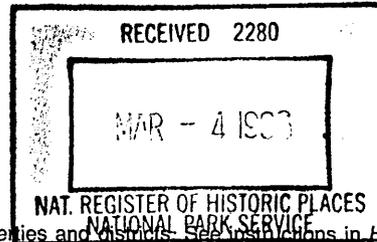


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cotton Free Library

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Quaker Village Road N/A not for publication

city or town Weybridge N/A vicinity

state Vermont code VT county Addison code 001 zip code 05753

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Elsa Gilbertson National Register Specialist February 29, 1996  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

4-4-96  
Date of Action

entered in the  
National Register

Cotton Free Library  
Name of Property

Addison County, Vermont  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: library

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: library

WORK IN PROGRESS

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls concrete

roof metal

other wood

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Cotton Free Library  
Name of Property

Addison County , Vermont  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

( Mark " x " in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

( Mark " x " in all the boxes that apply. )

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

( Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets. )

**Areas of Significance**

( Enter categories from instructions )

Education

Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1913-1945

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1913

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

( Complete If Criterion B is marked above )

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

( Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets. )

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other .

Name of repository:

University of Vermont

Cotton Free Library  
Name of Property

Addison County, Vermont  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre.

**UTM references**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	8	6	4	2	8	9	0	4	8	8	0	4	2	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

2 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

3 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

4 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name / title Helene K. Tingle, Preservation Consultant

organization University of Vermont, H.P. Program date May 9, 1995

street & number Wheeler House telephone 802-656-3180

city or town Burlington state VT zip code 05405

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional Items**

( Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

( Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Weybridge Town, Contact Richard Bensch

street & number R D #1 telephone 802-545-2189

city or town Middlebury state VT zip code 05753

**Paper Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7Page 1Cotton Free Library  
Weybridge, Addison County, Vermont

### *Section 7-Summary*

The 1913 Cotton Free Library, located in the historic town center of Weybridge Village, Addison County, Vermont, occupies a prominent position on the west side of Quaker Village Road, sharing the location with the Weybridge Town Hall. The library remains a well-preserved example of a small town Colonial Revival Style library, many of which were built around the turn of the century. The village of Weybridge, like numerous other Vermont communities, received its library from its foremost citizens, in this case from Joshua Franklin Cotton. It is a rock-faced concrete block structure with a hipped-roof and projecting eaves. Among its distinctive original features are the projecting monumental portico with a circular window in the tympanum, paired Tuscan columns, 3/1 windows, double entrance doors with muntin patterns in a modified Union Jack motif, and many historic interior details such as pressed metal walls, cornice, and ceiling, large glazed tile fireplace, wood detailing, and brass-plated tin light fixture. The town space is defined by its close proximity to the town hall and location on Quaker Village Road. The property retains its integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

### *Description*

The square-massed Cotton Free Library is a one-story, 3 X 3 bay, Colonial Revival style building with 3/1 windows. It is located in what historically was the town center of Weybridge Village on the west side of Quaker Village Road and adjoins the property of the Weybridge Town Hall, another important building to the community, on the south. Constructed in 1913, the rock-faced concrete block structure uses an innovative building material for its time period. Concave joints between the stones emphasize the rough surfacing. A projecting gable-front monumental portico on the front (east) facade has a tympanum with a circular marble window and is supported by wooden Doric columns with square capitals. A small platform stoop at the top joins the wide cast stone balustrade that slopes to the bottom. Original small marble urns flank the concrete stairway of four steps. At the bottom of the steps, three pieces of marble, donated by the Vermont Marble Company, comprise the fifth step. Paired glass-paneled entrance doors are decorated with a modified Union Jack motif at the tops. The main structure has a

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Weybridge, Addison County, Vermont

hipped-roof sheathed in green slate shingles with projecting eaves and a lead-coated copper ridge roll. At the rear roof line, a large, original rock-faced concrete-block chimney with a corbelled cap was built to exhaust smoke from the interior fireplace. A raised foundation, constructed of standard, flat concrete blocks, meets an outcropping of rock-faced stone comprising a watertable.

On the north facade, a covered side-entrance leads into the basement. This small gable-front addition is constructed half in rock-faced concrete blocks and half in the standard, flat surface concrete blocks. A recessed panel door with a large pane of glass leads to the basement stairs. Another door, at the bottom of three steps, enters into the poured concrete basement.

The rear facade (west) at the main floor level has a two panel wood door with a large pane of glass. The steps are missing and appear as though they may never have been constructed. Since the hillside was cut away to make room for the steps, the basement is raised in the back.

### *Interior*

Double wooden front doors with muntin patterns in a modified Union Jack motif lead into the projecting vestibule with raised ceiling, comprising the entire height of the portico. A cast iron oil lamp holder hangs on the left wall. Placed on hinges and a rotating arm, it has a round, flat surface for the oil lamp. To the right of the vestibule, a five-paneled door leads to the basement. Pressed metal covers the ceiling, cornice, and walls throughout the building, continuing down the basement stairwell. The design on the walls and ceiling simulates pressed pebble. A band of squares in the cornice is bordered by egg and dart detailing. Modified palmettes cover the joints in the corners. For the flooring, narrow maple boards are used throughout the building. The interior entrance to the main hall has a similar double set of wood doors with muntin patterns in a modified Union Jack motif.

Inside the main hall the ceiling rises to twelve feet. Four tall wood bookshelves regularly placed between the north and south windows are situated on top of lower bookshelves, running the length of the building under the windows on the north and south facades. Pressed metal, similar to that of the vestibule, covers the ceiling, walls, and cornice. A pressed-metal ceiling panel in the center of the room

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Weybridge, Addison County, Vermont

emphasizes the elaborately twisted brass-plated tin chandelier that is eight feet in diameter. Eight etched-glass globes with floral motifs are regularly spaced around a center hanging column. Brass-plated tin orbs under each lamp originally held kerosene. The fixture was electrified during the early 1920's when the building was wired. Four smaller hanging electric lamps with clear globes have been regularly placed in the corners of the room for additional lighting.

A small storage room to the left is built into the front (east) wall. It historically served as an office for the librarian. Most of the original detailing remains, such as the window with chamfered surrounds, and pressed metal ceiling, walls, and cornice.

On the rear (west) wall is a stepped concrete fireplace with a wood mantle piece and decorative Arts and Crafts tiles. The pine mantle has no decoration. Three brackets with incised trim support the mantle. Two incised fluted panels at the sides of the fireplace terminate at the base of the hearth. Burn bricks inside of the fireplace have a muted terra-cotta red surface. The glazing on the mantle tile is green and brown with raised dot detailing.

Three pieces of original oak furniture remain in the library. In the center, a large table with six clawed feet rests on tiny balls. Two drawers on either end of the table have a bit of an incised design. A complementary egg and dart incised design decorates the side surface of the table. A larger oak library table sits in the southeast corner near the bookshelves. It has a modified egg and dart motif side scoring. Two huge balls rest on an under platform. Wood feet in the form of consoles have similar trim to the side surface.

The most magnificent piece of furniture is the oak hall tree with elaborate undulating brass hinges. A mirror placed in the back is flanked by four double coat hooks. A box seat opens to form a storage area for shoes. An arm off the proper left of the hall tree has a small metal plate below for the storage of umbrellas and canes. Small ball feet serve to support the hall tree on the floor.

The basement can be reached by a set of "L"-shaped stairs in the front vestibule. Pressed pebble pattern metal covers the wall leading down to the basement. Though the basement has been remodeled, the original poured concrete foundation

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Cotton Free Library  
Weybridge, Addison County, Vermont

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is apparent. A new furnace in the rear center of the main room, sits in approximately the same position as the original. A seven foot ceiling shows the floor rafters underneath. Windows with three lights are regularly placed in the raised foundation under the first floor windows.

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Cotton Free Library  
Weybridge, Addison County, Vermont

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### *Section 8-Statement of Significance*

The Cotton Free Library possesses significance for embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction. It qualifies for statewide and local significance under criteria A for its significance in education and under criteria C for its architectural significance. It is a well-preserved example of a small town Colonial Revival library, similar to others constructed at the turn of the century. The outstanding architectural features of the building include a monumental portico with a circular window in the tympanum, paired Tuscan columns, and double entrance doors with muntins in a modified Union Jack motif and many historic interior details such as pressed metal walls, cornice, and ceiling, glazed fireplace tiles and wood detailing. It exemplifies the recommendations by the National Free Library Association, which gave local communities guidance and funding from the State of Vermont for their operations. The Cotton Free Library continues to serve as a memorial to one of the early citizens, Joshua Franklin Cotton, who funded the town library. Since its origins, the Library has served as an active part of the life of Weybridge, serving as a tool to teach many children to read. Along with the Weybridge town hall, it forms the historic heart of the village.

### *Historical Background and Significance*

In 1897, the Town of Weybridge received \$4000 from the will of Joshua Franklin Cotton to form a Free Library under town established regulations. According to the Free Library Commission's Regulations, the group of Trustees accepting the offer must elect officers to the the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Auditor, and Librarian each year at the annual meeting. With the money, the Trustees selected two courses of action. First they invested the money to produce income, lending it at five percent interest to local residents. Next they looked for a suitable place to house the library. A proposal submitted at the annual meeting voted to locate the library in the town hall basement at the expense of the town for the renovation and furnishings. The Trustees donated twenty-five dollars to prepare the space. An earlier Weybridge library, the 1860 Farmer's Library Organization, donated their agricultural books to start the library. The first librarian of the Cotton Free Library, Martin Sprague, arranged

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Weybridge, Addison County, Vermont

the unification with the Free Library Association that distributed state funds and advised local librarians on lending concerns. Yearly reviews were performed of the services and book quality. The Cotton Free Library always received above average to excellent remarks.

According to the annual report of 1900, the town owned 399 books. Soon the town's rapidly growing collection forced the town to find a larger space. A memo in the notes from later that year credits the library with owning 740 books and six monthly magazines. Damp conditions in the basement made the need more urgent. A search for a larger, dryer space took several years. A report of that year confirms the damp conditions. The librarian tried building a fire in the small room twice a week to see if conditions would improve.

At town meeting of October 1901, a vote was brought forth to construct a library building not to exceed \$1500. The Town gave the money up front to be repaid from the library fund. Land was offered in 1902 but the town refused to lend money for construction.

In 1911, the Library Trustees voted to accept an offer of land next to the town hall, purchasing it from Madison E. Sprague for \$800. The citizens proposed a one-story concrete block building with a basement and dimensions equalling 30 X 40 feet. Construction started in 1914 after the site was prepared by moving a house and barn. Henry Dodge, a former Weybridge resident then living in Chicago, hired an architect to make detailed drawing of the exterior and interior of the building.<sup>1</sup> Libraries built during this time commonly used the Colonial Revival style, which was evocative of Greek democracy and civic responsibility in order to emphasize that the library was a gift to the people.<sup>2</sup> The Vermont Free Public Library Commission suggested several guidelines for building size and construction. The size of the building must be of a proper size for the staff and book collection to adequately serve the community. A large room was needed to house the books with a separate office area for the librarian. To make the most out

<sup>1</sup>*Middlebury Register*, November 6, 1914 (Middlebury, VT): 3.

<sup>2</sup> Justin Winsor, *Public Libraries in the United States of America. 1876 Report* (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1876) 405.

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Weybridge, Addison County, Vermont

of a small structure, features such as porticos with columns, entrance vestibules, and classical detailing were used.<sup>3</sup>

Rough-faced concrete blocks, a rare building material for Addison County during the early twentieth century, had the appeal of being easy to construct into walls with insulation. They were economical to buy and could be produced on the site by purchasing a mold or mechanical press. Many contemporary structures were being constructed of wood, bricks, or local stone. The Cotton Free Library is one of the few libraries remaining that was constructed of man-made concrete blocks. In Addison County, the material never became popular with only a handful of buildings constructed of this material, none of them being libraries and most of them constructed in the 1930's.

Since construction of the library was so expedient, the Library Trustees forged ahead to accept the offer of Mr. B.W. Dodge, who offered to donate 2000 books if construction was complete by January 1, 1915. Operational problems in the basement library in the Town Hall continued. Moisture often ruined the books and made the space unbearable. At the meeting of 1913, it was proposed to move the collection upstairs in the town hall but was quickly rejected because the new Library was about to be started. That year, the Vermont Marble Company of Proctor, which had a hydro-electric station on the Otter Creek near the historic town center, donated three pieces of marble for the front step.

In 1914, Mrs. C.M. Baker was elected as librarian to supervise the move to the new library. Many Weybridge residents credit her encouragement in their interest in reading. A plaque on the library fireplace memorializes her dedicated service to the community.

In 1916, \$200 was borrowed from the town to finish the library. Operations resumed later that year inside the new structure, opening on Saturdays. Circulation was at 45-65 books and magazines per week.

Electricity was brought to the structure during the 1920s. At the annual town meeting of 1922, voters decided to appropriate \$375 to the Trustees to install

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<sup>3</sup> Vermont Free Public Library Commission Standards for Vermont Libraries, 1957.

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Cotton Free Library  
Weybridge, Addison County, Vermont

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electric lights. The brass-plated chandelier was converted from kerosene during this period.

Library operations continued to grow up under the direction of Mrs. C.M. Baker up until she retired in the late 1960's. Several local women held the position briefly. The library was closed in the mid-1980's. Since then, library operations have been sporadic. Local clubs such as the Boy Scouts and Weybridge Historical Society now use the building for meetings. Annually, the local elementary school uses the building for their class plays. In 1990 the Library Trustee leased the building to the Town of Weybridge for ninety-nine years for an undetermined use. Since the library still holds most of the original collection plus the archive of the historical society, future plans are to reopen the library with regular Saturday hours.

Several preservation grants were awarded by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation in the late 1980s and the 1990s to repair the windows, leaks in the pressed metal ceiling, replace slates, replace chimney mortar, add lead-coated copper flashing, down spouts, and ridge roll, and fix the cracks in the basement due to water infiltration. Stone trenching was installed around the building to aid in water removal.

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

Cotton Free Library  
Weybridge, Addison County, Vermont

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## 10. Geographical Data

### Verbal Boundary Description

The Cotton Free Library property is defined as tax lot 21, map 3, on file at Weybridge Town Clerk's Office, Weybridge, Vermont.

### Boundary Justification

The property is the lot that has historically been associated with the building.

NEW HAVEN  
WEYBRIDGE

Quaker Cemetery

Central Vermont  
Public Service  
Corporation

CREEK

15  
14.6A(C)

14.1  
52.0 A

(T.R. 20)

BAKER CT.(T.R.10)

26  
180(S)

25  
166.5

20  
122(S)

17  
184.47

3.8A(C)

18 2 A

13  
68.163 A

24  
1A

(SUR)  
23  
8 A

19  
249.53

36  
288.21

1.2A(C)  
37

43 2.01 A

44  
1.4A

1.5A  
38

2.0A(C)  
42

45  
38.5 A  
42.1A(C)

Town of Weybridge

54.12

22 A

25.5 A(C)

40  
3.9A(C)

41  
150

42  
150

Cotton Free Library  
Weybridge, Addison County, Vermont  
Lot # 21

