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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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NOV 21 1988

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 Paris Public Library

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

2. Location

street & number 3 Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town South Paris

N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME

county Oxford

code 017

zip code 04281

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Maine Public Libraries

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.

*Carol S. Fitzgerald* 11/16/88  
 Signature of certifying official Date  
 Maine Historic Preservation Commission

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

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of commenting or other official Date

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

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:)

*Helena Byers* 11/5/89  
 Entered in the National Register

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education: Library

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education: Library

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)Colonial Revival

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

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walls Brick

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roof Stone: Slate

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other Wooden Entrance Porch

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Paris Public Library is a one-story five-bay brick building covered by a low hipped roof. Its Colonial Revival style is emphasized by the round arched panels framing recessed windows and the gabled entrance porch. The book stack forms an ell at the rear giving the entire building a T-shaped footprint.

Facing southeast from a busy corner lot in the commercial district, the library's facade is focussed on the center entrance. The paneled door and round arched fanlight above are sheltered by the narrow porch whose roof is supported by a pair of thin Tuscan columns. The flanking paneled bays that rise from a tall basement contain six-over-six windows. Smaller windows punctuate the basement.

Both endwalls are divided into three bays each and the decorative treatment matches that used on the facade. However, only the outer bays contain windows, whereas the middle bays denote the existence of the interior end chimneys. The stack room features rows of three small windows (located above the interior stacks) on each side as well as small shed roofed entrances at the junction with the front block. Five six-over-six windows are positioned at the rear. The roof is covered with its original slate material.

Inside, a small vestibule separates the porch and hall. Wooden book shelves further define the hall and distinguish the two reading rooms, each of which has a Colonial Revival style mantelpiece. The circulation desk rests at the narrow entrance to the stack room, between and to the side of which is the librarian's office and basement stair. In 1962 the basement, originally designed only to house the furnace and provide storage, was partially converted to a meeting space.

**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)

Education  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1926-1938  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1926  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Stevens, John Calvin  
Stevens, John Howard

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

Constructed in 1926 from plans drawn by the Portland architectural firm of John Calvin Stevens and his son John Howard Stevens, the Paris Public Library is a Colonial Revival style brick building situated in the town's commercial district. It was built through the fund raising efforts of numerous local organizations and marked the culmination of a long-term interest in obtaining a permanent library facility. The library continues to serve in this capacity today. The library retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and association. It meets the requirements for registration under criteria A and C for its educational and architectural significance as more fully described in the multiple property submission "Maine Public Libraries".

The history of library organizations in South Paris is believed to have begun in 1885 with the establishment of a social library whose small collection of books was placed in the second floor of a downtown commercial building. Books were loaned with the charge of a penny per day while in use. A number of buildings subsequently housed the library at different times. (After 1896 its location was marked by a small wooden sign whose book-shaped configuration was emblazoned in gold leaf with the words "Paris Library"; the sign is on display in the library.) With the founding on October 14, 1893, of the Seneca Literary Club, a campaign began to obtain a permanent building, although it did not achieve its goal until 1926. In the meantime, however, the collection was continually augmented through gifts and purchases and it became a free library in 1905.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

"New Public Library at South Paris Dedicated." Oxford Democrat (South Paris),  
January 18, 1927.

"Paris Public Library." Unpublished, undated typescript narrative on file at the  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than 1

**UTM References**

A 

1	9
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3	7	9	0	2	0
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4	8	9	7	5	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property occupies the Town of Paris tax map U-8 lot 124.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the nominated property embraces the building and lot historically associated with the library.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian  
organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date October 11, 1988  
street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132  
city or town Augusta state Maine zip code 04333

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

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

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John Calvin Stevens was the most noted and prolific of those Maine architects who designed public library buildings. His first known commission was obtained in 1899 for the Brown Memorial Library in Clinton but he was subsequently responsible for at least three others as well as an additional seven after his son John Howard Stevens had become a partner in the firm. The Paris Library, which is one of the last, exhibits the Colonial Revival detailing typically found in the firm's other designs from this period.