingham settler Thomas Nichols. His father was Caleb Francis Nichols and his mother Jane Snow (Lothrop) Nichols, a daughter of Caleb and Mary Snow Lothrop of Summer Street, Cohasset (MHC #1). Born on May 13, 1864, Edward Nichols was educated in Cohasset public schools. On October 17, 1888, he married Ella Gertrude (Tower), daughter of Newcomb Bates Tower and Sophronia Lawrence (Parker) Tower. In his early professional years Edward Nichols was a member of the firm of Willard T. Sears, Architect, in

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<sup>26</sup> “Luxfer History,” Luxfer Gas Cylinders website, (<http://www.luxfercylinders.com/about/luxferhistory>), 31 July 2005.

<sup>27</sup> *Sweet's Indexed Catalog of Building Construction*, 1906.

<sup>28</sup> *Sweet's Engineering Catalog*, 1915.

<sup>29</sup> Burtram J. Pratt, *A Narrative History of the Town of Cohasset, Massachusetts*, Vol. II (Cohasset: Committee On Town History, 1956), 22. This quarry area today would be within Wompatuck State Park.

<sup>30</sup> T. Nelson Dale, *The Commercial Granites of New England* (U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 738, 1923).



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Boston. Sears moved his offices to 70 Kilby Street in Boston in 1895; Nichols lists the same address on his ca. 1902 blueprints for the Paul Pratt Memorial Library and in the 1908 Cohasset directory, (which lists his home address as Ripley Road in Cohasset).<sup>31</sup> In later years Nichols established a private architectural practice, maintaining his office at 136 Boylston Street, Back Bay, Boston, until his death in Back Bay in 1933. He was architect of a number of public and commercial buildings in Cohasset, including the first Osgood School (1891, razed), the Almshouse or Town Home on Pond Street (1906, razed), the Cohasset Savings Bank (1898, MHC #239), the library addition to the Beechwood Improvement Association Hall (1916, MHC #530), a new rear section of Cohasset Town Hall (1928, MHC #37), and a number of late nineteenth century large Victorian homes near Cohasset village, including his own house at 43 Tower Lane (1894, MHC #347). The records of the Massachusetts Historical Commission list only four Edward Nichols designs outside of Cohasset, all residential designs in Brookline and Quincy.<sup>32</sup>

Edward Nichols perhaps is best known for his extensive work with Isabella Stewart Gardner during the planning and design of her museum /residence (NHL) at Fenway Court (also 1902-03), Boston, later to become the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Representing Willard T. Sears, the principal architect, Nichols was the working architect on site. Original letters written by Mrs. Gardner to architect Nichols during her European buying trips, formerly in the possession of the Nichols, then Wadsworth, families, were given to the museum following the death of Nichols' daughter Dorothy Lothrop (Nichols) Wadsworth in 1973.<sup>33</sup>

The exterior appearance of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library remains much the same as shown in Nichols' own photograph illustrating the library in Davenport and Davenport's 1909 *Genealogies of the Families of the Town of Cohasset*. In that volume, Nichols describes the building as being designed "in the classical style of architecture, of the Georgian, or Colonial period."<sup>34</sup> While **Colonial Revival** style was widely used for residences in the United States from the 1880s onward, it was less often used for monumental public buildings. The classical brick Georgian Revival style is uncommon in Cohasset, with only one other building rivaling it in size and style: the Nichols-designed Cohasset Savings Bank building (1898, MHC #239), on Elm Street, now owned by the Hingham Institution for Savings. A second brick Colonial Revival style building in Cohasset is the former Ripley Road School (1927, no MHC #) with an early wing designed by Nichols, which in 2003 was

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<sup>31</sup> *Hingham and Cohasset Directory*, 1908. MassCOPAR lists Edward Nichols as in practice 1899-1923 and 1928-32; Nichols' office is at 70 Kilby Street in the 1905 and 1915 Boston directories.

<sup>32</sup> The MACRIS (Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System) Maker Index lists ten Cohasset projects for Edward Nichols; the residential designs are on Ripley Road, Sohler Street, and North Main Street and date from around 1890. In Brookline, Nichols designed the French Provincial style George W. Proctor House (1924; MHC #1301) and the Spanish-Colonial Revival style Ellery House (1918; MHC #1484) and Garage (1918; MHC #2814). In Quincy he designed the Colonial Revival Annie Prescott House (1908, MHC #1185). Nichols does not appear in Withey & Withey.

<sup>33</sup> The family history of Edward Nichols comes from the files of the principal author of this nomination, David H. Wadsworth, who is also the architect's grandson. Edward Nichols did not have a middle name. Nichols' linen architectural drawings, found in his attic after his death, were reused by the family for the cloth.

<sup>34</sup> "Description of the Building by the Architect, Edward Nichols," pp. 621-22 in George Lyman Davenport and Elizabeth Osgood Davenport, *Genealogies of the Families of Cohasset, Massachusetts* (Cohasset: Committee On Town History, 1909).

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renovated as the current Paul Pratt Memorial Library. The front facades of these large Colonial Revival buildings are intended to impart an image of solidness, permanence, strength, enlightenment, and reverence for the past, ideals that were perceived as being among the important character traits of the new American Republic. In this they have succeeded far better than many later designs. The 1902-03 Paul Pratt building, with its clean, balanced lines, large lantern cupola and massive Ionic portico is the best example in Cohasset of the monumental Colonial Revival style as used to express early 20<sup>th</sup> century American esthetic ideals.

Criterion C: Art

The Paul Pratt Memorial Library is significant to the history of art for its four rotunda murals by the Boston and Cohasset artist **MacIvor Reddie** (1899-1966). Concerned with accuracy, Reddie thoroughly researched not only the town's history but also the buildings, tools, equipment, clothing, and watercraft of the eras pictured. Warren F. Clark of Waltham, instructor of design and lettering at the School of Practical Arts, executed lettering for the murals. George W. Flint of Cohasset put the panels in place; they were permanently glued to the blank curved sections of the upper plaster walls of the rotunda. The murals, given by retiring Chief Librarian Charlotte S. Tower, were first open for public inspection on Sunday, December 1, 1946. Restored in 1993, the four large paintings and remain on the walls of the rotunda and are now owned by the Cohasset Historical Society.

At the unveiling of the murals, Tower told a reporter that she had brought the idea to Reddie, who agreed to pursue it. She suggested that each of the four panels represent a different century, but left the topics to Reddie. Reddie stood atop a stepladder with his brush and palette, touching up the newly installed murals, and told the journalist "There was plenty of history in Cohasset to fulfill Miss Tower's original idea, but the question was finding four scenes that would look well together."<sup>35</sup> Reddie studied Bigelow's *History of Cohasset* (1898), made quick sketches, then researched each. For the panel on John Smith's brief visit to Cohasset Harbor in 1614, he depicted a well-known seascape near Hominy Point, at high tide, but was careful to add in a stretch of trees that had been destroyed in an 1898 storm. He determined that Smith had probably sailed in a small two-masted boat called a pinnace, and depicted that in the mural. He searched the longest for an image of a surveyor's standing compass for the second mural; he finally found one at MIT. For his depiction of Bethiah Nichols Tower, Miss Tower's great, great grandmother, Reddie chose the woman's costume and her oxcart from illustrations in reference books found in the Paul Pratt Memorial Library. Finally, Reddie composed the harbor scene of the 1800s as a composite of several early photographs of Cohasset Harbor.

MacIvor Reddie was born on January 4, 1899, at Long Beach, California, to Archibald Ferguson Reddie and Eliza Cattel Reddie, both of Philadelphia. He married Elizabeth Magoun on November 3, 1936. His early

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<sup>35</sup> "Historical Murals Unveiled at Cohasset Library," 1946 unsourced article, and the pamphlet *Narrative History of Cohasset in Murals*, both in the Paul Pratt Memorial Library/Cohasset Free Public Library clipping file, Cohasset Historical Society, Cohasset; "To Be Presented to Cohasset Library," *Boston Sunday Herald* 17 November 1946 (Rotogravure Section).

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education was at Cambridge Latin, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and in public schools of Valparaiso, Indiana, and Eugene, Oregon. Reddie's art education began at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where he was a scholarship student for three years. He graduated in 1919. In 1918-19 he was offered a paid position as assistant to Philip Hale, teaching anatomy at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. After graduation Reddie became Supervisor of Art in the Whitman, Massachusetts public schools for one year (1919-20), then was an Assistant Instructor of First Year Drawing at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. From 1923 to 1927 he was part time Instructor of Figure Drawing and Figure Illustration at the School of Practical Art (now the Art Institute of Boston). During this time he painted murals in his Boston studio. From 1927 to 1933 he maintained a studio in Greenwich Village, New York City, where he continued painting portraits and doing newspaper illustrations as well as giving private instruction. During this time he painted several murals, including a church altarpiece at St. Malachi's in New York and *Jesus In the Garden at Gethemene* for a cathedral in Portland, Maine.

MacIvor Reddie returned to Boston in 1933, where he continued painting portraits, painting murals, and giving private instruction. From 1939 until 1966 he was involved with the School of Practical Art (Art Institute of Boston), first as Instructor of Figure Drawings and Illustration, then as Director, and later as Vice President, heading the faculty and the educational program. Finally he became part owner of the school. During his lifetime he was the recipient of numerous awards and decorations. He had exhibits and one-man-shows in numerous New England and New York festivals and galleries, including the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Peabody Museum, in Salem, Massachusetts (1968), the Guild of Boston Artists (1956-1966), and the South Shore Art Center, Cohasset (1956-1966). His life and career have been microfilmed by the Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian Institution.<sup>36</sup>

Reddie took up residence in Cohasset in 1942, four years before the unveiling of the four historical murals in the Paul Pratt Memorial Library. He was a charter member, organizer and board member of the South Shore Art Center, Cohasset, from 1955 to 1963, and also of several other local art centers. MacIvor Reddie died suddenly, in Cohasset, on November 7, 1966. In 1993, prominent local artist Liz Crosby restored the four historical murals at the Paul Pratt Memorial Library.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> See MacIvor Reddie Papers, 1869-1975, Reel 940, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. The summary of the collection reads as follows: "Personal and official correspondence with attached explanatory notes by Mrs. Reddie; biographical data and reminiscences; a certificate of award; exhibition material, 1953-1966; reproductions of Reddie's work; clippings; and photographs of Reddie and his work." The collection also contains a number of unmicrofilmed items, including sketches, sketchbooks, and exhibition catalogs from the MacIvor Reddie Gallery and the School of Practical Art.

<sup>37</sup> Most of the MacIvor Reddie biography was compiled by Liz Crosby of Cottage Farm Studio in Scituate, Massachusetts. Following the death of Reddie's widow, Elizabeth, in the 1980's, the Reddie family gave Crosby the task of selling the collection of MacIvor Reddie's paintings through her studio (at that time located at Jerusalem Road in Cohasset). In the early 1980's, Crosby restored the Cohasset Historical Society's collection of oil and watercolor paintings of mostly nineteenth century Cohasset subjects. Crosby maintained an active studio in Cohasset for many years before removing to the adjacent town of Scituate.

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Cohasset (Norfolk), MA**Section number 8 Page 16Changes Since the Period of Significance

Four major construction campaigns have occurred since the period of significance: a gradual updating in the late 1950s and three architect-designed reconfigurations in the decades since. Despite these changes, most of the architecturally significant elements of the building's exterior and interior remain intact. The architect for the 1963 building addition was Cohasset resident Horatio Williams Beal of the firm J. Williams Beal, Sons, Granger & Poskus of Boston; the contractor the Ambrosia Construction Company of Quincy. The architect for the 1977 renovation was Maurice Nathan Finegold of Anderson Notter Finegold Associates, the general contractor Constantino and Farley of Burlington, and the landscape architects Mason and Frey. The lead architects for the 2004 conversion of the building were James F. Rissling and Jim Sandell of the firm Carr, Lynch and Sandell, Inc.

In the 1962 Cohasset Town Report, the secretary of the Board of Directors of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library reported on "major improvements made during the past few years." The list is worth reprinting completely here:

- Removing old copper roofing and putting on a new slate roof with copper gutters.
- Weathervane re-gold-leafed.
- All outside bricks pointed up and waterproofed
- Face of the building steam cleaned and painted.
- New Vinyl plastic floors laid down in the main building.
- Adult reading room re-decorated and shades replaced with drapes.
- New counter top on main desk with improved lighting.
- Electric hot water heater installed (no hot water before.).
- New boiler room built and fireproofed.
- New black top driveway.
- Lawn regraded and rebuilt.

The two boards of the independent library began planning its expansion about 1960. In a 1961 town planning report, Cohasset evaluated its library facilities. Between 1951 and 1960, Cohasset population had grown at a relatively steep rate, from an estimated 3,900 to 5,765 people. In line with national American Library Association standards, the library was open 45 hours a week (just below the 50 hours suggested), had a collection of 5 volumes per capita, and circulated 13.5 volumes per capita (well above the suggested national ratios of 3 and 10 per capita, respectively). The report identified the main library problem as space needs. It considered expanding into the basement level, which at that time contained the heating plant, the former coal storage room now partially occupied by fuel-oil tanks, little-used restrooms, and two large unheated spaces, infrequently used for storage or workspace. While finishing the basement would provide the needed square feet, "this would require extensive structural remodeling, including the provision of new stairways. The cold, damp

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stonework of the basement walls would have to be completely covered with interior finish and windows cut through their full thickness at numerous points.”<sup>38</sup> Instead, the library commissioners proposed, and the planning report endorsed, a two-story rear addition, scheduled for construction within the next five years. Working with architect Horatio W. Beal, the library board drew up plans and began work in November 1963.<sup>39</sup> The new addition was dedicated on September 27, 1964, although the lower level, then planned as an auditorium, remained unfinished. Funding for the addition came from bequests and gifts.

The architect for the 1963 building addition was Cohasset resident **Horatio Williams Beal** (d. 1964) of the firm J. Williams Beal, Sons, Granger & Poskus of Boston. J. Williams Beal (1855-1919), born at Norwell, earned his architecture degree at MIT and worked as a draftsman for Richard M. Hunt and McKim, Mead & White. He began his own practice in Boston in 1888 and worked with his two sons Horatio and John Woodbridge Beal, designing public buildings in Plymouth County and residences throughout Boston.<sup>40</sup> The family business known later in his life as J. Williams Beal & Sons continued at least through 1980, as J. Williams Beal Sons (1921-58), J. Williams Beal Sons, Granger & Dyer (1959-61), J. Williams Beal Sons & Granger (1962), J. Williams Beal Sons, Granger & Poskus (1963-67), and J. Williams Beal Sons & Poskus (1968-80).<sup>41</sup> Horatio Williams Beal (AIA 1921) had retired to Cohasset; he designed the addition shortly before his death.<sup>42</sup>

By 1975, the Paul Pratt Memorial Library was again running low on space, and began a project to expand the library. The town decided to rehabilitate the underutilized basement areas to increase library space by 40%: “The lower level of the library which faces Jacob’s Meadow contains 2,000 sq. ft. of unused space. Architectural studies of the library by the firm Finegold and Bullis show that the cellar area with its high ceilings and rough stone walls can be renovated to create an attractive two-level library. This structural modernization of the building will give us an efficient, attractive interior. We will have ‘recycled’ an old, but fine building” (emphasis original).<sup>43</sup> That same year, as part of the renovation, the Directors gave the library building and its property to the Town of Cohasset. That gift was accepted by an affirmative vote under Article 51 of Town Meeting and was effectuated later in 1975. An article to renovate the building failed of the necessary two-thirds vote at that meeting, but subsequently was approved at Town Meeting in the spring of

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<sup>38</sup> *Cohasset, Massachusetts: Summary Report on Long Range General Plan*. December 1961, 35.

<sup>39</sup> The Paul Pratt Memorial Library Dedication Brochure, September 27, 1964, Paul Pratt Memorial Library/Cohasset Free Public Library clipping file, Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Cohasset.

<sup>40</sup> Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: New Age, 1970). J.W. Beal’s office in 1895 was at 55 Kilby, according to Charles S. Damrell, *A Half Century of Boston’s Building* (Boston: Louis P. Hager, 1895).

<sup>41</sup> MassCOPAR, *Directory of Boston Architects, 1846-1970* (Cambridge: MassCOPAR (Massachusetts Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1984), 10. According to directory search cards in the files of the Fine Arts Library of the Boston Public Library, the firm’s office was at 185 Devonshire from 1926 through 1974-75.

<sup>42</sup> *American Architects Directory* 1962. H.W. Beal had not filled out the questionnaire for this edition; someone penciled “d. 1964” after his name in the Boston Public Library’s Fine Arts Library copy.

<sup>43</sup> “Library Renovations: A Sensible Solution to an Urgent Problem.” Paul Pratt Memorial Library/Cohasset Free Public Library clipping file, Cohasset Historical Society, Cohasset.

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1976, appropriating \$201,000. Overall these alterations increased usable library space in the building by a reported 40%. As part of the 1977 alteration the former washroom facility off the rotunda and adjacent to the front entry on its south side was removed and a broad stairway constructed leading between main floor level and the new children's library at the lower level. The newly renovated building was dedicated on January 8, 1978.

The architect for the 1977 renovation was **Maurice Nathan Finegold** (b. 1932) of Anderson Notter Finegold Associates. In 1975, the firm of Finegold & Bullis completed an architectural study of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library prior to the fundraising campaign. The final plans were drawn up by Finegold's next partnership, and Finegold spoke at the dedication of the library in 1978. Born in Providence and educated at Harvard College (BA 1954) and Harvard Graduate School of Design (MARCH 1958), Finegold (AIA 1959) worked for Salsberg & LeBlanc (1961-64) before founding his own firm, Maurice N. Finegold & Associates (1964-70).<sup>44</sup> He was lead partner in Finegold and Bullis from 1970 until 1975. Finegold & Bullis won recognition for a project completed shortly before Pratt Library, the 1974-75 renovation and expansion of the Randall Library in Stow, Massachusetts.<sup>45</sup> In 1975, Finegold joined the firm Anderson, Notter & Associates as a principal. Organized in 1961 as J. Timothy Anderson & Associates, the firm reorganized as Anderson, Notter & Associates in 1970, recognizing George M. Notter, Jr., a partner since 1965. In 1977 the firm reorganized as Anderson, Notter, Finegold Associates, a firm that continued the commitment of its partners to some of the highest-profile renovation, restoration, and adaptive use projects in Boston: Charlestown Navy Yard, Chelsea Post Office, Old City Hall, the Wang Center, the Hatch Shell, and the Custom House Block & Gardiner Building. Outside of Boston, the firm pioneered adaptive reuse downtown planning in Newburyport, Springfield, and Lowell; Ellis Island, New York; and the Art Deco District in Miami Beach, Florida. The firm designed restorations or adaptations for Mechanics Hall in Worcester; H.H. Richardson's Union Station in New London, Connecticut; and the Auditor's Building in Washington, D.C. In 1993, lead partner Finegold changed the firm name to Finegold Alexander + Associates. In 2005, the firm continues under that name, with a staff that includes eight architects and seventeen drafters, specializing in large-scale projects for academic, cultural, commercial office, public, religious, and multi-unit residential clients; it lists its areas of expertise as master planning, adaptive-use, renovation, restoration, and new construction. A 1980 firm resume lists thirteen library projects, nearly all adaptations or expansions, in Amesbury, Avon, Bolton, Cohasset, Dedham, Ipswich, Norwell, Plymouth, Sharon, Shrewsbury, Stow, and Weymouth, Massachusetts; and Burlington, Vermont.<sup>46</sup> The Paul Pratt Memorial Library design occurred at a significant transition in Maurice Nathan Finegold's architectural career.

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<sup>44</sup> *American Architects Directory* 1970.

<sup>45</sup> *Built to Last: A Handbook on Recycling Old Buildings* (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1977), 29-30.

<sup>46</sup> Besides the sources already cited, information for this profile comes from the Architect card files and the Architect files (including resumes of Anderson Notter Finegold Inc., articles, and clippings) of the Fine Arts Library of the Boston Public Library, as well the firm's current (2005) profile.

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Most of the basement/bottom floor of the building now holds two single-bedroom apartments constructed by the Cohasset Historical Society and funded by the Cohasset Community Preservation Committee. After the Cohasset Historical Society, a private non-profit organization, acquired the property from the Town of Cohasset in 2003, they launched an ambitious plan to convert basement space not needed for their collections or programming into housing for qualified moderate-income senior citizens. The 2004 project built two apartments into existing lower-level spaces at the Paul Pratt Library. The north reading room is used as a combination working and display area, the existing built-in library wooden shelving serving as exhibit shelves. The former office area to the rear of the main floor holds the Society's general archive files and work area.

The lead architects for the 2004 conversion of the building were James F. Rissling and Jim Sandell of the firm **Carr, Lynch and Sandell, Inc.**, of Cambridge, Massachusetts. According to the firm's website, it was founded in 1977 and "is a multi-disciplinary firm providing services in architecture, master planning, urban design, landscape design, and exhibition design." A prominent co-founder of the firm was Boston architect, planner, and author Kevin Lynch (d. 1984), while Stephen Carr wrote *Public Space* (1992). Known previously as Carr, Lynch Associates (ca. 1980s) and Carr, Lynch, Hack, and Sandell (1990s), the firm completed such high-profile Boston projects as the Prudential Center Redevelopment (early 1990s) and Boston Yacht Haven (1994). Outside of Boston, their far-ranging projects include the award-winning Lowell Heritage State Park Entrance Plaza in Lowell, Massachusetts; the Caribbean Jewel Beach Resort in St. Lucia; and waterfront redesigns at Perth, Australia, and Battery Park in New York City. Jim Sandell is a resident of Cohasset.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Besides the firm's website, sources for this profile include the card files of the Fine Arts Library of the Boston Public Library, and telephone conversations with Jim Rissling and Jim Sandell.



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Pratt Historic Building  
Name of Property

Norfolk, MA  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property Less than 1 acre

**UTM References See continuation sheet.**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19 Zone	351480 Easting	4677600 Northing	3. Zone	Easting	Northing
2. Zone	Easting	Northing	4. Zone	Easting	Northing

— See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

**Boundary Justification**

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

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title David Wadsworth, Cohasset Historical Society, Tim Orwig, consultant and Betsy Friedberg, NR, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date July 2006

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

**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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Cohasset Historical Society

street & number 106 South Main Street telephone 781-383-1434

city or town Cohasset state MA zip code 02025

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**10. Boundary Description**

The National Register boundary for this property corresponds to the legal boundary of the lot containing the Pratt Historical Building, a former public library owned by the Cohasset Historical Society, at 106 South Main Street in Cohasset. The lot is illustrated on the current Town of Cohasset Assessor's Map 32, as Plot 62. This parcel holds the former Paul Pratt Memorial Library building, shown as a roughly rectangular upland section of about 24,630 s.f. and a generally triangular wedge of marsh of 23,400 s.f. (part of Jacob's Meadow). This roughly triangular rear parcel has two town sewer easements across its eastern apex. The parcel abuts South Main Street near its northern intersection with Spring Street on its west (front) side, private property on its north and south sides, and the Town of Cohasset sewer treatment plant parcel on its northeast apex.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries correspond to the legal boundaries of the lot containing the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, purchased from the Town of Cohasset by the Cohasset Historical Society on February 11, 2003. The full legal description is in the Quitclaim Deed from the Town of Cohasset to the Cohasset Historical Society, Norfolk County Deeds Book 18531, pp. 146-147. The boundaries outlined in the current deed appear to correspond roughly to the "Plan of the Land conveyed by Samuel T. Snow and Adeline C. Snow to Paul Pratt Memorial Library, August 27, 1901, Surveyed by D.N. Tower, June, 1893," Cohasset Historical Society. The only variation between the present deed and the 1893-1901 plan is a small section of town-owned land added to the northwest corner, formerly part of a wide odd-shaped right of way at the (northern) intersection of Spring Street and South Main Street. That section was added by 1902 as the terminus of the circular driveway.

(end)

## Pratt Historic Building, Cohasset, Norfolk County, Massachusetts Site Data Sheet

Structure/Landscape/Feature	Date of Construction	Type of Resource	Contributing or Not (NC)	Direction from Paul Pratt Memorial Library	Designer (if known)
Paul Pratt Memorial Library	1902-03	Building	Contributing		Edward Nichols
Series of stone walls	1902-03	Structure	Contributing	N & S	Edward Nichols
Old Stone Wall	prior to 1891		Contributing	N	
North Lot Line Retaining Wall	ca. 1902-03		Contributing	NW & N	
South Lot Line Retaining Wall	ca. 1902-03		Contributing	SW & S	
Northwest Corner Stone Pier	ca. 1902-03?	Object	Contributing	NW	
Front Driveway	1902-03	Structur	Contributing	W	
Memorial Flagpole	Since 1977	Object	NC	W	
Stone Bench	Since 1977	Object	NC	W	
Utility Shed	2004	Building	NC	E	
Signpost	2004	Object	NC	W	
Rear Walkway (includes walk, railings, light bollards)	1977, 2004	Structure	NC	SW & S	

Totals: 9 = 1 contributing building (1 NC); 2 contributing structures (1 NC); 1 contributing object (3 NC).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number appendix Page 1Pratt Historic Building  
Cohasset (Norfolk), MA

## Original Architectural Descriptions

1. This "Description of the Building by the Architect, Edward Nichols," appeared on pages 621-22 in George Lyman Davenport and Elizabeth Osgood Davenport, *Genealogies of the Families of Cohasset, Massachusetts*, 1909:

The Paul Pratt Memorial Library building is designed in the classical style of architecture, of the Georgian, or Colonial period, and is cruciform in plan, the main reading rooms making the long arms of the cross, with an Ionic portico on the front and the stack room in the rear making the short arms. The walls are built of buff brick with trimmings of Indiana limestone, above a base course of granite. The roof is of copper, and is crowned by an octagonal cupola terminated by a vane in the form of a mackerel,—typical of Cohasset's former industry. In a circular hall opposite the entry is the general delivery desk, and close to this a card catalogue case let into the paneling of the wall. Beyond the desk, with an intervening lobby, is the book room, consisting of two tiers of steel stacks with glass floor. This room is of fireproof construction, and is shut off from the main building by an automatic fireproof door. It contains shelf-room for about 13,000 volumes, and, by reason of the basement being wholly above ground on the rear, it is made possible to increase the capacity by adding an equal amount of shelving below, making a total capacity of 26,000 volumes. This arrangement of stacks, partly above and partly below the general delivery desk, brings all the books within easy access. The whole north wing of the building is given to a large reading room containing the juvenile department and cases for the exhibition of articles of historic interest; and the south wing is divided into a smaller reading room, an alcove for reference books, and a room for the use of the librarians and directors. Both reading rooms have fireplaces, and are paneled to the height of the windows and finished with birch in mahogany color, with birch floors. The spaces on either side of the vestibule are used for the janitor's room and stairs to the basement and loft. In the pediment above the front portico is a clock, the gift of Mr. James Longley of the Board of Directors.

2. Nichols also wrote a lengthy (4 page) poem, "Lines Written for the Dedication of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Cohasset, Mass.," which takes the reader through a tour of the new library. The following brief excerpt, for example, describes the construction process:

... Is a new plot of ground sprung up where we may often pass it,  
    Proceeding over Hancock's hill, by way of South Main Street.  
And if you further asked the why and wherefore of this doing,  
    Why ledges have been leveled and the sloping hill made low . . .  
That what was once a hollow has been raised above the river,  
    And what was once a hilltop has been leveled to the ground.<sup>1</sup>

This excerpt describes Nichols' conception of the architecture:

<sup>1</sup> *Dedicatory Exercises at the Opening of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Cohasset, Massachusetts* (Addison C. Getchell & Son, 185 Franklin St., Boston, 1903), 23-26.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number appendix Page 2Pratt Historic Building  
Cohasset (Norfolk), MA

Until to-day we stand, complete from books to window screens.  
To wit,—then, here's a building of Colonial dimensions,  
With portico and cupola, and all that appertain,  
Buff bricks with limestone trimmings, cruciform in its extensions,  
Arched are the windows and the doors, and, for a sure beginning,  
As solid as Cohasset's rocks on which our faith we pin,  
Is set level to the floor, a granite underpinning;  
And granite steps invite us at our ease to enter in.  
By the Ionic portico we enter at our leisure,  
Pass through the paneled vestibule and pause beneath the dome;  
Here at the desk Miss Collier sits, awaiting there our pleasure,  
Of willing mind to show us the Library's new home.  
We see beyond the desk, the stacks, in orderly precision,  
Row upon row of well-kept books, aligned upon the shelves, . . .  
Now to the right we enter through an arched and paneled portal,  
The reading room, with tables lined by thoughtful readers all;

Nichols lists the many authors and categories of learning in his poem, then moves to the northern reading room:

Crossing the hall, we enter now the north room and the greater,  
With arched top and mantel high and wide expanse of floor;  
Here may the patriot daughters meet in goodly numbers later  
To keep alive the memory of the patriot sires of yore. . . .  
Returning thence we find ourselves again in the rotunda;  
And here within the panel work are seen three smaller doors,  
One giving entrance to the stairs, to loft, and cellar under,  
Another where the janitor will guard his precious stores.  
A third behind the desk, to the librarian's study enters,  
Thence to the book room or the reading rooms on either hand;  
This viewed, there's naught remains on which the public interest centres,  
So passing out, a moment on the portico we stand.  
Above us with its massive chains the lantern sways convulsive,  
Like some dead felon on the gibbet rack of olden time,  
Before a wiser age had shown how futile and repulsive  
This old barbarian method was, for punishment of crime.  
And we may well consider in the march of human knowledge,  
From barbarism up until its present excellence,  
That books have done their share no less than church or school or college,  
And institutions such as this have spread beneficence. . . .





007 NNNNNNNN 07/19/04 NOBLE'S 0

Paul Pratt Memorial Library  
(Pratt Historic Building)  
106 South Main Street  
Cohasset MA 02025

Photographer: Noel A. Ripley 6/2004  
Cohasset Historical Commission

Photograph # 1 of 3.

Southwest elevation, The Front.

copy 1.

Don





007 NNN1NNNN 07/19/04 NOBLE'S 0

Paul Pratt Memorial Library  
(Pratt Historic Building)  
106 South Main Street  
Cobasset MA 02025  
Photographer: Noel A. Ripley ©/2004  
Cobasset Historical Commission  
Photograph # 2 of 3 Copy 1.  
Southwest and southeast elevations.

rew





007 NNNNNNNN 07/19/04 NOBLE'S 0

Paul Pratt Memorial Library  
(Pratt Historic Building)  
106 South Main Street  
Cohasset MA 02025  
Photographer: Noel A. Ripley, 6/2004  
Cohasset Historical Commission  
Photograph # 3 of 3 copy 1.  
North west elevation (the wing)

REV





PRATT HISTORIC BLDG.  
COHASSET (NORFOLK) MA

2006

ANN LATTINVILLE digital photo

photo #1



PRATT HISTORIC BLDG.  
WHASSET (NORFOLK) MA

2006  
ANN LATTINVILLE digital photo

PHOTO #2







PRATT HISTORIC BLDG.

COHASSET (NORFOLK) MA  
2006

ANN LATTINVILLE digital photo

PHOTO # 3



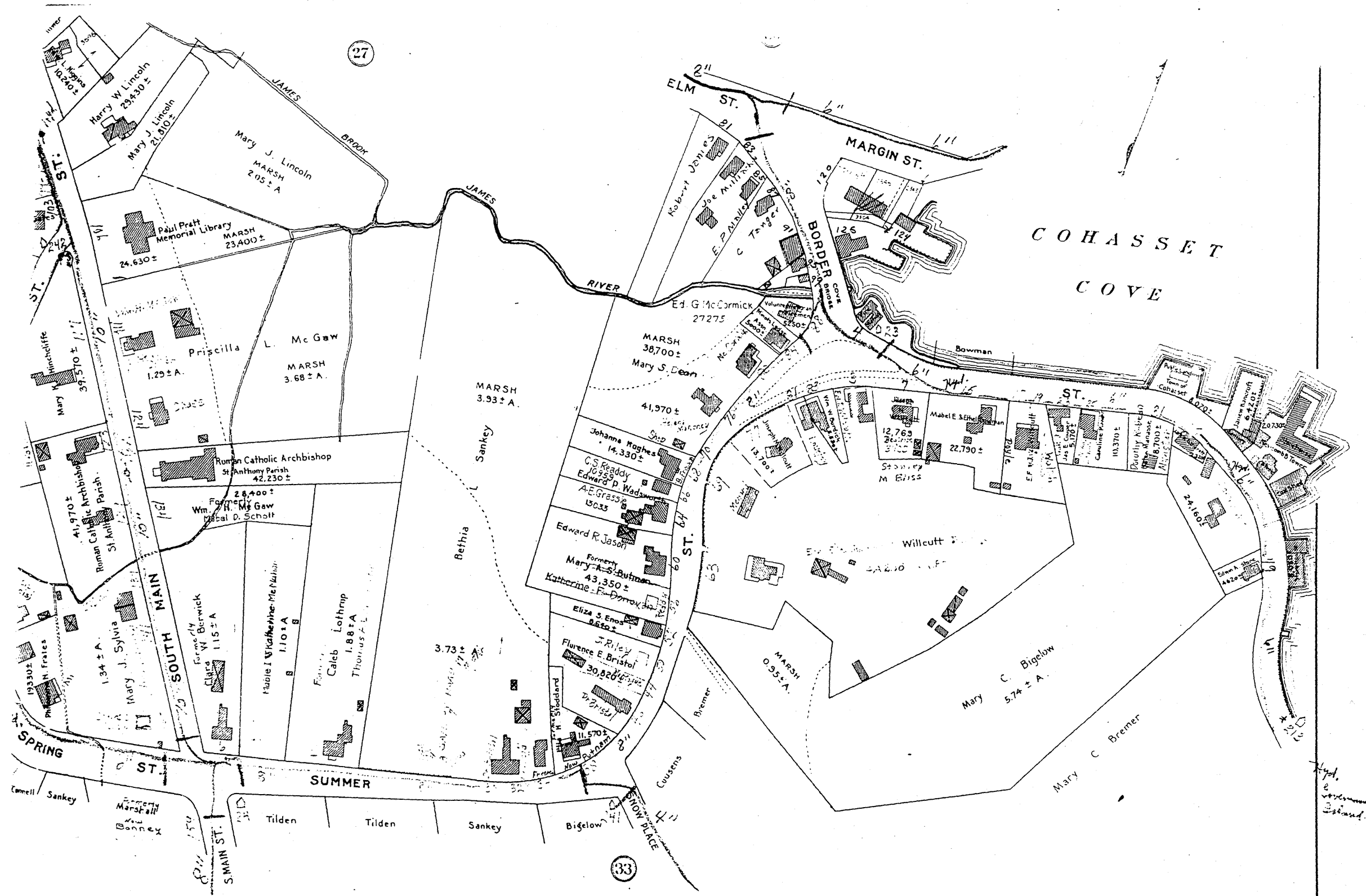
PRATT HISTORIC BLDG.  
WHASSET (NORFOLK) MA

2006

ANN LATTINVILLE digital photo

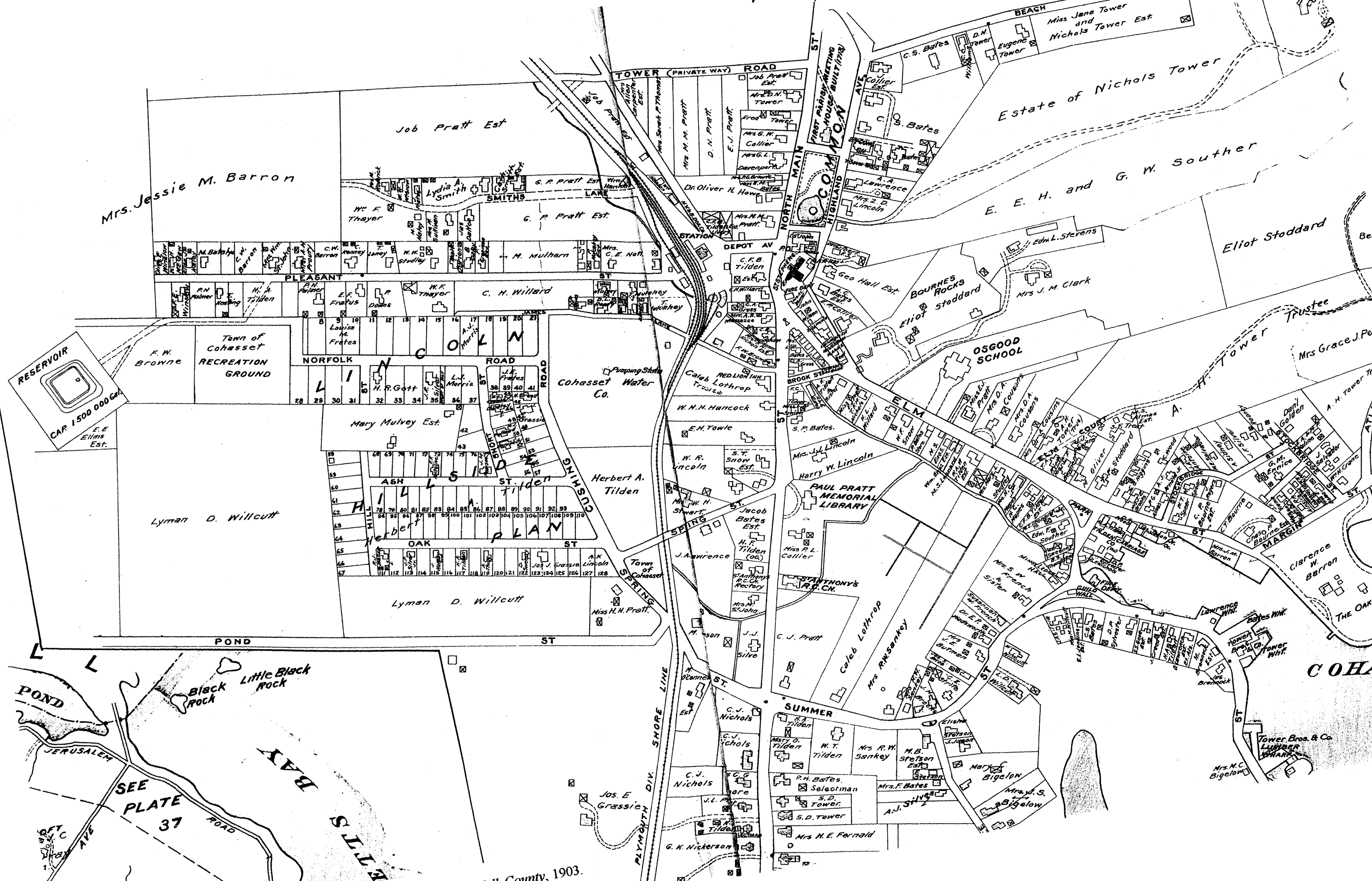
PHOTO #4





Cohasset Assessors' Office Map published 1931. Cohasset Historical Society.





Cohasset, Norfolk County, 1903.

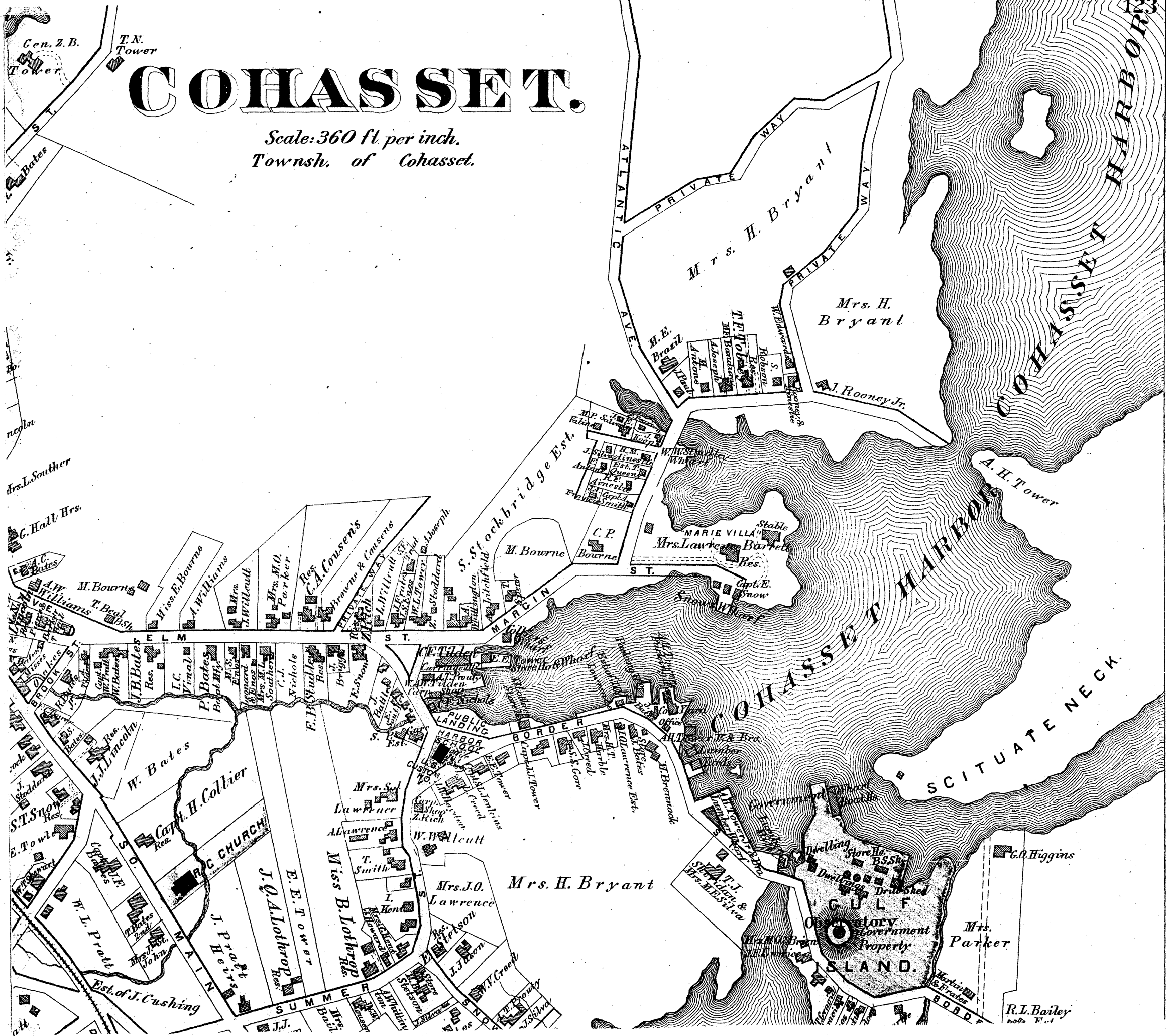
RESERVOIR  
CAP. 1 500 000 GAL.

SEE PLATE 37

COHASSET

# COHASSET.

Scale: 360 ft. per inch.  
Townsh. of Cohasset.

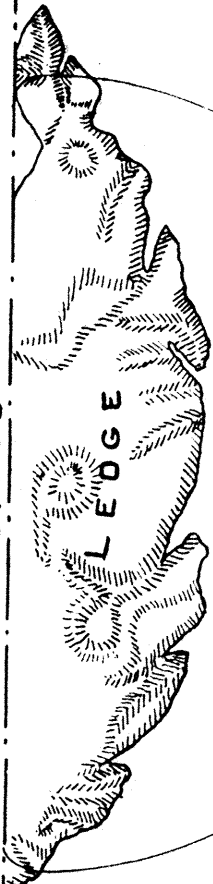


SOUTH MAIN STREET

SOUTH MAIN STREET

N 69° 10' E 58.5 ft.

138.8 feet



27443 Square feet of Upland

PAUL PRATT

Estate of Bela Bates  
S 76° 40' E 335.9 feet Line of ditch

18673 Square feet of Meadow

N 68° 45' E 402.0 feet Line of ditch

Henry Collier







# PLAN OF THE LAND

conveyed by

**SAMUEL T. SNOW AND ADELINE C. SNOW**

to the

**PAUL PRATT MEMORIAL LIBRARY,**

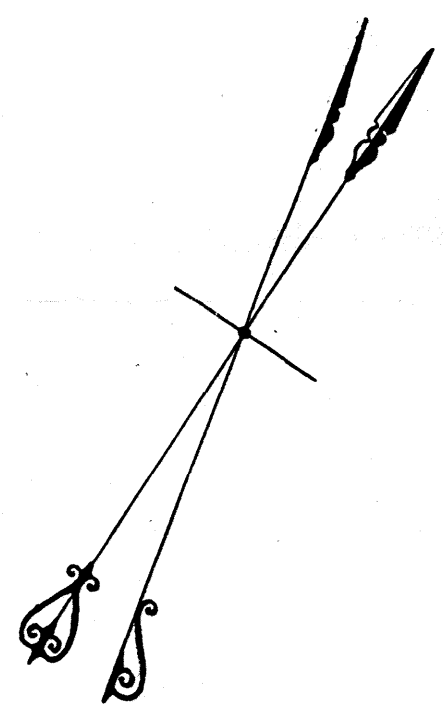
August 27, 1901.

Surveyed by

D.N. TOWER

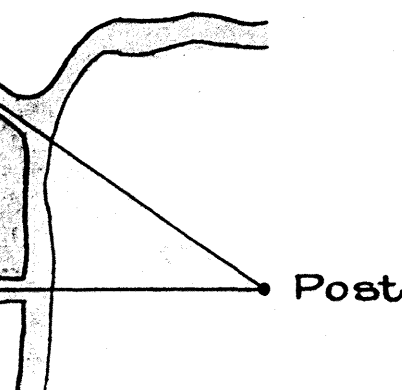
June, 1893.

Line of Bela Bates  
335.9 feet  
Line of ditch



8673 Square Feet of Meadow.

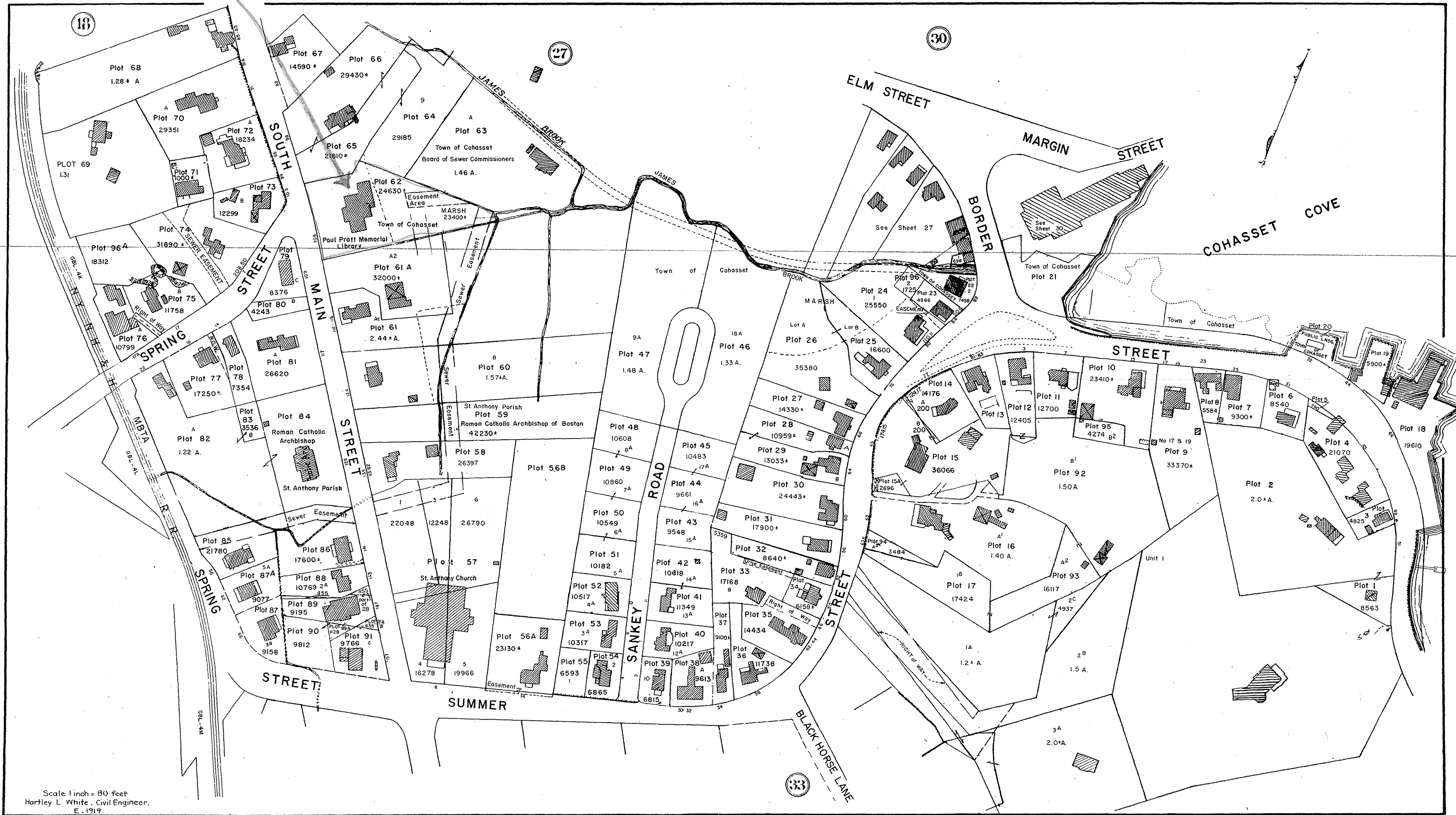
Line of ditch



Scale: 1 inch = 20 feet



Paul Pratt Memorial Library  
106 South Main Street  
Cohasset (Norfolk Co.), MA



Scale 1 inch = 80 feet  
Hartley L. White, Civil Engineer,  
E., 1919



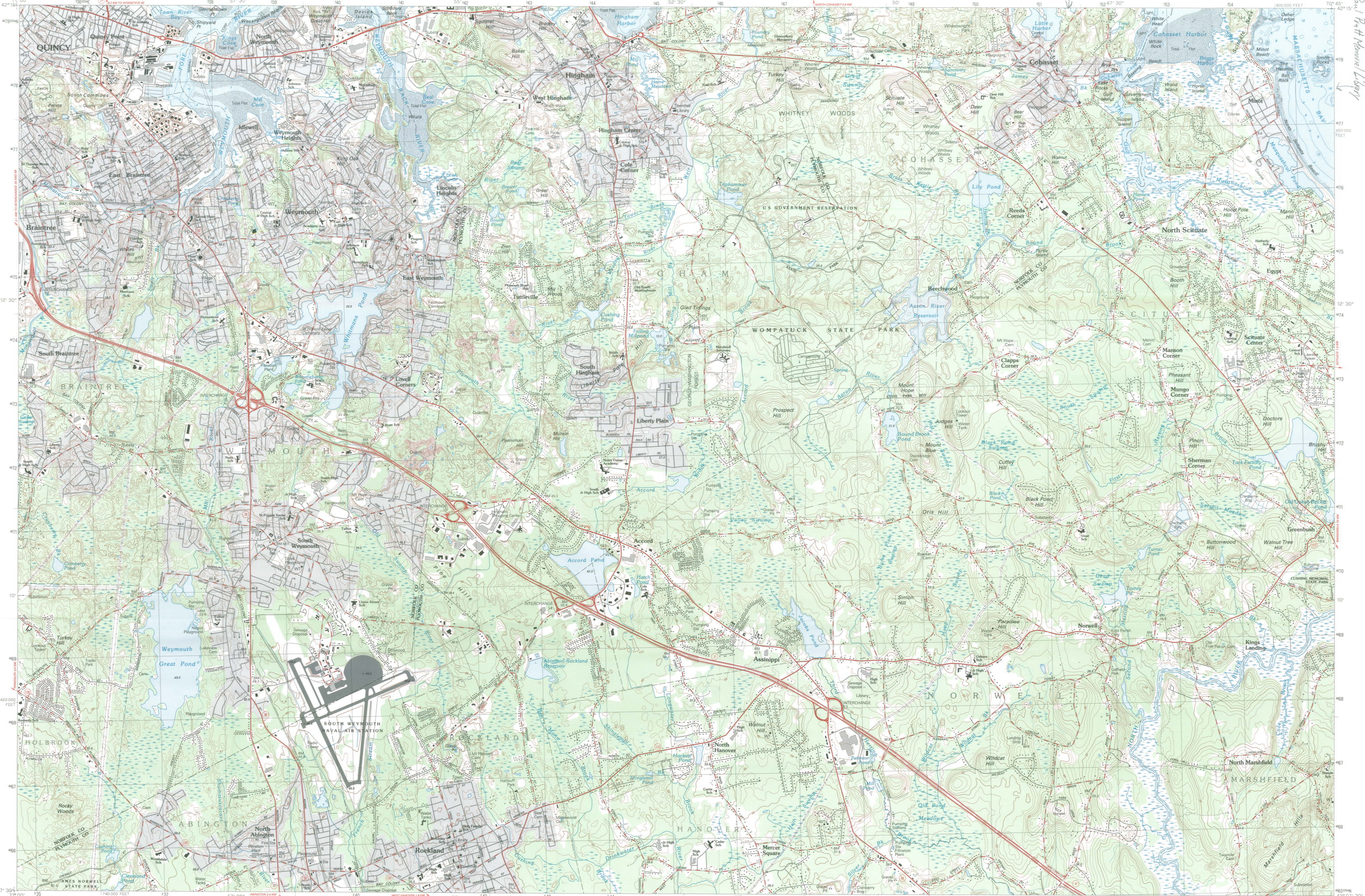
PAUL PRATT MEMORIAL BUILDING  
**Weymouth**  
MASSACHUSETTS  
COHASSET (NORFOLK) MA

1:25 000-scale metric  
topographic map

7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE  
SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names

**GEOLOGICAL SURVEY**  
1984



Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of  
Public Works

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
agencies

Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1976. Field checked 1979. Map edited 1984.  
Supersedes Weymouth and Cohasset 1:25 000-scale  
maps dated 1971 and 1974.

Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 13269 (1980)  
and 13270 (1982). This information is not intended for navigational purposes.  
Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 19 Universal  
Transverse Mercator  
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate  
system, unadjusted zone  
1927 North American Datum  
To place on the projected North American Datum 1983  
move the projection lines 6 meters south and  
42 meter east as shown by double corner ticks.  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of  
the National or State reservations shown on this map.

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER  
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN METERS  
DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS UNABLE  
TO BE DETERMINED  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE  
OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2.7 METERS

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS		
Meters	Feet	MAGNETIC		1	2	3
1	3.2808	N		4	5	
2	6.5617	E		6	7	8
3	9.8425	S				
4	13.1234	W				
5	16.4042	MAGNETIC				
6	19.6850	DECLINATION				
7	22.9659	AT CENTER OF MAP				
8	26.2467	Diagram is approximate				
9	29.5276					
10	32.8084					

To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808  
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048

UTM grid convergence (GN and 1983 magnetic declination) at center of map Diagram is approximate

1 Boston South  
2 Hull  
3 Norwood  
4 Scituate  
5 Brockton  
6 Whitman  
7 Duxbury

ISBN 0-607-23435-0  
9 780607 234350

**Topographic Map Symbols**

Primary highway, hard surface	.....
Secondary highway, hard surface	.....
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	.....
Unimproved road, trail	.....
Route marker: Interstate, U. S., State	.....
Railroad: standard gage, narrow gage	.....
Bridge: drawbridge	.....
Footbridge; overpass; underpass	.....
Built-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown	.....
House; barn; church; school; large structure	.....
Boundary	.....
National, with monument	.....
State	.....
County parish	.....
Civil township, precinct, district	.....
Incorporated city, village, town	.....
National or State reservation; small park	.....
Land grant with monument; forest section open	.....
U. S. public lands survey: range, township, section	.....
Range, township; section line: location approximate	.....
Fence or field line	.....
Power transmission line, located tower	.....
Dam; dam with lock	.....
Cemetery; grave	.....
Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument	.....
Wellhead; water well; spring	.....
Mine shaft; prospect; pit or crater	.....
Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation	.....
Distorted surface: strip mine, lava, sand	.....
Barometric contours: index, intermediate	.....
Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream	.....
Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small	.....
Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp	.....
Land subject to controlled inundation; wetland	.....
Scrub; mangrove	.....
Orchard; vineyard	.....



# National Register of Historic Places

## Note to the record

Additional Documentation: 2006

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Pratt Historic Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Norfolk

DATE RECEIVED: 10/12/06 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/25/06  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 06000816

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Additional Documentation Accepted*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept

REVIEWER Edson Beall

DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 10-12-06

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



06000816



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

October 3, 2006

Dr. John Roberts  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye St., NW, 8<sup>th</sup> floor  
Washington, DC 2005



RE: Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Cohasset (Norfolk County), Massachusetts

Dear Dr. Roberts:

I am writing with a request for a technical change to the designation of the above property, which was listed in the National Register on September 7, 2006. Although the property was originally known as the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, the community gave that same name to a new facility when it relocated in 2003. As the nomination states on page 5 of section 8, "...the name 'Paul Pratt Memorial Library' moved along with the library's books, [and] the former library building is currently called the Pratt Historic Building." The Cohasset Historical Society acquired the building in 2003 and renamed it the Pratt Historic Building. To avoid further confusion, we thus request that the property be listed in the National Register as the Pratt Historic Building, rather than as the Paul Pratt Memorial Library.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Brona Simon  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
Executive Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Cc: Timothy Orwig, consultant  
William Griffin, Cohasset Board of Selectmen  
David Wadsworth, Cohasset Historical Society  
Rebecca McArthur, Cohasset Historical Commission  
Alfred Moore, Jr., Chair, Cohasset Planning Board

# National Register of Historic Places

## Note to the record

Additional Documentation: 2014





**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

September 10, 2013

J. Paul Loether  
National Park Service 2280, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 I (eye) Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Re: Address changes for properties listed on the NRHP

As we digitize our inventory of historic resources, we are discovering discrepancies in property addresses due to renumbering, changing the address to a side street that abuts the parcel, or assigning a precise address where none had existed. In some cases, property owners have notified us of an incorrect address. We are, therefore, writing to request technical corrections in the National Register records for the following:

**Chelsea (Suffolk County)**

- Chelsea Garden Cemetery (NRIND 2/9/2001)—new address is 70 Central Avenue (formerly Shawmut Street) **01000089**

**Cheshire (Berkshire County)**

- Hall's Tavern (NRIND 3/10/1983)—new address is 31 North Street (formerly North Street) **83000568**

**Cohasset (Norfolk County)**

- Pratt Historic Building (NRIND 9/7/2006)—new address is 106-110 South Main Street (formerly 106 South Main Street) **06000816X**

**Concord (Middlesex County)**

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo House (NRIND/NHL 10/15/1966; NRDIS-9/13/1977)—new address is 18 Cambridge Turnpike (formerly 28 Cambridge Turnpike near intersection of Lexington Road) **66000365 NHL**
- Sleepy Hollow Cemetery (NRIND 8/19/1998)—new address is 34A Bedford Street (formerly 24 Court Lane) **98000991**

**Dennis (Barnstable County)**

- West Schoolhouse (NRIND 4/24/1975)—new address is 61 Whig Street (formerly Nobscusset Road) 75000262
- Dennis, Josiah Manse (NRIND 2/15/1974)— new address is 61 Whig Street (formerly Nobscusset Road and Whig Street) West Schoolhouse and Josaih Dennis Manse, which stand adjacent to each other, have the same address. 74000360

**Easton (Bristol County)**

- North Easton Railroad Station/Old Colony Railroad Station (NRIND 4/11/72; NRDIS 11/3/1972 and 12/23/1987; NHL 12/23/1987)—new address is 80 Mechanic Street (formerly Oliver Street or off Oliver St along railroad right of way) 72000125

**Holden (Worcester County)**

- Willard-Fisk Farm (NRIND 2/23/1996)— new address is 121 Whitney Street (formerly 123 Whitney Street) 96000163

**Wilmington (Middlesex County)**

- West Schoolhouse (NRIND 2/23/1990)— new address is 141 Shawsheen Avenue (formerly Shawsheen Avenue at Aldrich Road) 90000184

**Winthrop (Suffolk County)**

- Newton, Edward B. School (NRIND 8/21/1997)— new address is 131 Pauline Street (formerly 45 Pauline Street) 97000878
- Winthrop, Deane House (NRIND/TRA, First Period Buildings of Eastern MA, 3/9/1990)—new address is 34 Shirley Street (formerly 40 Shirley Street) 90000162

**Woburn (Middlesex County)**

- U. S. Post Office-Woburn Center Station (NRIND 10/19/1987)—new address is 1 Abbott Street (formerly 2 Abbott Street) 86003436

Sincerely,

*Betsy Friedberg*

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY Pratt Historic Building  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Norfolk

DATE RECEIVED: 11/19/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/05/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 06000816

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Additional Documentation Approved**

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept

REVIEWER Edson Beall

DISCIPLINE History

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 1.3.14

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY <sup>→ Pratt Historic Building</sup> Pratt, Paul, Memorial Library (OTHER)  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Norfolk

DATE RECEIVED: 7/31/06 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/25/06  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/09/06 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/13/06  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 06000816

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: Y PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

✓ ACCEPT \_\_\_\_\_ RETURN \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT 9/7/2006 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A&C  
REVIEWER Patrick Andrews DISCIPLINE Historian  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 9/7/2006

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

July 26, 2006

Dr. John Roberts  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8<sup>th</sup> floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Dr. Roberts:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Pratt Historic Building, 106 South Main St., Cohasset (Norfolk), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

One letter of support has been received.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Timothy Orwig, consultant  
William Griffin, Cohasset Board of Selectmen  
David Wadsworth, Cohasset Historical Society  
Rebecca McArthur, Cohasset Historical Commission  
Alfred Moore, Jr., Chair, Cohasset Planning Board



NR ple



# Cohasset Historical Society

106 South Main Street  
PO Box 627  
Cohasset, MA 02025  
Ph 781-383-1434

RECEIVED

SEP 29 2004

MASS. HIST. COMM



Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, MA 02125

September 28, 2004

Dear Betsy,


On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Cohasset Historical Society, we are writing in support of the Cohasset Historical Commission's application for National Register listing for the 1903 Pratt Building (formerly the Paul Pratt Memorial Library), designed by a Cohasset resident Edward Nichols (1864-1933), Boston architect and former member of the firm of Willard T. Sears. Four historical murals by MacIvor Reddie (1899-1966), illustrating scenes from Cohasset's past, grace the rotunda walls. Reddie was for many years an instructor at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, and the School of Practical Art (now the Art Institute of Boston).


Since purchasing the Pratt Building from the Town of Cohasset in 2002, the Society has made remarkable progress in the restoration of the building and its adaptive reuse as the Society's headquarters. We now have a year-round facility for changing exhibitions and public programs and lectures. In addition, we have more than doubled our space for collections storage. In 2003, the Society received Community Preservation Act funding for this restoration and for constructing two senior moderate income apartments on the lower level, which will help us to cover additional costs of operating this larger building.

The Cohasset community and, indeed, residents and visitors to the South Shore alike, are grateful to the Society for preserving the Pratt Building and keeping it from being converted to a private residence or condominiums by a private developer. We appreciate that attaining National Register status will reflect not only the historical significance of this fine building, but also signal to many the importance of preserving the best of the past.

Thank you for your attention and thoughtful consideration of this application.

Sincerely yours,

  
Paula Morse  
Co-President

  
Kathleen O'Malley  
Co-President

cc Noel Ripple, Chairperson, Cohasset Historical Commission