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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Public Library Buildings in Iowa

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

(multiple locations)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

State of Iowa

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT☒ thematic
group

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☒ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED☒ both

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☒ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME multiple ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Refer to individual properties.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

An Architectural and Historical Survey of Public Libraries in Iowa

DATE

1977-80

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Office of Historic Preservation, Iowa City IA

CITY, TOWN

Des Moines

STATE

Iowa 50319

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This nomination includes all public library buildings in the State of Iowa erected prior to 1940 that may be considered significant on architectural and/or historical grounds and therefore eligible for the National Register. Ninety-six libraries are represented. Of these, 27 are significant on architectural grounds, 59 on historical grounds and 10 on grounds of both history and architecture. Fifteen libraries (of which four were not judged significant by the survey) are already listed in the Register.

LIBRARIES OF THE FLORESCENT PERIOD, 1900-1920

All but a few of the libraries (15 in number) were erected between 1900 and 1920, the period during which the public library movement in this country experienced its greatest growth. The buildings of this florescent period are remarkably similar in plan, massing, elevation and style. For the most part they may be seen to belong to a legible type of small to medium-sized public library building, a type which first emerged at this time.

Plan

The typical program for a small or medium-sized library featured reading rooms or reading areas for adults and children, a large delivery desk or counter, from which the librarian handled all the services involving the public, a bookstack, if the size of the collection warranted it, and an office, or at least a work area, for the librarian and her staff. These library functions were normally all accommodated on one floor. A room where lectures, community meetings and other educational programs could take place was felt to be a necessary adjunct to the library. Almost all libraries erected between 1900 and 1940 included such a facility.

The majority of the libraries (78 of 96) are of one story. The library occupies the main floor and is set on top of a high basement containing the lecture room (as well as storage rooms, janitor's closet, boiler room, etc.). A prominent front stoop leads up to the main story. The high basement was universal during the first quarter of the century. After that it fell from favor, as it was felt that it made the library too remote and inaccessible. Basements became gradually lower and the entrance to the building approached ground level. Two-story libraries are generally without high basements. The second floor housed the lecture room, as well as other rooms devoted to special purposes - art galleries, music collections, local history collections, etc.

Although most libraries have experienced some renovation over the years, it is virtually always possible, by means of architect's plans, old photographs and the written prescriptions of library planners regarding library design, to reconstruct the original disposition of the interior. Certain changes have been common. The growth of the collection and expanded services have forced many of them to convert the base-

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ment lecture room into a children's room, thereby leaving the entire upper floor for the adult library. Changing styles of librarianship have prompted the frequent dismantling of the bookstack. The stack has become a reading area and the shelves, formerly concentrated in the stack, are dispersed throughout the library floor, making both stack and reading rooms places in which shelves and tables mingle.

The plans of the libraries of the florescent period fall into six distinct types. With the exception of Plan Type V, which is represented by only four examples, the plan types are variants of a single parti featuring a centrally placed delivery area flanked on either side by a reading room. This parti was sometimes termed the "butterfly" plan.

I. The smallest libraries are usually simple rectangles. The principal story, devoted to library services, is a single space on the interior. Division into separate functional areas is often suggested by wooden ceiling beams, which, due to the low height of the ceiling, are often quite conspicuous. The entrance is through a closed vestibule located in the center of one of the long sides. The vestibule may project from the front of the building or it may protrude into the interior. The delivery desk is in the center of the room and faces the entrance. The space immediately behind the desk, usually partitioned off by bookshelves, is reserved for the use of the librarian and staff. To the left and right of the delivery area are the reading areas, one for adults and one for children. The book collection is kept in wallshelves around the perimeter of the interior. With the growth of the collection, standing shelves would be introduced, which divided the reading areas into semi-secluded alcoves. Occasionally (e.g. Eldon) there might be a reference alcove in the rear corner behind the adult reading area. Although the usual location for the basement stairs is in the vestibule, at one side of the stairs leading up to the library floor, a separate basement entrance at the rear of the building is not uncommon.

Libraries corresponding to Plan Type I are: Eldon, Hamburg and Sigourney.

II. A second group of libraries, generally somewhat larger than those of Type I, also have open interiors, but differ in having a bookstack at center rear behind the delivery desk. The librarian's office is located at one side of the bookstack, in the rear corner behind the children's reading area. Occasionally it is walled off from the rest of the interior. The opposite rear corner is usually occupied by a reference or study alcove. The bookshelves in the stack either run from front to rear or radiate from a center placed at the delivery desk (intended to permit easy supervision by only one attendant). In some

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cases the stack projects slightly from the rear of the building (e.g. Woodbine) or it may be entirely an appendage (e.g. Nashua).

Libraries corresponding to Plan Type II are: Bedford, Bloomfield, Nashua, Traer and Woodbine.

III. A third group of libraries, generally larger yet than those of Plan Types I and II, continues the basic disposition of functional areas seen in Plan Type II. The interiors, however, are no longer single spaces, but instead divided into distinct rooms. In shape the buildings are still rectangular and symmetrically planned, with the entrance through the center of the long side, but they more nearly approach the square than the smaller buildings. The plan may be described as sexpartite. Most examples are clearly divided into two zones of three parts each: a front zone composed of central delivery room (and entrance vestibule), flanked on either side by a reading room; and a rear zone composed of central bookstack, flanked on one side by the librarian's office and on the other by a reference room. The front zone is deeper from front to rear than the rear zone and may also be somewhat wider, creating an overall shape that departs somewhat from the pure rectangle. In the larger examples of this type, the delivery room is sometimes treated as a central rotunda and vaulted (e.g. Waterloo, Main Library) or domed (e.g. Kendall Young Library-Webster City, Carnegie-Ellsworth Library-Iowa Falls, Council Bluffs). In spite of their compartmentalization, the interiors often retain the effect of spaciousness seen in the smaller libraries. The openings connecting the delivery room to the reading rooms and the bookstack, often either arched or set with columns in-antis, are usually high and wide. The bookstack is generally wider than the delivery room and may be entered directly from the reading rooms. Particularly in the larger libraries, it often projects substantially from the rear of the building.

Libraries corresponding to the sexpartite plan (Type III) are: Carroll, Charles City, Clinton, Council Bluffs, Eldora, Humboldt, Carnegie-Ellsworth Library-Iowa Falls, Manchester, Mason City, Onawa, Osceola, Red Oak, Vinton, Waterloo-Main Library, Kendall Young Library-Webster City.

IV. There is a small group of libraries that represents a development of the orthodox sexpartite plan, but differs from it enough to be considered a separate type. The central position of the delivery room and vestibule is retained. One or both of the reading rooms extend the full depth of the building, resulting in an "H" or dumbbell configuration of reading rooms and delivery room. The bookstack projects from the rear, in some cases in its entirety, creating a building T-shaped in

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outline. In some of these libraries, the direct relationship between the stack and the delivery and reading rooms has been lost through the insertion of a workroom. Many of the libraries of this type are relatively large and their stacks may have been originally closed to the public.

Libraries corresponding to Plan Type IV are: Grinnell, Ottumwa and Sheldon.

V. A few libraries belong to a type in which a reading room on one side of a central rotunda balances a bookstack on the other. With the exception of Anamosa, these are large, two-story libraries. Libraries corresponding to Plan Type V are: Anamosa, Drake Library-Centerville and Des Moines.

VI. Iowa has several examples of a variant of the "butterfly" plan adapted for a street-corner location. The entrance is through a corner vestibule. The two reading rooms are at right angles to each other. The bookstack is a quadrant circle, located in the rear corner, wedged between the reading rooms. The shelves radiate from the central deliver desk. The librarian's office and possibly also a reference or study room are found in front, near the vestibule.

Examples of Plan Type VI are: Eagle Grove, Hampton, Marshalltown, Perry and West Liberty.

Mass and Elevation

The small library type is as much a matter of exterior form as it is of interior plan. In their massing and elevation the libraries of the florescent period share many characteristics in common.

The overwhelming majority are rectangular blocks with symmetrical front facades. These may be described and classified by the treatment of the roof, the treatment of the entrance and the pattern of fenestration.

The roof may be one of three types: not visible, concealed behind a parapet; hipped; or gabled, with side gable ends. In libraries with the sexpartite plan, the roof over the rear zone is most often treated as an appendage to the main roof. Where the main roof is hipped, the rear roof is either flat or a separate, lower hipped form. Where the main roof is gabled, the rear roof is usually flat. Although there is little discernible pattern of variation in the form of the rectangular block libraries in terms of size, it should be noted that the two-story libraries are generally "roofless." Libraries such as Nevada or Boone are essentially Italian palazzi, a building type in which visible roofs are traditionally absent.

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Perhaps the most characteristic feature of the libraries, both large and small, is the presence of a prominent entrance pavilion. Very few libraries mark the entrance by nothing more than a doorframe. The entrance pavilion usually occupies the center bay of a three- or five-bay facade. It defines the extent of the vestibule and delivery lobby, i.e. the center "part" of the sexpartite plan, and normally projects, either slightly or substantially, from the facade.

With classical libraries, the center pavilion is most often an orthodox portico, generally pedimented on hipped- or gable-roofed libraries, and unpeditented on libraries without visible roofs. These porticos are rarely fully prostyle, to the extent that they form ample porches. They are instead either engaged or stand only slightly in advance of the pavilion wall. The porch, if there is one, is usually recessed. The most common types of portico are the prostyle-distyle, with coupled columns (e.g. Clinton, Humboldt, Marion, Mason City, Waterloo-Main Library, Kendall Young Library-Webster City), and the distyle-in-antis (e.g. Carnegie-Ellsworth Library-Iowa Falls, Charles City, Manchester, Ottumwa, Sheldon, Waterloo-West Branch).

Among other types of center pavilion that appear, if not frequently, at least with some regularity, the following might be mentioned. Many pavilions consist simply of a flat wall surface standing in advance of the main wall. The pavilion wall serves as a background against which the often elaborate doorframe is displayed. With hipped- and gable-roofed libraries, the wall will be finished at the top with a full triangular pediment, with a raking cornice returned slightly at the corners (e.g. Sigourney), or with a shaped gable (e.g. Bedford, Emmetsburg, Osceola, Vinton). Roofless libraries usually have no pavilion pediment. The main cornice and parapet are continued across the pavilion and elaborated with paneling and various sorts of acroteria. Other pavilions are variations on a triumphal arch motif, featuring an arch framed by piers or pilasters (e.g. Estherville, Ericson Library-Boone, Hampton, LeMars, Perry).

The great height of these mostly small, one-story buildings, perched on top of their high basements, resulted in a variety of solutions to the matter of base levels for the pavilion. In this regard the pavilions fall into two general categories. The entrance door may be at the level of the main floor, in which case the stairs leading up to the library will be entirely outside stairs. It may also be at a level somewhat lower than the main floor, with the stairs divided between the exterior stoop and a staircase within the vestibule. In libraries on which the entrance level is dropped, the base of the portico, if there is one, may descend below the watertable, to line up with the

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base of the door (e.g. Humboldt, LeMars, Manchester). The common solution, which better accords with orthodox classical design, keeps the base of the portico at the level of the main floor (e.g. Cherokee, Carnegie-Ellsworth Library-Iowa Falls, Marion, Sheldon, Waterloo-West Branch). The difference in level between entrance and portico assumes the dimension of a pedestal for the columns and piers of the portico.

One of the most noticeable characteristics of the fenestration of the libraries is the relatively large amount of wall area on the front facade devoted to window openings. Natural light was highly valued by librarians of the period. Because the side windows were generally kept small and high, in order that the bookshelves underneath could be uninterrupted, the front windows became the principal source of light for the interior. The common tendency was to place one large window in the front wall of each reading room and divide it into thirds by vertical mullions or to place three tall, narrow windows close together. This resulted in a three-bay facade. There are also libraries of five bays, with autonomous single or double windows, although this is not as common as the tripartite window motif.

The need for large front windows seems to have created a problem in relating the fenestration to the center pavilion. In libraries such as Chariton, Sigourney, Vinton or Waterloo-West Branch a certain tension may be detected between the large scale and predominantly horizontal proportions of the side windows and the tighter scale and vertical proportions of the pavilion. A solution much in evidence among the libraries included in the nomination involves treating the windows in such a way that they become part of a background against which the portico stands out as a figure. By this means the pavilion is allowed greater freedom to seek its own scale and proportions than if windows and pavilion were both treated as figures set against the wall and the generous scale of the windows need not seem improper next to the slenderer, more diminutive pavilion. At Nashua, for example, the windows are large enough that what remains of the wall takes on the character of a narrow frame and there is no tension felt between the windows and the multiple small elements of the pavilion. A number of the classical libraries (e.g. Ames, Humboldt, Manchester, Marion, Traer, Waterloo-Main Library) demonstrate the same phenomenon. They feature groupings of three tall, narrow windows at either side of distyle porticos. Due to the spacing of the windows, the particular areal relationship of opening to wall and the generally very simple framing of the windows (most often merely a flush lintel and a sill), the windows merge with the wall to become a gridded, patterned background.

Another problem evident in the design of the libraries involves the

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fenestration of the basement. The basement, normally occupied by a lecture room, required adequate illumination. This resulted in the need for large windows set directly at grade. If the basement is not clearly articulated on the exterior, by treating it, for example, as an emphatic classical basement, the building may seem to have a first story submerged partially underground. The lack of an adequate visual basement is evident at such libraries as Glenwood, Hampton, Indianola or Perry.

Libraries that clearly do not fall into the rectangular block form-type are few in number. Several other types are represented in this nomination by one or several examples and deserve mention. Libraries with visible domes on the exterior are rare in Iowa. Two have been included. Iowa Falls is a hipped block with a drummed dome erupting through the roof. Ottumwa, a larger and more elaborate building, consists of various subsidiary masses grouped pyramidically around the central dome. Another group of medium-sized libraries feature a dominant central mass of $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 stories extending from front to rear. This central mass, either front-gabled or hipped, is flanked by lower, one-story hipped masses. Two libraries, Grinnell and Waterloo-Main Library, are of this type. Three irregular libraries are included: Algona, Eldora and West Liberty. These feature asymmetrical facades with roofs composed of gables intersecting in T or L formations. Their plans vary. Algona's plan is unique and does not fit into any of the six types. West Liberty is an example of Plan Type VI, with a corner entrance and a quadrant bookstack. Eldora has a sexpartite plan (III), with the reading rooms slightly different in shape. Two of the Plan VI libraries, Eagle Grove and Marshalltown, clearly ^{express} this plan-type on the exterior. Corner entrance pavilions, conceived as circular or octagonal tempietti, serve as hinges joining the twin facades of the reading rooms.

Style

A widespread characteristic of the libraries is their architectural simplicity. Although revivalist styles were used, there is a marked tendency to reduce decoration to a minimum or to favor styles such as the Georgian, which were inherently simple and in which an architect could be convincingly historicist without using much detail. The materials chosen also demonstrate a preference for simplicity. Brick is the most common material. Stone is normally limited to trim, to the elements of the order and to the basement.

The buildings fall into two broad stylistic categories - classical and medieval. The classical libraries tend to be essentially astylar and rustic in character. Except on the larger libraries, the use of an order is generally restricted to the central pavilion. The favored

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orders are the Tuscan or a stripped-down, unfluted Roman Doric (e.g. Ames, Chariton, Charles City, Humboldt, Indianola). The classical is often fused with styles, such as the Craftsman or the Prairie School, that project an image of informality and domesticity. In this regard one might note, for example, the use of features such as exposed rafter ends, brackets or chunky modillions in conjunction with distinctly classical elements (e.g. Chariton, Charles City, Sigourney). Libraries with Georgian/Federal characteristics are numerous. In certain of these, this is limited to the doorframe (e.g. Bedford, Eldora, Shenandoah). In others, the Georgian image extends to elevation and mass as well as detail (e.g. Cherokee, Glenwood, Hamburg, Perry, Sigourney).

Among the libraries that are medieval in character there are several tendencies. A number of libraries strive for a fairly high-style English late medieval or Perpendicular effect. All make use of depressed Tudor arches and label molds to frame the openings. Spirit Lake and West Liberty are the only examples represented in the nomination. Other libraries affect the character of the rustic English cottage, using such features as half timbering, wooden bargeboards, diamond-paned windows, wall overhangs and tapestry brick laid on the diagonal to simulate nogging. Such libraries are Bloomfield, Laurens, Alden and Red Oak.

A significantly large number of libraries are neither explicitly medieval nor classical, but instead seek a Flemish or Spanish Renaissance character. This effect is achieved principally through the use of shaped gable-ends and elaborate Dietterlin-esque doorframes. Such libraries are Algona, Eldora, Emmetsburg, Osceola and Vinton.

Only a few libraries, all of which show the influence of the Prairie School, are almost totally free of historical reminiscence. Such libraries are Onawa, Carroll, Sutherland and Woodbine. Two branch buildings of the Sioux City Public Library, the Smith Villa and Fairmount Branches, are frankly Prairie School in style.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY LIBRARIES

Eight libraries erected prior to the florescent period are included in the nomination: the Cook Memorial Library in Davenport, the first Forest City Public Library, the first Sage Public Library in Osage, the Fairfield Public Library, the Cattermole Memorial Library in Fort Madison, the Burlington Public Library, the Independence Public Library and the Des Moines Public Library. They share little in common. They were erected before the legible library type described above had been developed and are not readily identifiable as library buildings. Nor do they seem in any way to anticipate the type. The old Osage and Forest City libraries are small commercial fronts, indistinguishable in char-

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acter from their neighbors. Fairfield seems like a scaled-down version of a county courthouse. Independence and Fort Madison seem like prosperous dwellings. Davenport and Burlington, with their towers, are quickly recognized as public buildings, but it is impossible to characterize them more specifically than this.

SITING

The siting of the libraries within the townscapes of which they are components was not systematically considered by the survey. Nonetheless, a few general statements may be made on this subject. The nineteenth-century libraries are all situated in downtown commercial districts, most of them on constricted lots along major business streets. Library planners of the first several decades of this century regarded such sites as undesirable. The library, they felt, should be centrally located, but it should also be free from noise, be well lit, have the sort of home-like character that would make its patrons feel comfortable and have space for expansion. Thus, although many libraries of the florescent period are located on main commercial streets, a location on the edge of the downtown district, bordering one of the residential districts, is more common. Most of the libraries are sited much like the private dwellings surrounding them. They sit in the center of ample landscaped lots. Street-corner locations are not uncommon.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This theme nomination is the result of an historical/architectural survey of Iowa public library buildings begun by the Iowa Division of Historic Preservation in 1977. It was conducted by two former Division staff members, Martha H. Bowers, Historian, and Samuel J. Klingensmith, Architectural Historian. The survey focussed initially on identifying all library buildings erected prior to 1940 that were designed specifically as libraries (i.e. libraries housed in buildings erected originally to serve other purposes were excluded from consideration).

Information was gathered principally from the following sources: a questionnaire sent to librarians of all libraries founded before 1940, which requested basic historical and descriptive information; a second questionnaire sent to librarians who had not responded to the first; systematic searches of local historical literature, particularly county and city histories; and field examination by teams of researchers, who photographed the buildings, both inside and out, drew sketch plans, took overall measurements and made notes on materials and state of repair (approximately 80% of the libraries were recorded in this way).

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139 libraries meeting the above criteria were identified. Of these, ten had been demolished, leaving a total of 129.

Architectural Evaluation

The architectural significance of the libraries was assessed on two grounds: quality as a work of architecture; and integrity of original fabric. Not enough information was gathered on the siting of the buildings to assess their significance as urban landmarks.

In judging architectural quality, the following considerations were kept in mind:

1. basic design quality, i.e. treatment of massing, proportion, scale, detailing, etc.
2. how well certain design problems endemic to the small library type (i.e. relation of the scale of the front fenestration to that of the entrance pavilion; provision of an adequate visual base for the building had been solved
3. whether the building was representative of the small library type in one of its variants
4. how well the building seemed to embody the intentions of librarians and library planners of the early twentieth century regarding the architectural character of library buildings.

Each building was given one of five ratings for architectural quality: Exceptional, Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor. In judging integrity, the building was given one of four ratings: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor. Buildings rated Poor for integrity were considered to have substantially lost the features and qualities for which they might have achieved significance. Architectural quality was considered the primary evaluative factor, with integrity serving merely as an adjustment to it. Buildings rated Exceptional, Excellent or Good for architectural quality were considered eligible for the Register, unless their integrity was rated Poor. Buildings rated architecturally Fair were considered eligible only if their integrity was Excellent. Buildings rated architecturally Poor were considered ineligible, despite their state of preservation.

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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Historical Evaluation

The historical evaluation was designed to identify those library buildings that best illustrate significant aspects of the public library movement in Iowa. Early in the survey, it became clear that public library growth in the state was something of a "mass" phenomenon, and that most individual instances achieved their greatest significance simply because they were part of the much larger, collective development. It was possible, however, to distinguish among Iowa's public libraries by using a combination of chronological placement and source of building construction funds. The latter is of particular interest, because although there are nearly 400 public libraries in the state, only about a quarter are housed in library buildings, and of the 134 originally built before 1940 (10 of which are no longer extant) all but a handful were funded by private donors: either local philanthropists or Andrew Carnegie. Selection of libraries for nomination to the National Register thus emphasises the trends of Iowa public library building finance, from the 1870's to World War I. The nomination recognises the early efforts of local donors, the impact of the Carnegie phenomenon, and the few instances in which communities erected library buildings without benefit of private funding.

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"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 1870-1940

BUILDER/ARCHITECT See individual properties.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The libraries selected for nomination reflect certain currents in the history of library architecture in this country during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In particular, the nomination illustrates the emergence of the legible type of small to medium-sized library building that has since become an integral component of the physical structure of the midwestern town. Also evident in the nomination are the variations of form and the diversity of style allowed by the type.

The small library type emerged during the first decade of the twentieth century and maintained its hegemony through the period covered by the nomination. Although the scope of the survey has not permitted intensive investigation of the historical forces involved in its development, it is possible to provide a brief outline.

In the late nineteenth century public libraries were founded in ever increasing numbers. In 1898, with the initiation of Andrew Carnegie's "wholesale" library philanthropy, funds for the construction of library buildings suddenly became available on a scale previously unknown. Carnegie's library program lasted until 1919, during which time he funded 1679 libraries throughout the country. One hundred of the 126 libraries erected in Iowa from 1900 to 1940 were built with Carnegie money.

Librarianship was then first achieving status as a profession and librarians took considerable initiative in defining and solving the problems of library design that were arising. From its founding in 1876, the American Library Association devoted much attention to library architecture. The state library commissions, many of them founded during this period (the Iowa Library Commission began in 1900), also played an important role. Librarians seem to have successfully reached a consensus on the fundamentals of sound library planning. They began actively to disseminate this doctrine in manuals of librarianship and recently founded journals, as well as in the architectural press. As Cornelia Marvin remarked in the introduction to Small Library Buildings, a collection of plans published by the American Library Association in 1908: "The similarity in the plans [illustrated in the book] testifies to the fact that a few principles are well established. The buildings are nearly all of one type . . ."

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Certain architectural firms earned reputations as experts in library design and seem to have worked closely with the professional librarians' organizations and the state library commissions. Such a firm was that of Patton and Miller of Chicago, who designed 20 libraries in Iowa between 1900 and 1915. In 1903, Miller published an article on library planning in the Quarterly of the Iowa Library Commission. Several Des Moines firms also participated heavily in the design of libraries in the state. Liebbe, Nourse and Rasmussen, for example, designed seven libraries between 1900 and 1905. Frank E. Wetherell, working either alone or in partnership, was responsible for ten libraries in the first two decades of the century.

The Carnegie Corporation played a direct role in standardizing library architecture. Aware that Carnegie's largesse was often squandered on gaudy, non-functional buildings, James Bertram, Carnegie's secretary in charge of the library program, decided that local library boards needed not only money, but also guidance in planning buildings well suited for library service. In 1908, he began to require that plans be submitted to him for approval before a grant could be finalized. In 1911, feeling that further direction was in order, he published a leaflet entitled "Notes on Library Buildings [sic]," which was sent to each community along with the promise of funding. The leaflet sought to provide certain minimum standards for functional buildings and illustrated seven model floor plans intended to embody these standards. All were variations on the already widespread rectangular parti featuring a central delivery area flanked by twin reading rooms.

The principles preached by library planners emphasized efficiency in operation, economy in construction and hospitable service to the public. Attention should focus, librarians felt, on seeing that these factors were not sacrificed to the desire to gratify local pride through architectural monumentality, a desire they feared was rampant among local library boards and architects. Instead, the small library should be a building of simple, inexpensive dignity and project the character of warmth, openness and intimacy that would induce the public to enter and, once inside, remain.

Around 1900, open access to the book collection became the common policy for small libraries. Librarians urged that the books be accommodated in wallshelves around the perimeter of the reading rooms. Only libraries of a certain minimum size were thought to need a bookstack, which, in any case, ought to be spacious enough to allow browsing and reading to take place there. With patrons permitted such freedom, proper supervision by limited staffs became a paramount concern. This led to the recommendation that the plan be as open and free of walls as possible. Openness would also allow flexibility in future renovation. The centralized placement of the delivery desk ensured that both reading

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rooms could be easily managed by one attendant. Were a bookstack required, placing it directly behind the desk guaranteed that all areas open to the public would be in sight. The radiating stack was designed to take full advantage of this arrangement, although it seems to have quickly fallen from favor, due to the belief that it was wasteful of space (sixteen Iowa libraries, all erected between 1900 and 1910, are known to have had radiating stacks).

The best overall shape for the library was thought to be the simple rectangle (the closer to the square, the better), in that the pure geometric figure maximizes the ratio of usable floor space to length of exterior wall. The high basement was also favored on grounds of economy in construction; a building of one story plus habitable basement was deemed cheaper than a two-story building. The vestibule was kept closed in order to promote efficiency in heating, as well as to isolate traffic to the basement. Brick was recommended as the least expensive fireproof building material and had the additional advantage of being less severe in character than stone. Proper fenestration was felt to be important. Large, low-silled windows on the front would not only provide lots of natural light, but, furthermore, by opening the interior to view from the street, would serve as advertisement for the library. If the front windows were grouped together, there would be less interruption to the shelves. Thus, the tripartite window motif became customary. The desire for a home-like interior led to the frequent use of fireplaces, low ceilings, natural woodwork and many small reading tables rather than fewer long ones.

Librarians generally confined their prescriptions to the planning of the interior, feeling that matters of architectural style were best left to architects. Architects were merely admonished to seek architectural excellence not in elaborate detail but in harmonious proportions. Writers occasionally discouraged the use of the classical style, on the grounds that it was expensive and did not lend itself to a domestic character. It is thus not surprising that many of the classical libraries are essentially astylar and embrace the vernacularity of the Craftsman and Prairie School styles. Nor is it surprising that the rustic English cottage and the Georgian house are such frequently invoked images.

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Historical Significance

The libraries included in this nomination on historical grounds are those that best illustrate significant developments in the history of public library construction in Iowa. During the three decades before World War I, the public library emerged as a national phenomenon, and Iowa communities joined in the movement, with the result that there are nearly 400 public libraries in the state today. However, only about one-fourth of these institutions are housed in buildings specifically designed for library purposes -- and the majority of these were built before 1920, during those decades before WWI so important to the public library movement as a whole.

Despite the fact that they are tax-supported institutions, nearly all Iowa's public library buildings owe their construction to private funds. From the 1870's to the mid 1890's (and with isolated instances thereafter), public library buildings were built with substantial sums from local philanthropists, such as Orrin Sage (Osage), Frederick Munson (Independence), Cook (Davenport), and Elizabeth Cattermole (Ft. Madison). Beginning in 1898, Andrew Carnegie's "wholesale" grants program largely supplanted local donors. Of the 126 public library buildings erected in Iowa between 1900 and 1940 (the closing date for the survey), Carnegie funds accounted for 100 of these, all built with money granted before 1919. The year 1903, which was the peak year for Carnegie grants nation-wide, was also the peak year for Carnegie grants to Iowa communities. Twenty-two towns and cities received grants that year, nearly one-fourth of the Carnegie total for the state. These communities were: Algona, Ames, Carroll, Chariton, Charles City, Cherokee, Council Bluffs, Glenwood, Indianola, Iowa Falls, Jefferson, Le Mars, Marengo, Marion, Monticello, Mount Vernon, Perry, Shenandoah, Spencer, Storm Lake, Vinton, and Waverly.

Without the support of private funds, nearly all Iowa communities with libraries chose to house their books in existing buildings, adapting interior space for the new use and avoiding the substantial costs of new, architect-designed library buildings. The two most noteworthy exceptions to this were the Public Library of Des Moines, built with municipal tax levies in 1895, and the first library in Forest City (1899), which was funded with community-wide donations. Two other library buildings merit recognition on more individual grounds. The Jefferson Public Library at Fairfield (1892) was Iowa's first Carnegie building, and the first Carnegie built west of Pennsylvania. The Ericson Library, at Boone (1900), commemorates a philanthropist who went beyond merely funding a library in his own community to active support of the public library on the statewide level. C.J.A. Ericson was a wealthy local businessman and politician, who served five terms in the Iowa General Assembly. As a member of the legislature, he actively supported many items of library legislation. As a longtime member of the Iowa Library Association, Ericson served as vice president, and held a strategic seat on the Association's Legislative Committee. He was recognized at his death as a "friend of libraries", and inclusion of his library at Boone will serve as a fitting reminder of his longstanding support of the Iowa public library movement.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Refer to Continuation Sheet 9:1-2

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA Refer to individual properties.

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

QUADRANGLE NAME _____

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
E	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
G	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
F	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
H	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Refer to individual properties.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	n/a	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE		CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE and James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator
Samuel J. Klingensmith, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION
Iowa SHPO

DATE
March 31, 1983

STREET & NUMBER
East 12th & Grand Ave.,

TELEPHONE
515-281-4137

CITY OR TOWN
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

STATE
Iowa

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL _____

STATE XXX

LOCAL XXX

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE Executive Director, Iowa State Historical Department

DATE March 31, 1983

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST: See Continuation Sheet for Testimony DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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Note: Only general sources pertinent to the history of the public library movement and to the architecture of small public library buildings in Iowa and the midwest are listed in this bibliography. Sources relating to the specific buildings included in the nomination are listed on the individual inventory forms.

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Bibliographical Note:

Several comments regarding the sources listed on the individual inventory forms are in order. The librarians to whom survey questionnaires were sent were extremely cooperative in providing information on their buildings. Two questionnaires were sent, the first in April 1977 and the second in February 1978. These have been cited in the bibliographies, except in cases where they contained little or no useful information. The following acronyms apply: DHPLSQ-1, DHPLSQ-2. Following the acronym are the name and title of the person who completed the questionnaire. The field inspection reports prepared by the surveyors, who examined 80% of the libraries, provided essential descriptive information. These reports were without exception cited in the bibliographies. The acronym, DHPFIR, is used and is followed by the name(s) of the surveyor(s) and the date of the inspection. The library files of the Iowa Division of Historic Preservation contain in addition much ephemeral material collected in the course of the survey. Although this material was often invaluable, lack of space generally did not permit citing it. Many libraries still possess prints of the architect's drawings for the building. Where known, this fact is noted. Publication of drawings or photographs of a library in the contemporary architectural press or library literature has also been noted.