

NOV 21 1989

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

FEB 14 1989

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Gilmanton Iron Works Library
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Elm Street
city, town Gilmanton
state New Hampshire code NH county Belknap code NH 001 zip code 03837

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/district/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: R. Stuart Waller, NEW HAMPSHIRE, Date: FEB 9 1989

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: Date:

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
[X] entered in the National Register.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register.
[ ] other, (explain:)
Signature of the Keeper: Helene Byers, Date of Action: 3/16/89

---

**6. Function or Use**

---

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education / library

---

---

---

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education / library

---

---

---

---

**7. Description**

---

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)Colonial Revival

---

---

---

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

---

walls Weatherboard

---

roof Asphalt

---

other 

---

---

---

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Gilmanton Iron Works Library is a small, Colonial Revival style, wooden frame library building, that stands on its own lot on the northwest side of Elm Street in the village of Gilmanton Iron Works in the town of Gilmanton. The rectangular, hip roofed, one story, building has a small, gable roofed portico, sheltering the main entry in the center of its long southeast (street) facade. The building has seen few changes, beyond necessary repairs, since its construction in 1916-17. The original flowerboxes on the front windows have been replaced by larger and more elaborate flowerboxes. A modern metal storm door has replaced the earlier, wooden framed screen door at the main entry. A railing has been installed at the portico steps, and metal rain gutters on the cornice. And, a modern gas furnace has required exterior gas tanks and a large floor register. But, these minor changes have not deprived the building of its basic integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The building's walls, set on a fieldstone foundation, are sheathed with wide clapboards. Although no trim appears at the corners, the walls are trimmed by sillboards with watertables. The building's wide box cornice with mouldings, architrave, and frieze, has a deep overhang and a beaded board soffit. (Modern metal rain gutters are now attached to the cornice and connected to similar metal drainpipes at all four corners of the building. A wide brick chimney with concrete cap is found in the center of the rear (northwest) slope of the broad, asphalt shingled hip roof.

In the center of the three bay street (southeast) facade appears the main entry, a door with three tall, vertical lower panels and a three pane upper window. (The door is now covered by a modern metal storm door with a large single pane window.) The entry is framed by pilasters with moulded bases and capitals supporting an entablature, complete with mouldings, cornice, architrave, and frieze. The main entry is sheltered by the small portico, which has a fieldstone base topped by a board frieze. The portico's board floor extends beyond the shelter of the portico roof towards the street and is reached by three inset board steps. (A wrought metal hand rail now serves these steps. And a low step of concrete tiles has been placed at ground level.) The portico roof is supported two wooden columns, whose design might best be described as a variant of the Roman Doric order, complete with moulded base and capital, plinth, astragal, and abacus. The columns support a pedimented entablature, actually an extension of the building's box cornice with architrave and frieze, save that the cornice does not have the same

 See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

deep overhang, the overhang being reduced here to more classical proportions. The architrave and frieze are omitted on the raking cornices of the pediment. Flush boarding covers the small tympanum. Mounted on the frieze of the pediment's horizontal cornice are large wooden letters and numbers giving the building's title and date, "G.I.W. LIBRARY. 1916". A light fixture is mounted in the center of the beaded board portico ceiling, which is trimmed by a ceiling moulding. Attached to both sides of the portico are simple, lightly constructed wooden trellises. Asphalt shingles cover the portico's gable roof. The two side bays of the building's street facade each feature two three pane windows, with plain wooden frames, in the basement, and a large triple window in the main level. Each triple window has a wide central twelve over one sash window and flanking six over one sash windows. The window frame is topped by a moulded lintel, which is actually a projection of the architrave of the main building cornice, as it is mounted over the architrave and is topped by the same moulding that separates the architrave and the frieze. The southeastern triple windows are each ornamented by a long wooden flowerbox, supported by four heavy curved sawn wooden brackets (now supplemented by two simple struts rising from the watertable to two of the brackets). The present flowerboxes, replacements of the smaller original flowerboxes, have slanted fronts, each decorated with an ornately sawn curvilinear upper edge and by applied silhouettes of two flowers and a central diamond.

The one bay southwest end of the building contains another plain framed, three pane basement window and another large triple main level window of the same design as the street facade triple windows, save that it lacks any flowerbox. The northeast end facade has three separate six over one sash windows, identical to the flanking windows in the triple windows, and topped by moulded lintels, projecting from the building cornice's architrave, of the same design as the triple window lintels. (To the rear, northwest, of the windows, is now found two outside gas tanks sheltered by a curved metal hood.) The three bay rear northwest facade has another large triple window, like the corresponding southeastern windows (but without a flowerbox), and two plain framed, three pane basement windows, in each side bay. Between the two triple windows, but placed somewhat offcenter, is the rear entry, a plain framed door with three lower panels and a large single pane upper window.

The plan and composition of the main level is quite symmetrical. The main entry opens into a small vestibule, which, in turn, opens into the central portion of what is essentially a continuous space, H-shaped in plan, that occupies most of the building. The three sections of this large H-shaped space, the reading area that occupies the entire southwest end of the main level, the stack area occupying the entire northeast end, and the central area occupying the central portion of the central section of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

the main level, could be considered separate rooms. But the side walls of the central area, shared with the reading area to its southwest and the stack area to its northeast, are reduced to little more than three feet of wall above the openings that span the entire length of the side walls. To the rear (northwest) of the central area is the small rear stairhall. The public spaces of the main level (that is to say, all but the stairhall) have the same hardwood floor, plaster walls with moulded baseboards, and plaster ceilings. The window and door frames of the public spaces also share an unusual design. Each frame has a beveled inner edge, and each is topped by a shaped lintel with rectangular upward projections at the ends, above the jambs, and by a shallow but wide triangular projection spanning the space between the end projections.

The main entry opens into the small vestibule, which has the already noted hardwood floor, plaster walls, and moulded baseboards, as well as a flat plaster ceiling. Similar frames, each with beveled inner edges and the already described shaped lintel, surround the two doors, the outer door, the main entry, in the center of the southeast wall, and the inner door to the central area, in the center of the northwest wall. Both doors have three tall vertical lower panels and an upper window, the outer door having a three pane window, the inner door an eight pane window. Mounted to the east of the inner door is an electric light on a bracket.

The central area of the main H-shaped space shares its hardwood floor with the vestibule, the stack area, and the reading area. The plastered southeast wall has a moulded baseboard and a central door, the already described inner vestibule door, which has the same frame here as in the vestibule. The central area's side (northeast and southwest) walls, as already noted, have been largely eliminated, the large openings into the adjoining spaces taking up the whole lengths of the walls. These openings are each spanned by an entablature with mouldings, architrave, frieze, and cornice, that is also continued across the central area's southeast and northwest walls, so that it encircles the entire central area about two feet below the flat plaster ceiling. (The walls are all plastered above the entablature.) The entablature in each opening is supported by two octagonal wooden columns, one near each end of the opening, and by pilasters at the ends. The large, tapered, octagonal columns have simple octagonal bases, but moulded octagonal capitals. The wall pilasters, which continue around the corners of the walls into the stack area and the reading area, also have simple bases and moulded capitals, as well as obvious entasis. The lower portion of the central area's northwest (rear) wall is occupied by a brick fireplace, which covers the entire wall between the pilasters. The fireplace opening has a tile floor, a brick interior, and a segmental brick arch. The tile hearth features small red tiles, surrounded by a border of glazed brown and green tiles. The brick

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

fireplace is topped by a wooden mantelshelf with moulded upper edge, that also stretches from pilaster to pilaster. The mantelshelf is supported by five heavy wooden sawn brackets, with curvilinear profiles. The two end brackets are deeper than the three brackets between them. Above the mantelshelf, the northwest wall is plastered, save for the encircling entablature. A light fixture hangs from a chain in the center of the central area's ceiling.

The reading area and the stack area are almost, but not exactly, mirror images of each other. Each has the same hardwood floor, although the reading area floor has a large metal register for the gas furnace in the basement. The plaster walls are all trimmed by moulded baseboards and by beveled and moulded chair rails that also serve as the aprons for the window sills. In the center of each inner wall (the southwestern wall of the stack area and the northeastern wall of the reading area) is the large opening into the central area, spanned by an entablature (exactly like that in the central area), which is supported near each end by the already noted octagonal columns, and at the ends by the already described pilasters that mark the corners. Encircling both areas at the level of the entablature's cornice is a shallow moulded cornice with the same mouldings as the entablature cornice, but with very little projection from the wall. The shallow moulded cornice marks the top of the wall and the beginning of the ceiling on the three outer walls of each area. On the inner wall of both areas, the plaster wall continues above the entablature and the shallow cornice. The plaster ceilings of both areas are unusual in design, each having a wide, shallow, plastered cove on the three outer sides, surrounding a flat plaster ceiling that butts up against the inner wall and is set a few inches higher than the upper edge of the cove. (This vertical junction between the flat ceiling and the cove is also plastered.) Hanging from the ceiling in each area is a electric light fixture on a chain, of the same design as the hanging light in the central area. The two areas are lit primarily by triple windows, one in each outer wall (the southeast, southwest, and northwest walls) of the reading area, and one in both the front (southeast) and rear (northwest) walls of the stack area. The triple windows have twelve over one central sash, flanking six over one sash, and the already noted frames with veveled edges and lintels with rectangular projections above each jamb (including the inner jambs between the central and flanking windows) and triangular projections above each window. The stack area's northeast wall features three six over one sash windows with frames of the same design. Two electric lights on brackets are also mounted on the northeast wall. The stack area also has the door to the rear stairhall, a five panel door with a frame of the same design seen on the other doors and windows, in its inner southwestern wall to the rear (north) of the opening into the central area. (The library furnishings, including the librarian's desk in the central area, tables in

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

the reading area, and bookcases in both the reading area and the stack area) are all freestanding.)

The rear stairhall contains a stairway that descends two steps from the stack area door to a small landing at the rear entry, then continues down southwesterly along the rear building wall to the basement. The main level of the stairhall is plastered on both the ceiling and the walls, the latter having plain baseboards. The southeastern wall of the main level has a small indentation at its westerly end. The lower basement section of the stairs descends between the exposed brick base of the fireplace to the southeast and the exposed fieldstone foundation wall to the northwest. The board steps and the landing are now covered with linoleum. Plain frames surround the two doors, the five panel door to the stack area at the northeast end, and the rear entry, a door with three lower panels and a single pane upper window, in the northwest wall.

The basement is an unfinished space with a dirt floor and exposed, mortared, fieldstone walls. (Part of the northeast basement wall is buttressed by a poured concrete wall.) The unfinished board ceiling, with its exposed joists, is supported by the exposed sills, set on the fieldstone walls, and by four transverse beams, each supported by three square posts on concrete bases. (Suspended from the ceiling is the modern, gas fired, hot air furnace.) The basement is basically one room, interrupted only by the posts and the large brick base of the fireplace. The basement is lit by high, plain framed, three pane windows, one in the southwest wall, four apiece in both the southeast and northwest walls.

In front (southeast) of and northeast of the building, the lot is devoted to lawns with shrubs, notably foundation shrubs along the street (southeast) facade of the building. The land slopes upward to the building from the street, particularly from the south corner of the lot. A round concrete cover for an abandoned well is found on the lawn, near the east corner of the lot. Behind the building, the grounds are rougher with an uneven surface, exposed stones, and dense growth, including a number of trees, concentrated near the building and along the northerly boundaries. The lot, of approximately 12,000 square feet in area, is five sided in shape, being almost rectangular, with a clipped northern corner. The short north boundary on the clipped corner is marked by a short stone wall.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1916-1917

Significant Dates

1916

1917

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Bacon, Willard M. (architect)

Twombly, Herbert A. (builder)

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

The Gilmanton Iron Works Library is significant under Criterion C, in the area of architecture, as an attractive small library building, notable for its pleasing design and simple but effective ornament, and as the first public library building in Belknap County to use the Colonial Revival style and a symmetrical main block with an entry portico. Built in 1916-1917, according to the plans of Boston architect Willard M. Bacon, the library differed in style and form from its five predecessors and one contemporary in Belknap County. When construction began on the Gilmanton Iron Works Library, all eleven municipalities in the county had public libraries.<sup>1</sup> But only four municipalities had proper public library buildings, buildings erected especially to house a library. The first public library building, erected in the town of New Hampton in 1895, was followed by library buildings in the towns of Meredith and Centre Harbor, and by two library buildings in the city of Laconia. Another library building was also erected in 1916-1917, in the town of Barnstead. Of these six buildings, four followed the Classical Revival style, while the main Laconia library employed the Romanesque Revival style and the Lakeport branch of the Laconia library used an eclectic blend of early 20th century styles. The two Laconia buildings are asymmetrical in form and plan, but all four Classical libraries had symmetrical main blocks, three of them being further distinguished by central entry pavilions. The Gilmanton Iron Works Library was the first to turn to the Colonial Revival style and to use a symmetrical main block with an entry portico. In both aspects of its design, the Gilmanton library was prophetic of the three library buildings subsequently built in the county, all of which used the Colonial Revival style and a symmetrical main block with central entry portico. In style and form, the Gilmanton Iron Works Library marked a significant change in the architectural evolution of the county's libraries. The library is also significant simply as a well designed building, an attractive small library, with good proportions, a pleasant composition, and attractive ornament. Its notable features include wide

1. For the histories of the public libraries and their buildings in Belknap County, see David Ruell PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY (Meredith, N.H.:1986)

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

"Articles of Agreement of the Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association" (manuscript, Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, Gilmanton, N.H.)  
"Deed, Addie C. Shannon to Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association", Belknap County Registry of Deeds Book 144, Page 151 (manuscript, Belknap County Registry of Deeds, Laconia, N.H.)  
"Gilmanton Town Records, Volume 12, 1883-1902" (manuscript, Gilmanton Town Offices, Gilmanton, N.H.)  
Doris Jones, letter to David Ruell, dated July 3, 1988 (manuscript, David Ruell, Ashland, N.H.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Specify repository:**

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property approximately .3 acre

**UTM References**

A 

1	9	3	1	3	9	5	0	4	8	0	9	5	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the nominated property is described as follows: beginning at the south corner of the lot, marked by a drillhole in a stone on the northwest side of Elm Street, the boundary proceeds northwesterly 161 feet along land of Marjorie Maher, then northeasterly 58 feet along land of Virginia Jahnle to a stone wall, then easterly 16 feet along the stone

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the nominated property is that of the lot purchased by the Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association in 1915. The lot has been historically associated with the Gilmanton Iron Works Library building since its construction in 1916-1917.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title David L. Ruell  
organization Lakes Region Planning Commission date July 10, 1988  
street & number Main Street telephone (603) 279-8171  
city or town Meredith state New Hampshire zip code 03253



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

clapboarded walls with sillboards, the entry portico, a fine entry frame, large triple windows, a wide cornice, and broad hip roof, as well as the interior window and door frames, brick fireplace, coved plaster ceilings, and columns, pilasters, and entablatures of the public spaces in the interior.

Before the establishment of public libraries, some Belknap County residents were served by private libraries, notably subscription libraries that were typically open only to their own members. Two such private libraries were founded in Gilmanton in the first years of the 19th century. The Social Library of Gilmanton, incorporated in 1801, was housed at first near the Smith Meetinghouse in the center of the town, but was later moved to Gilmanton Iron Works village. The Gilmanton Academy Social Library, incorporated in 1815, was housed in the village of Gilmanton Corner, where it also served the students of Gilmanton Academy. These libraries survived at least until 1845, when they are described in the town history. But, like most private association libraries in rural New Hampshire, they were relatively small, having only 150 volumes and 160 volumes, respectively in 1845.<sup>2</sup> And the private libraries were generally available only to their dues paying members and did not serve the public at large. 1833 saw the beginning of the free public library movement in New Hampshire, with the establishment of the Peterborough Town Library. It was not, however, until 1878, when the first Belknap County community followed Peterborough's example, when the Laconia town meeting voted to establish a public library, which opened its doors the following year. Meredith established its town library in 1882. Tilton's citizens acquired the use of a library in 1887, when the Hall Memorial Library opened in the neighboring town of Northfield (in Merrimack County) to serve both towns. In 1891, the state legislature spurred the growth of public libraries by offering a \$100 grant to any municipality that would establish a public library and agree to appropriate a certain sum annually for its support. This grant was accepted by the towns of Alton, Barnstead and Gilmanton in 1892, by the towns of Belmont and Gilford in 1893. In Gilmanton, however, there were second thoughts on the new institution. Although the 1892 annual meeting had decided to establish a board of library trustees and make the necessary annual appropriation<sup>3</sup>, the 1893 annual meeting repealed the earlier vote.<sup>4</sup> In 1895, the state legislature mandated annual library

2. Daniel Lancaster, THE HISTORY OF GILMANTON (Gilmanton, N.H.: 1845) pp.178-179

3. "Gilmanton Town Records, Volume 12, 1883-1902" (manuscript, Gilmanton Town Offices, Gilmanton, N.H.) pp. 342 and 346

4. "Gilmanton Town Records, Volume 12, 1883-1902", pp. 372 and 375

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

appropriations, even in towns where no public library existed. This requirement apparently prompted the Gilmanton voters to elect library trustees at the annual March 1896 town meeting<sup>5</sup> and to once again adopt the provisions of the state law on the establishment of public libraries at a November 1896 town meeting.<sup>6</sup> The same legislative requirement seems to have eventually convinced the voters of Sanbornton and Centre Harbor to establish public libraries in 1903 and 1910 respectively. The town of New Hampton was spared the necessity of creating a public library, when the Gordon-Nash Library, a library open to the residents of the town but built and supported by a generously endowed private corporation, was opened in 1896. So, by the early 20th century, every citizen of Belknap County had access to a public library.

The public library system developed somewhat differently in Gilmanton than it did in the county's other towns. In most Belknap County towns, one public library serving the entire community was located in the town's major village. The city of Laconia did inherit a library in the area known as Lakeport, when it annexed that portion of the town of Gilford in 1893. The Lakeport library became a branch of the city library, but was substantially smaller and clearly subsidiary to the main library, although it did eventually acquire its own building, erected with the bequest of a Lakeport physician.<sup>7</sup> The town of Barnstead experimented in the 1890's with the division of its town library into four branches, in the town's four villages. But, after a few years, the branches were abandoned, and Barnstead's library consolidated in one place.<sup>8</sup> Gilmanton alone developed a system of three separate public libraries for the three different parts of the town, the villages of Gilmanton Corner, Gilmanton Iron Works, and Lower Gilmanton. The early history of the Gilmanton Public Library is somewhat obscure, but it is clear that the three libraries had been established by 1915. The town owned books were circulated from one library to another, but each library was a distinct entity with its own librarian and its own quarters.<sup>9</sup> This system was no doubt prompted by two factors, the lack of any predominant village that had a clear claim to be the center of the town, and the rural character of the large township, whose scattered residents could travel no faster than a horse could walk and who were more easily served by neighborhood institutions, such as the district schoolhouse.

With the exception of the New Hampton and Centre Harbor libraries,  
5. "Gilmanton Town Records, Volume 12, 1883-1902", p. 449  
6. "Gilmanton Town Records, Volume 12, 1883-1902", pp. 468 and 473  
7. Ruell, pp. 57-59  
8. Ruell, pp. 12-14  
9. Ruell, pp. 39 and 42; Laconia Democrat August 24, 1917, p. 2; interview of Melvin Bunker by David Ruell, July 3, 1988

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

the public libraries of Belknap County began in makeshift quarters, spaces converted from other uses and not designed for library use, such as a rented room in a commercial block, as in Laconia, a spare room in the town hall, as in Sanbornton, or the librarian's home, as in Gilford.<sup>10</sup> The Gordon-Nash Library in New Hampton was, in fact, the first public library in the county to have its own building, actually designed and built for library use, built in 1895 and opened in 1896. The New Hampton library was the result of a generous bequest; and the four libraries that appeared in the county in the next fifteen years were all built with the gift or bequest of private individuals. The public library buildings in Meredith (1900-01) and Centre Harbor (1909-10) were gifts of former residents. The two Laconia library buildings, the main library (1901-03) and the Lakeport branch (1905-06), were erected with the bequests of Laconia men. By 1915, therefore, four of the county's eleven municipalities had especially built library buildings. But more typical were the three libraries of Gilmanton, the Lower Gilmanton library in a private home, the Gilmanton Corner library in a converted cobbler's shop, and the Gilmanton Iron Works library in a village business block.

On May 28, 1915, the Gilmanton Iron Works library lost its home, when a great fire swept the center of Gilmanton Iron Works, destroying "nearly one half" of the village, including the Charles Dockham business block, which housed the library, the selectmen's office, and the post office.<sup>11</sup> The library books were saved,<sup>12</sup> but the library had no place to operate, until temporary quarters were readied in mid November.<sup>13</sup> The great fire was a severe blow to the villagers. But, within a few weeks, a movement was well underway to erect a library building in Gilmanton Iron Works.<sup>14</sup> On July 14, 1915, a meeting was held to organize the Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, formed for building a library. Officers were elected and plans made for soliciting donations.<sup>15</sup> Food sales and other fund raising events began almost immediately.<sup>16</sup> One of the houses destroyed by the fire was owned by Addie C. Shannon.<sup>17</sup> On August 11, the Association voted

10. See Ruell, PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY, for the history of all of the Belknap County libraries.

11. Laconia Democrat June 4, 1915, p.1

12. Laconia News and Critic July 14, 1915, p.8

13. Laconia News and Critic November 10, 1915, p.7

14. Laconia News and Critic July 14, 1915, p.8

15. "Meetings of Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, July 14, 1915 through October 31, 1915" (manuscript, Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, Gilmanton, N.H.) minutes of Association meeting, July 14, 1915 (The manuscript is unpaginated.)

16. Laconia News and Critic July 28, 1915, p.5; August 11, 1915, p.1

17. Laconia News and Critic June 2, 1915, p.1

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

- to buy the Shannon lot.<sup>18</sup> The actual conveyance was made on October 28, when the small lot near the center of the village was acquired by the Association for \$50.<sup>19</sup> In September, the Association was more formally organized and incorporated by the state under articles of agreement signed on September 18 and recorded by the Secretary of State on September 23.<sup>20</sup> The articles of agreement stated the purpose of the new Association as "the construction and maintaining of a public library in Gilmanton Iron Works, N.H."<sup>21</sup> New officers and a board of directors were elected under the articles of agreement in October.<sup>22</sup> Plans for the building, drawn and donated by Willard M. Bacon, a Boston architect who summered on Crystal Lake, a Gilmanton lake just north of the village, were adopted by the board of directors in February of 1916.<sup>23</sup> By the end of June, 1916, the Association had raised "a little over \$1100", through fund raising events, and donations from permanent and summer residents of the town, former residents, and interested parties in nearby towns.<sup>24</sup> On June 17, the directors felt confident enough to create a building committee (Dr. Clarence P. Ballard, Lizzie A. Connell, and Charles A. Price) with "full power to construct" the building.<sup>25</sup> The building contract was promptly put out for bids<sup>26</sup> and was soon awarded to a local builder, Herbert A. Twombly of Gilmanton, who had built the new Iron Works Village school.<sup>27</sup>
18. "Meetings of Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, July 14, 1915 through October 31, 1944", minutes of Association meeting, August 11, 1915
  19. "Deed, Addie C. Shannon to Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association" (manuscript, Belknap County Registry of Deeds, Laconia, N.H.) Book 144, page 511
  20. "Meetings of Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, July 14, 1915 through October 31, 1944", minutes of Association meeting, Sept. 18, 1915; "Articles of Agreement of the Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association" (manuscript, Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, Gilmanton, N.H.)
  21. "Articles of Agreement of the Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association"
  22. "Meetings of Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, July 14, 1915 through October 31, 1944", minutes of Association meeting, October 5, 1915
  23. "Meetings of Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, July 14, 1915 through October 31, 1944", minutes of Directors meeting, February 5, 1916; Laconia News and Critic, February 9, 1916, p.5; Laconia Democrat, August 24, 1917, p.2
  24. Laconia Democrat June 30, 1916, p.3
  25. "Meetings of Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, July 14, 1915 through October 31, 1944" minutes of Directors meeting, June 17, 1916
  26. Laconia Democrat June 30, 1916, p.3
  27. "Meetings of Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, July 14, 1915 through October 31, 1944", minutes of Association meeting, August 3, 1916; Laconia News and Critic August 2, 1916, p.1; interview of Gwen Cochran by David Ruell, July 8, 1988

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

The contract called for the Association "to furnish the frame and boards and one thousand feet of finish and Mr. Twombly to furnish all other materials and complete the building on or before Oct. 15, 1916 for \$1500".<sup>28</sup> (Besides monetary donations, the Association had also received donations of lumber, notably most of the timbers needed for the frame.<sup>29</sup>) The contractor commenced work on the foundation on July 29, 1916.<sup>30</sup> By early September, the frame was "up and boarded in".<sup>31</sup> One Laconia paper reported on November 1, that the "Finishing touches are being given to the new Library building",<sup>32</sup> and, at the end of December, that "the new library is ready for the decorators".<sup>33</sup> But the completion and furnishing of the library required more fund raising, which continued well into the next year.<sup>34</sup> The library was not ready for use until the summer of 1917. The Gilmanton Iron Works library opened to the public in its new building on August 11, 1917.<sup>35</sup> The library was formally dedicated a few days later, at a well attended ceremony on August 16.<sup>36</sup>

Few changes have been made to the library since its construction. Some necessary repairs, such as the replacement of roof shingles, the portico, steps and floor, and the column plinths, have been made over the years.<sup>37</sup> Metal gutters and drainpipes were installed in 1968. A metal and glass storm door replaced a wooden framed screen door at the main entry in 1972. A new gas furnace required the installation in 1979 of outside gas tanks and a new floor register in the reading area. A handrail was mounted on the front steps in 1984.<sup>38</sup> 1988 saw the installation of new flowerboxes on the front windows, that are larger and more elaborate than the original flowerboxes.<sup>39</sup> Basically, however, the building appears today as it did

28. "Meetings of Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, July 14, 1915 through October 31, 1944", minutes of Association meeting, August 3, 1916

29. Laconia Democrat June 30, 1916, p.3

30. Laconia News and Critic August 2, 1916, p.1

31. Laconia News and Critic September 6, 1916, p.4

32. Laconia News and Critic November 1, 1916, p.5

33. Laconia News and Critic December 27, 1916, p.4

34. Laconia News and Critic December 20, 1916, p.7, August 8, 1917, p.5;

"Meetings of Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, July 14, 1915 through October 31, 1944", minutes of Association meeting, July 17, 1917, minutes of Directors meetings, May 12, 1917 and August 28, 1917

35. Laconia News and Critic August 15, 1917, p.2

36. Laconia Democrat August 24, 1917, p.2; Laconia News and Critic August 15, 1917, p.2, August 22, 1917, p. 6

37. Interview of Doris Jones, Margaret Burns, and Gwen Cochran, by David Ruell, June 29, 1988

38. Letter, Doris Jones to David Ruell, dated July 3, 1988 (manuscript, David Ruell, Ashland, N.H.)

39. Interview of Doris Jones, Margaret Burns, and Gwen Cochran, by David Ruell, June 29, 1988.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

at its dedication in 1917.

The Gilmanton Iron Works Library differed in style from the five preceding and one contemporary library buildings in Belknap County.<sup>40</sup> (By the time the Gilmanton Iron Works Library was completed a public library building was under construction in Barnstead. Although it was not completed and opened until the fall of 1917, Barnstead's Oscar Foss Memorial Library should be regarded as a contemporary of the Gilmanton library.) Four of these six buildings, the Gordon-Nash Library in New Hampton, the Benjamin M. Smith Library in Meredith, the Nichols Memorial Library in Centre Harbor, and the Oscar Foss Memorial Library in Barnstead, were Classical Revival style buildings. All four were symmetrical in form, with a central entry and (with the exception of the Barnstead library, which has a recessed entry) an entry pavilion. The two Laconia libraries, the impressive Romanesque Revival Gale Memorial Library (the main library) and the eclectic Ossian Wilbur Goss Reading Room (the Lakeport branch), both asymmetrical in form and plan, were the only exceptions to the dominance of the Classical styles. The Gilmanton Iron Works Library marked the first appearance of a new style, the Colonial Revival style, and a new form, the symmetrical main block with a central entry portico, that also characterized all three later library buildings erected in the county. Willard M. Bacon did not design the Gilmanton Iron Works Library as an academically correct reproduction of a Colonial building. But, the Colonial Revival style can be seen in the wide clapboards and sillboards with watertables of the walls, the triple windows with multipane upper sash and single pane lower sash, the broad hip roof, the main entry's frame of pilasters and entablature, the columned, pedimented portico, the box cornice with architrave and frieze, the symmetrical plan and the entablatures, columns, and pilasters of the interior. But, there are some features, such as the wide overhang of the main cornice, the lack of corner trim, and such interior elements as the window and door frames, the fireplace and its mantelshelf, that are not typical of the style, although they are typical of the period. For the three Belknap County library buildings that followed the Gilmanton Iron Works Library, all in adjoining towns, the style and form of the Gilmanton building may have served as an inspiration. This is quite clear in the case of the Gilford Public Library, built in 1924-25. The Gilford library copies the Gilmanton Iron Works Library in most of its exterior features, the wide clapboards, sillboards, wide cornice, three bay front with central entry, columned and pedimented entry portico, large triple windows, and broad hip roof. The Gilford library, erected by a local builder, is not as sophisticated in its design or in its details as the Gilmanton library, but it is clearly modeled on

<sup>40</sup> The comparison in this paragraph is based on David Ruell, PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 7

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

the earlier building. The two other later libraries, the Belmont Public Library (1927-28) and the Gilman Library of Alton (1951), are both Colonial Revival buildings having three bay fronts with central entries and central pedimented entry porticos. Both, however, are gable roofed brick buildings designed by architects, and probably were not directly influenced by the Gilmanton Iron Works Library. Nevertheless, the Gilmanton Iron Works Library clearly indicated in its form and style the future of library architecture in Belknap County.

The Gilmanton Iron Works Library is perhaps more significant for its quality than for its influence. It is a relatively small building, just 40 feet long and 25 feet deep, with a modest entry portico. But, it is a well designed and well executed building. The exterior ornament, the sill-boards with watertables, the wide cornice with its architrave and frieze, the moulded lintels of the windows, covering and echoing the architrave of the main cornice, the pilasters and entablature framing the main entry, and the graceful columns and pediment of the portico, is restrained but successful. The symmetrical and nicely composed facades give the building a pleasing exterior. The interior, with its symmetrical and integrated plan, its unusual window and door frames, attractive baseboards, chairrails and cornices, fine fireplace with mantelshelf, the exceptional ensemble of columns, pilasters and entablatures in the central portion, and the coved plaster ceilings, is quite sophisticated for a building of this size. The interior, like exterior, is well designed and pleasing to the eye. The architect, although designing a small building on a tight budget, succeeded in producing a very attractive building, one of Belknap County's best small library buildings.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   9   Page   1  

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

---

Laconia Democrat June 4, September 17, 1915; June 30, August 11 and 18, 1916; August 24, 1917

Laconia News and Critic June 2, July 14 and 28, August 11 and 25, September 15, November 10, December 1 and 22, 1915; February 9 and 16, March 8, June 14, August 2, 9, 16 and 23, September 6, November 1, December 20 and 27, 1916; May 23, July 25, August 8, 15 and 22, 1917

Daniel Lancaster THE HISTORY OF GILMANTON (Gilmanton, N.H.: Alfred Prescott printer, 1845)

"Meetings of Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, July 14, 1915 through October 31, 1944" (manuscript, Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, Gilmanton, N.H.)

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE STATE LIBRARY AND THE STATE LIBRARIAN FOR THE PERIOD BEGINNING JUNE 1, 1904 AND ENDING MAY 31, 1906 (Manchester, N.H.: John B. Clarke Co., printer, 1906)

David Ruell PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY (Meredith, N.H.: Lakes Region Planning Commission, 1986)

Interview of Melvin Bunker by David Ruell, July 3, 1988

Interview of Gwen Cochran by David Ruell, July 8, 1988

Interview of Doris Jones, Margaret Burns, and Gwen Cochran by David Ruell, July 8, 1988



**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

---

### Verbal Boundary Description

wall (and land of Jahnle), then southeasterly 151 feet along land of Jahnle to Elm Street, then southwesterly 85 feet along Elm Street to the point of beginning. The property is described in the Deed of Addie C. Shannon to the Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association, Belknap County Registry of Deeds, Book 144, Page 151, and appears as Parcel 3557 on Gilmanton Property Map 53. The boundaries of the nominated property are highlighted in yellow on the attached sketch map entitled "Gilmanton Iron Works Library, Gilmanton, N.H."

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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

Section number 10 Page 2

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

---

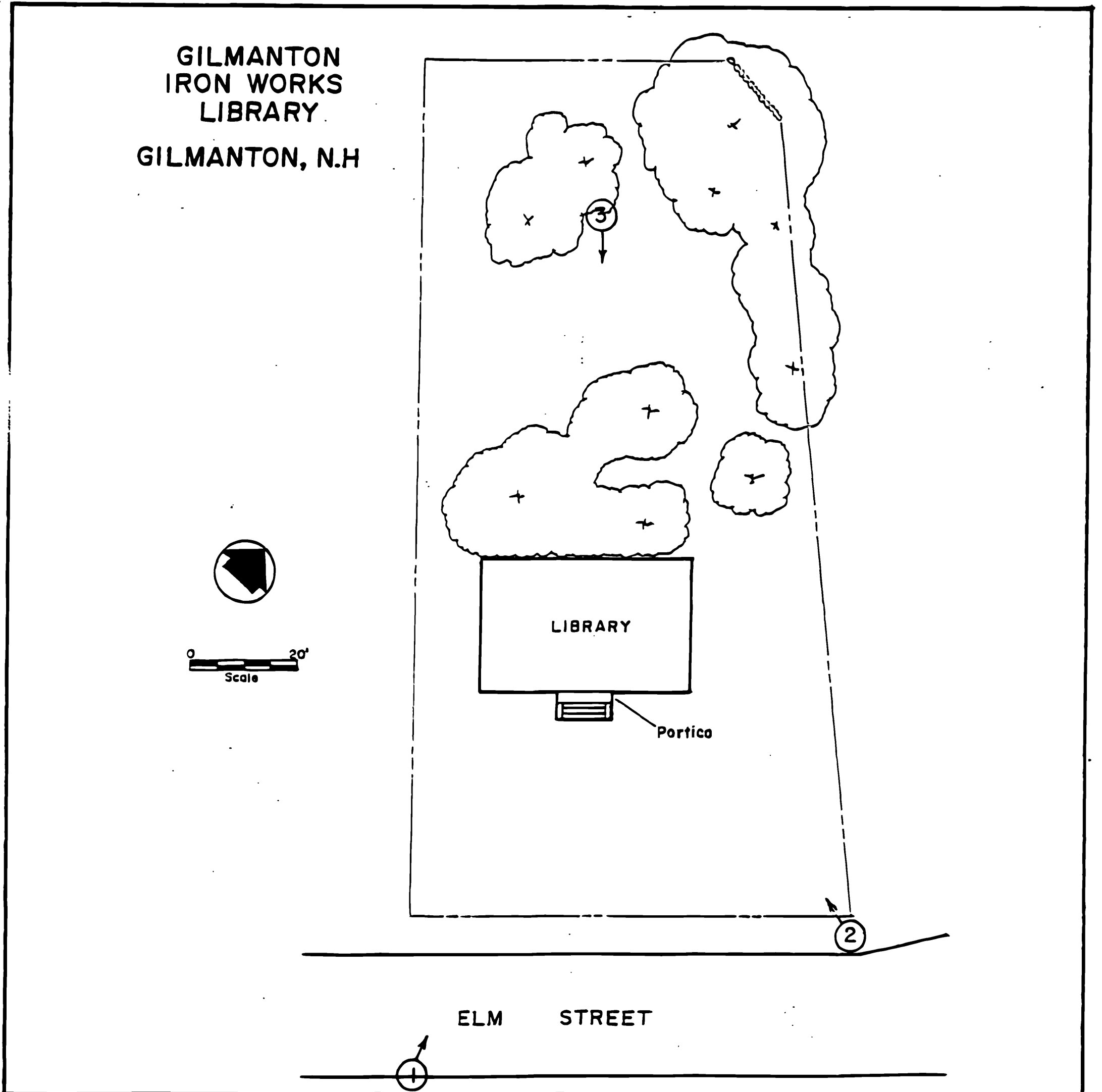
This certifies that the appearance has not changed since these photographs were taken.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Gilmanton Iron Works Library



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Gilmanton Iron Works Library

---

Owner Gilmanton Iron Works Library Association

Mailing address P.O. Box 66  
Gilmanton Iron Works, N.H. 03837