

PH0501948

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

**X

Porter Memorial Library

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Court Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Machias

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd Hon. William Cohen

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maine

CODE

23

COUNTY

Washington

CODE

029

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

X BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

PUBLIC

X PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

X OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

X YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

X EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Porter Memorial Library Association

STREET & NUMBER

Court Street

CITY, TOWN

Machias

STATE

Maine

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Washington County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Machias

STATE

Maine

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Machias Public Library, designed by George A. Clough of Boston, is a fine example of the Romanesque Revival style in a small public building. The one and a half story Library is of granite ashlar construction with a slate shingled gable roof and a T-shaped plan.

The main facade faces north and is dominated in its center by a porch with a large semi-circular arched entryway. To the left of this porch, in the gable end of the "cross" of the "T", is a row of five one-over-one windows surmounted by semi-circular arches which, with their arcade effect, reflect the arched porch entry. In the half story is a pair of much smaller one-over-one windows, similarly arched. To the right of the entrance porch, on the "stem" of the "T", is a series of three four-over-four double-hung sashed windows closely spaced to each other. Unlike the other windows mentioned above, these have plain granite lintels, and are not arched.

The west end of the building has an identical series of simple four-over-four windows, while the east end, which is vertically divided by an external stone chimney, has a single four-over-four window on each side of this chimney.

A Romanesque style pinnacle of carved stone sits atop each of the three gable ends.

Clough has here created a dignified building which avoids austerity through its asymmetry and refined detailing. Machias is fortunate to have such a structure as its public library.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1893 BUILDER/ARCHITECT George A. Glough

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The importance of the Porter Memorial Library in Machias is two fold. The first significant aspect is the architecture and granite construction of the building itself. The Library is equally important as an illustration of the civic action by the Machias Library Association and the benevolence of the Porter family.

During his successful railroad career, Henry Homes Porter sent \$1500 to the Machias Library Association which was in the insecure position of having a permanent book collection and only a temporary home. He instructed the Association to draw up plans for a library building, and offered \$9,000 more to construct the library. In 1891 plans were completed and a public lot which had been the site of a Soldier's Monument was chosen as the location. The library was dedicated on September 15, 1893 and opened for business on December 6th of the same year. The Library Association named the building Porter Memorial Library to honor both H.H. Porter, and his father, Rufus K. Porter, who had been a respected attorney in Machias for many years and had founded the library ca. 1815.

Henry Homes Porter was born in Machias in 1835. He attended school at Washington Academy until age 15 or 16. In 1853, after working in Eastport for a few years, he headed west and began to work for the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad. In 1860, he switched to the Michigan Southern and Northern Indiana Railroad, and became superintendent there in 1862. He left in 1865 to become a director of the First National Bank of Chicago and an investor in lumber and stockyards. A director for the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad, Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, and Union Pacific Railroad. At various times, Porter invested his own money directly into the industry in 1874 with the purchase of the 190 mile West Wisconsin Railroad. Unable to sell it to his Northwestern directors, Porter bought other railroads at depression prices to form the 1300-mile Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha system. He was able to sell this system to Northwestern for a large price in 1882. Porter later became president of Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad, then retired from railroad management in 1902. He died in Chicago in 1910.

This staunch little Romanesque Revival library stands not only as a monument to community striving for cultural improvement but also to the unusual financial opportunities open to ambitious and clever men as the Industrial Revolution exploded in the last third of the 19th century.

