

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

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received FEB 7 1985  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic HOLDERNESS FREE LIBRARY

and/or common Holderness Free Library

**2. Location**

street & number Juntion of Rte. 3 and Rte. 113 n/a not for publication

city, town Holderness n/a vicinity of

state New Hampshire code 33 county Grafton code 009

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	Other
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>Library</u>

**4. Owner of Property**

name Town of Holderness

street & number Route 3 (Box 203)

city, town Holderness, n/a vicinity of state New Hampshire 03245

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Grafton County Courthouse  
Grafton County Registry of Deeds

street & number Route 10

city, town North Haverhill, state New Hampshire 03774

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Holderness Historic Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Lakes Region Planning Commission

city, town Meredith, state New Hampshire

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date n/a

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Holderness Free Library is a public library building that stands on its own lot at the junction of Routes 3 and 113, in the center of Holderness village. The rectangular, hip-roofed building is set with its long south side facing Route 3, the village's main street. The brick library is one-story high, with a full basement partially exposed on the rear (north) facade. A small wooden enclosed porch shelters the main entry in the center of the south facade.

The foundation consists of rough uncoursed granite blocks topped by a row of dressed granite blocks with a water table. Save where the basement is exposed on the rear facade, only the dressed course is visible. The brick walls are laid in common bond, and embellished by ornamental brickwork. Laid directly on the granite foundation is a projecting course of headers. The corners are ornamented by wide brick quoins. Above the windows, a band of five projecting courses (the top course projecting further than the bottom four courses) encircles the building. This band is arched above the entries and is supported by a few shallow brick corbels. Above the band, the east, south, and west walls are punctuated by small crosses formed by projecting headers. The eaves brackets rest on two courses of projecting bricks. And between the brackets can be seen a course of vertically laid bricks.

The slightly flared eaves of the hip roof have a wide overhang and are unusually elaborate. A projecting horizontal wooden beam is supported by short, heavy sawn brackets. On the beam rests the decoratively sawn rafter ends which support the eaves' sloping soffits, which are sheathed with beaded boarding. Mouldings are found above and beneath the beam. A fascia board with mouldings trims the outer edge of the eaves. The hip roof, sheathed with slate, has copper ridge mouldings. It is broken only by two small attic vents, on the east and west slopes, and by the large chimney in the north slope.

The main facade is three bays wide with the main entry in the central bay. The entry itself is a twelve panel door with a granite sill. The door's moulded surround is eared at the upper corners and projects over the door around a horizontal panel, which is topped by a shallow moulded cornice. Filling the space between the ears and the cornice panel are small carved scrolls. Above the cornice is another horizontal raised panel. The entry is sheltered by a small, enclosed entry porch with a metal clad convex roof. The porch has a dressed granite block foundation and a brick floor. Fluted square pillars with bases and capitals and corresponding pilasters support the classical moulded cornice with a paneled frieze. On the street (south) facade, the cornice is pedimented, creating a segmental pediment with a flush boarded tympanum. The pediment's horizontal cornice, which has a paneled soffit, is indented above the door and is supported at the outer corners by large ornate scrolled brackets. The panel in the frieze is filled by a painted sign identifying the library. On the east and west side facades, the cornice is shallower, not projecting as far as it does on the south. The outer door in the porch's south facade is another twelve panel door, here with plain trim. A small bookdrop is found to the west of the door. The porch's east and west sides feature large twelve pane windows above low paneled walls. Panels also appear in the porch interior, above the outer door, and both beneath and above the windows. The classical cornice trims a flat plain wooden ceiling.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 2

Above the porch on the south facade, the projecting band above the windows sweeps up as stilted segmental arch. The brick arch is ornamented by a large brick keystone and corbels beneath the imposts. The side bays of the south facade each contain a triple window, with brick sill and flat brick head. The window's central six over six sash window and flanking four over four sash windows are framed by simple wooden pilasters. Corbels supporting the above window band are found on both sides of each triple window. Above that band, four crosses ornament each side bay.

The one bay wide east and west facades are almost identical. Each has a three pane basement window with plain trim, set in a sunken well with rough stone walls topped by a course of dressed granite blocks. Each side facade features a triple window of the same design as the two south windows, differing only in that all three sections have six over six sash. Corbels support the above window band on each side of the windows. And six crosses appear above the band.

The rear (north) facade is a little simpler, lacking the crosses and the corbels found on the more public facades. In the center of this windowless facade is a recess which contains a beaded board panel above a granite sill. The panel covers a future doorway, as the building was planned with expansion to the rear in mind. The shallow recess is topped by a segmental arched section of the above window band, again ornamented by a brick keystone. Just west of the recess is the library's exterior chimney. The lower section of the chimney received the same treatment as the wall itself, including the granite foundation, the projecting course of bricks directly above the foundation, the projecting above window band, and the projecting courses just below the eaves. The upper section of the chimney, which projects through the roof, is smaller than the lower section and is crowned by a corbeled cap. Part of the basement is exposed in the eastern half of the rear facade. The basement entry, a paneled door with six pane window, as well as a three pane basement window, has plain trim.

The main level of the building is one large library room. The hardwood floor is partially carpeted. The walls are sheathed in wood, with narrow raised vertical panels above a baseboard and beneath a shallow moulding which marks the bottom of high horizontal panels. These upper horizontal panels are cut off by the new lowered ceiling. The modern suspended tile ceiling has a central row of builtin light panels. The triple windows, one apiece in the east and west walls, and two in the south wall, all have moulded trim, splayed jambs, and modern window quilts. In the center of the south wall is the main entry--a twelve panel door with moulded trim, topped by an overdoor panel. Both the door and the overdoor panel are set in a moulded frame. Directly opposite the main entry in the center of the north wall is the future doorway. This unused doorway is virtually identical to the southern door, complete with twelve panel blind door, overdoor panel and moulded frame. Short builtin bookcases are found only on the west wall, as most of the bookcases, as well as the furniture, are movable.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 2

Item number 7

Page 3

In the northeast corner of the room is the L-shaped stairs to the basement. The stairwell is protected by a plain railing with square posts, simple rails and balusters. The partially carpeted wooden steps end at a modern door with plain trim. The stairway's outer walls are the exposed stone and brick basement walls, while the inner walls are sheathed with modern grooved wooden "paneling".

The basement has poured concrete floors, metal sheathed ceilings, plain window and door trim, and uncoursed rough stone walls topped by a short brick wall which corresponds to the dressed granite course on the exterior. Two square brick piers stand on the center line of the basement. The northwest quarter of the basement has been partitioned off as a restroom-furnace room. And the stairway, of course, occupies the northeast corner. Both the stairway and the outer walls of the furnace room are sheathed with modern grooved wooden "paneling", with narrow corner strips and simple ceiling mouldings. The main basement space is lit by a three-pane window in the east wall, a three pane window and the window of the basement door in the north wall. The furnace room contains the furnace, a washbasin, and an incinerating toilet. Entered by double paneled doors in its south wall, the furnace room has the usual stone and brick outer walls, and plywood sheathed inner walls.

The library sits on a slight knoll, a few feet above the streets. The lot slopes to the east and, more dramatically, to the north towards the Squam River. Along Route 3, which has a curbed paved sidewalk, is found a short retaining wall, built of rough granite blocks topped by a rough granite coping. This short wall is interrupted by a set of granite steps with metal hand rail which lead up to the concrete walk that serves the building's main entry. The steps are flanked by a pair of ornate wrought iron lamp standards with pseudo Colonial electric lamps. Two other retaining walls are found to the rear--a short stone wall perpendicular to the north facade next to the basement door, and a concrete wall, topped by a metal pipe hand rail, that continues the line of the north facade to the east. The grounds are grassed around the building, with shrubs flanking the walk and at the building's front corners. On the lawn east of the library stands a simple wooden sign with two boards between two square posts, identifying the building and giving the library hours. On the lawn west of the building is found the Holderness Honor Roll. This wooden World War II memorial is set on two brick piers. The honor roll itself, lists of painted names on wooden panels, is protected by large panes of plate glass, on the slightly curved front of the memorial. The title appears in raised letters above the names. Raised stars and simply scrolled boards ornament the ends of the Honor Roll. A tree shades the memorial and another tree stands behind the exterior chimney. The lot's steep northern slope has been abandoned to a wild but attractive growth of shrubs and tall trees. A third of the northern boundary of the lot is the Squam River itself. The east edge of the lot is given over to a gravel parking lot, which is shared with the property to the east of the library.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1909–1910

**Builder/Architect** Fox and Gale, architects

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Holderness Free Library is significant in the area of architecture as a fine, well-preserved example of early 20th century library architecture, and as one of the most interesting small libraries in the Lakes Region. The design of the Holderness Free Library is transitional and eclectic in character, as it combines a basically Classical plan with Classical, Colonial Revival, and Victorian elements. The plan and the facades are strictly symmetrical, as was typical of Classical and Colonial Revival styles. The emphasis placed on the building's axis by the central entry porch is also typical of the two styles. The porch itself, with its fluted pillars and pilasters, classical cornice with consoles, segmental pediment, and convex roof, could easily be found on a Colonial Revival house of the period. The triple windows with multipane sash, the brick quoins, and the hip roof are other features shared by many Colonial Revival buildings. But other brick elements, such as the projecting band above the windows with its segmental arches with keystones, and the rows of small crosses seem more Victorian in character. But perhaps the most Victorian element is the elaborate eaves with their slight flare, wide overhang, beaded board sloping soffit, decoratively cut rafter ends, and sawn brackets. The Holderness library building thus represents the transition from the architecture of the late 19th century as exemplified by the Stick Style and the Queen Anne style, to the more disciplined architecture of the early 20th century, as seen in the Neo-Classical and Colonial Revival styles. The small eclectic building does not strictly follow any stylistic formula, but still manages to please the viewer.

In its early years, the Holderness Free Library was housed in private houses and store buildings. On September 17, 1906, a great fire destroyed seven buildings in Holderness village, including N.B. Whitten's store building, in which the library was then housed. The library collection was reduced by the fire to the eighteen books then out on loan. This sad experience seems to have inspired the movement to erect a proper (and more fireproof) public library building on its own lot. In the warrant for the annual Holderness town meeting of 1907, there appeared an article requesting an unspecified sum of money for a library building. On March 12, 1907, the voters appropriated \$1,000 toward the building and land, and authorized the library trustees to proceed with selecting a location, accepting donations from individuals, and erecting the building. The lot chosen by the trustees was the most prominent site in the village, at the junction of its two main highways. The owner, A.C. Long, was reluctant to let the land go, so the selectmen had to take the property by eminent domain in June, 1908. Long appealed the selectmen's decision. The appeal was unsuccessful, but it was not until the following winter that the town finally acquired undisputed title to the lot. The land cost \$1,000, absorbing all of the town appropriation. So the nearly \$4,000 cost of the building had to be raised from private donations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The bulk of the money for the new library building came from the Webster family, with \$2,500 from Frank G. Webster and \$500 from Lawrence J. Webster.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .4 acre

Quadrangle name Holderness, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UTM References

A 

1	9	2	9	1	5	5	0	4	8	4	5	1	5	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

(see continuation sheet)

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Rue11

organization Lakes Region Planning Commission date August 5, ]984

street & number Main Street telephone (603) 279-8171

city or town Meredith, state New Hampshire

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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



1/25/85

title New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer

date

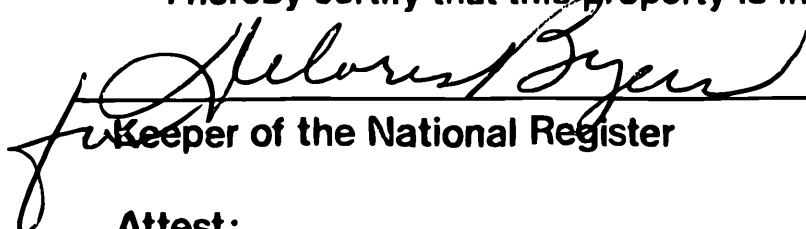
### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Subscribed and sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1985

date

3-7-85



Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 3

Item number 8

Page 2

The building was designed by the Boston architectural firm of Fox and Gale. The Ahern Brothers of Plymouth began work on the cellar and foundation in late June, 1909, and finished the foundation in September. The contract for the building itself was awarded to John H. Perkins. The brick laying commenced in September and was finished by early November. The roof and exterior finish were completed by mid December. But progress on the building, described by a local newspaper as "a little slow from the time the ground was broken"<sup>2</sup>, seems to have slowed even further in 1910. In July, the newspaper noted that "The Holderness library building is slowly arriving at completion."<sup>3</sup> But, the contractor did not receive his final payment until January 10, 1911. And the library did not open in its new quarters until some-time in 1911.<sup>4</sup>

There have been few changes to the building. A 1973-74 renovation was limited to the basement and included the installation of the present stairway and an electric toilet. The only other significant changes to the main level of the building were two energy conservation measures, the installation of a lower suspended tile ceiling in 1977 and of window quilts in 1983. The grounds have seen the erection of the Holderness Honor Roll after World War II, and of the front stone retaining wall after the widening of Route 3 in 1975. But, the exterior of the building has not been changed since its construction. So, the Holderness Free Library appears today virtually as it did in 1911.

Of the seven library buildings erected in the Lakes Region in the first decade of the 20th century, five, including the Holderness library, were Classical or Colonial Revival in design. The Wakefield Public Library (1902-03) is a purely Colonial Revival building, just as the Franklin Public Library (1905-06) and the Nichols Memorial Library in Centre Harbor (1909-10) are obviously Neo-Classical in style. The Benjamin M. Smith Memorial Library in Meredith (1900-01) is also a Classical building, although rather freer in its approach to the Classical style than the Franklin and Centre Harbor buildings. But the Meredith library is not as free from stylistic constraints as the Holderness Free Library is. The Holderness Library is a truly eclectic building, inspired by the Classical, Colonial Revival and

<sup>2</sup>Plymouth Record, December 11, 1909.

<sup>3</sup>Plymouth Record, July 16, 1910.

<sup>4</sup>Unfortunately, there is no record of the date of occupancy, beyond predictions in the Plymouth Record of January, 1911 that the library would "open in the spring" (January 7) or "soon" (January 28).

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 4

Item number 8

Page 3

Victorian styles, but not strictly bound by any of them. It succeeds, not by parroting the features of these strong styles, but by its own unique blend of their common elements, disciplined by a strictly symmetrical design. The result is a building which resists easy stylistic labeling, but which nevertheless has its own strong character. The Holderness Free Library is not only Holderness' best 20th century public building, but it is also one of the most architecturally interesting small libraries in the Lakes Region.



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 5

Item number 9

Page 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

ANNUAL REPORTS, TOWN OF HOLDERNESS, for the years ending February 15, 1908, February 15, 1909, February 15, 1910, February 15, 1911, December 31, 1973, December 31, 1974, December 31, 1975, December 31, 1977.

Vina Merrill Henry, "History of the Holderness Free Library" (manuscript, Holderness Free Library, Holderness, N.H.).

"Holderness Town Records" Volume 7 (manuscript, Holderness Town Hall, Holderness, N.H.).

Laconia Democrat - April 16, 1909; September 30, 1910; March 3, 1911.

Laconia News & Critic, October 20, 1909.

Plymouth Record - September 22, December 29, 1906; January 10, September 21, 1907; April 18, December 12, 1908; January 9, March 27, April 10, June 26, July 3, 24 & 31, August 14, September 14, October 23, November 6, December 11, 1909; June 18, July 16, 1910; January 7 & 28, February 18, March 4, 1911.

THE TOWN REGISTER: ASHLAND, PLYMOUTH, SANDWICH, CAMPTON, HOLDERNESS, CENTER HARBOR, MOULTONBORO - 1908 (Augusta, Maine, 1908).

Interview - Ann Pierce, August 1, 1984.

Interview - Mary DeLashmit, August 4, 1984.

Interview - Evangeline Dana, August 4, 1984.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 6

Item number 10

Page 2

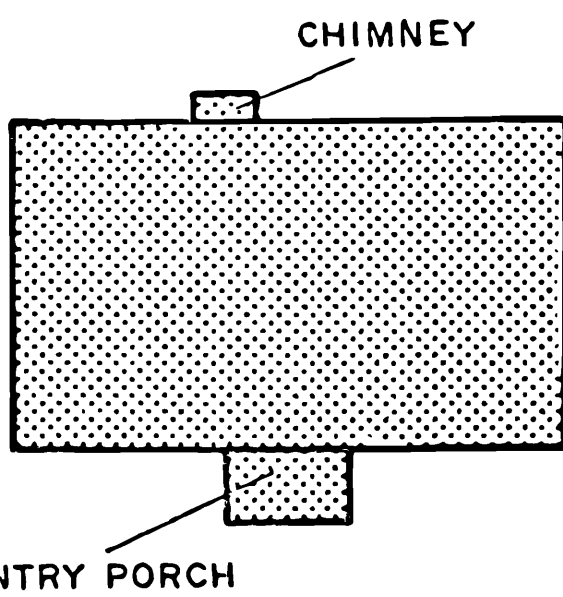
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The boundary of the nominated property is indicated as a highlighted yellow line on the accompanying map entitled "Holderness Free Library, Holderness, N.H.". The nominated property is a four-sided lot bounded on the south by Route 3, on the west by Route 113, on the north by the Squam River and the property of Jacob Dunnell, and on the east by the property of Peter and Susan Francesco, James and Kimberly Littlefield. The nominated property includes the Holderness Free Library and lot on which it has stood since its construction. (Holderness Property Map 5A, Lot 44A).

SQUAM RIVER

ROUTE 113

ROUTE 3



HOLDERNESS FREE LIBRARY  
 HOLDERNESS, N.H.

