

MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

MAR 2 1982

HISTORIC NAME: Thomas Scott Buckham Memorial Library COUNTY: Rice
 CURRENT NAME: CITY/TWP.: Faribault
 LEGAL DESC.: Lots 4, 5, 6, 7, BLock 6, Southern Addition ADDRESS:
 to Faribault. Central Avenue and Division Street

CLASSIFICATION:	CONDITION:	SIGNIFICANCE:	THEME/S:
Building <u>X</u>	Excellent _____	Local <u>X</u>	Primary <u>Architecture</u>
Structure _____	Good <u>X</u>	State _____	Secondary <u>Education</u>
Object _____	Fair _____	National _____	Others <u>Art</u>
District _____	Deteriorated _____		

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Yes X No _____ Restricted X PRESENT USE:
 VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD: Yes X No _____ library
 OCCUPIED: Yes X No _____

DATE CONSTRUCTED: 1930 ORIGINAL USE: library
 ORIGINAL OWNER: City of Faribault ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Charles Buckham, Vermont

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: City of Faribault 208 1st Avenue NW Faribault, MN 55021	ACREAGE: Less than one acre <u>X</u>
LOCAL CONTACT/ORG.: Rice County Historical Society, P.O. Box 5, Faribault, MN 55021	UTM REFERENCE: Faribault Quad. 7.5 15 / 478635 / 4903900
FORM PREPARED BY: Britta Bloomberg	
DATE: April 1981	

DESCRIPTION:

The Thomas Scott Buckham Memorial Library occupies a prominent location at the south-east corner of Central Avenue and Division Street at the south end of Faribault's principal business district. A residential neighborhood is located in the immediate vicinity. The building's large scale, masonry construction, three story tower, and prominent location make it the most prominent structure in this part of town.

The library was constructed in 1930 and was designed by Charles Buckham of Vermont, a nephew of the man it commemorates. The building is Art Deco in massing and feeling with a late Gothic Revival influence. It faces north and is symmetrical with a multi-level plan that is almost tiered in effect: one story on the north, two stories in the center section broken by a tall four story tower, and two stories at the rear (south) with one story sections at the rear corners. The building is constructed of dolomite limestone quarried near Kasota, Minnesota; wall surfaces are smooth and ornamentation is in low relief. Windows are largely rectilinear and multi-paned with pastel colored glass. The arched design above many of the windows and doors in the stone is reminiscent of the Gothic style. Identical entrances on the north and west facades are sheltered in stone vestibules flanked by small colored glass rectilinear windows and lanterns on each side, with the building name engraved in the stone overhead. The tall central tower is the dominant element of the design; tower features include a large arched stained glass window at the front second story level (designed by Charles Connick of Boston), a clock on the north, and paired arched openings on all sides. Low relief geometric ornamentation is located at the top of the tower. Both the tower and the utilization of slightly projecting corner pilasters throughout the building lend verticality to the design.

The building's integrity is excellent. The interior retains the original woodwork, many of the furnishings, and four murals depicting Greek culture in the fourth century B.C. (painted by former Carleton College art professor Alfred J. Hyslop). The building continues to serve its original purpose and houses the Faribault Public Library.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Thomas Scott Buckham Memorial Library is significant both as the prominent home of the Faribault Public Library for fifty years and as an outstanding example of the public buildings constructed in the larger Minnesota communities during the 1930s. It is also significant as the structure best associated with Judge Buckham, the man it commemorates. The building was the gift of Mrs. Anna Buckham in memory of her husband, The Honorable Thomas Scott Buckham, an early Faribault settler, prominent local leader, state senator, and

Significance - continued

district judge for thirty years (1880-1910). The Greek theme for the building, particularly evidenced in the murals and stained glass window, was chosen to reflect Buckham's scholarly interest in Greek culture and art, and his personal library formed part of the gift to the city in his memory. Buckham Memorial Library is the second building to house the Faribault Public Library since it became a city supported institution in 1897 in the shelter of the Faribault City Hall. The Art Deco design masonry construction, scale, and tower make the building a prominent local landmark, of scale and quality usually seen only in county courthouses or in other public buildings in cities much larger than Faribault. As such, it is not only a generous gift in memory of an important individual and a grand home for a public library, but an excellent example of a style popular for large public buildings in the 1930s.

Bibliography:

Sanborn Insurance Company Maps, 1930.

Swanberg, L.E., ed., Then and Now, a History of Rice County, Faribault, and Communities,
Faribault: 1976.