

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 14 1987  
date entered JUN 25 1987

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

1. Name

historic Cary Library

and or common

2. Location

street & number 107 Main Street not for publication

city, town Houlton vicinity of

state Maine code 23 county Aroostook code 003

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Houlton

street & number Mechanic Street

city, town Houlton vicinity of state Maine 04730

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Aroostook County Registry of Deeds

street & number

city, town Houlton state Maine 04730

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Cary Library is a one-and-a-half story T-shaped building constructed of coursed ashlar granite and covered by a slate roof. The symmetrically composed three-bay front elevation features a projecting centrally located vestibule with a steeply pitched gable roof. Exterior chimneys rise on both gable ends.

Facing north, the library's facade focuses on the vestibule. A flight of granite steps bordered by a low stepped granite wall rises to the recessed paneled and glazed two-leaf door. The entrance is flanked by a pair of lamps affixed to the wall and adorned with carved granite scrolls below the lintel. This lintel bears the words "Cary Library" and the date of construction in Roman numerals. A small four-over-four double hung sash window is centrally located in the gable peak. The gable features a corbeled raking cornice which extends to the short end returns.

Trios of nine-over-one windows flank the vestibule on the recessed walls. Their granite lintels are surmounted by a cornice detailed with large dentils. A stringcourse, which carries around the building, meets the sills of these six windows. The water table caps a tall basement that is punctuated by a pair of three pane windows.

Both gable ends are composed of exterior chimneys flanked by basement windows, nine-over-one sash on the first story and small nine-over-six windows in the gable. A single narrow window abuts the west chimney. The short gable end returns and raking cornice repeat the theme established on the vestibule. A 1968 expansion of the library included the basement level addition of a flat roofed granite veneered structure carrying across two-thirds of the original structure's rear elevation and along part of the west gable end. This addition meets the original building at a point between the water table and stringcourse. The bulk of the addition is located to the southwest of the library.

The ell, whose decorative features repeat those on the front block, has three six-over-one windows surmounted by smaller four pane fixed sash on both the west and east elevations. There are two short six-over-one windows below a pair of nine-over-one sash in the gable end. Paired nine-over-one windows are located on the recessed rear wall of the main block.

Inside, the library has a symmetrical floor plan composed of a centrally located hall flanked by reading rooms. Each room features sheathed wainscot and plain window and door surrounds. The reading rooms have narrow projecting fireplaces with relatively plain mantels. Originally, the circulation desk faced the two-leaf vestibule door. Located below a wide opening framed by scroll brackets, the desk (which has since been removed) also stood in front of the stack area in the ell. A floor which partially subdivided the space has been removed. The attic houses an open storage area for books, whereas the basement is divided into small compartments.

## 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** 1903-04      **Builder/Architect** John Calvin Stevens, Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

When completed in 1904, the Cary Library marked the crowning achievement of a long term effort in Houlton to establish a free public library. Dedicated to the memory of George Cary and funded in large part by a gift from Andrew Carnegie, the library was designed by John Calvin Stevens (1885-1940), Maine's preeminent late nineteenth and early twentieth century architect.

Efforts to found a library in Houlton appear to date to about 1850 when Milton Welch, the first principal of the Houlton Academy, managed to obtain a small collection of books for his students through the auspices of "The Forest Club" literary society.<sup>1</sup> Interest in the society subsequently waned until 1868 when the Houlton Library and Literary Association was formed. The association's collection of books was made available to the public without charge, but it was apparently only short lived. In 1896, two local clubs again resuscitated efforts to establish a library. Interest was furthered in 1899 with the bequest of a portion of the estate of Dr. George Cary, a former director of the Literary Association, a prominent physician and a past member of the Maine Legislature.

Following Cary's lead, Houlton's interested citizenry pursued a correspondence with Andrew Carnegie, the Pittsburgh steelmaker who made grants nationwide for the construction of public libraries. Carnegie's \$10,000 gift was made on condition that the town appropriate \$1,000 annually toward maintenance of the library.

The choice of John Calvin Stevens for architect was a significant one: one that underscores the forward looking character of the building committee. Stevens' long and distinguished career began in the Portland office of another noted Maine architect, Francis H. Fassett.<sup>2</sup> Nationally recognized for his innovative Shingle Style designs published in Examples of American Domestic Architecture (1889) during his partnership with Albert Winslow Cobb, Stevens' work at the turn of the century increasingly showed the influence of the Colonial Revival style. This trend toward more formal compositions is clearly illustrated in the Cary Library.

Stevens was not unfamiliar with the unique design aspects of a public library. His previous commissions included libraries in Clinton (1899-1900) and Buckfield (1900).<sup>3</sup> Of particular note is the fact that his 1903 design for a brick library in Rumford is nearly identical to the one employed in Houlton. Slight variations occur in the fenestration pattern as well as in the use of a round arched entryway in the Rumford scheme, but otherwise they are remarkably alike.

Construction of the Cary Library apparently commenced on 1903 under the direction of Houlton's John Chadwick. The 1905 edition of the "Report of the Selectmen of Houlton" carried the library building committee's final report in which it was shown that Stevens was paid \$708.10 and Chadwick \$11,443.83.<sup>4</sup> The entire cost of the lot and building was put at \$17,233.62.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Putnam, Cora M. The Story of Houlton. Portland: House of Falmouth, Inc. 1958.

Annual Report of the Selectmen, Treasurer and Other Officers. Town of Houlton. Various dates.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Houlton North, Maine-N.B.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	9	5	8	9	7	7	0	5	1	0	8	4	2	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

The nominated property is contained within the boundary as drawn on the Town of Houlton Tax Map 35, Lot 145.

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

state code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date April 14, 1987

street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132

city or town Augusta state Maine 04333

## 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

title S.H.P.O. date 5/8/87

For NPS use only

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

date 6/25/87

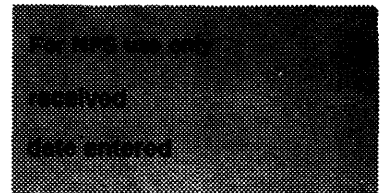
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Betty A. Savage date 6/25/87

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Continuation sheet Cary Library

Item number 8

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ENDNOTES

1. Cora M. Putnam, The Story of Houlton (Portland : House of Falmouth, Inc., 1958), p. 295. Putnam's history is the source of the background on the founding of the library.
2. Information concerning Stevens' career is taken from Shettleworth's and Barry's new introduction to Examples of American Domestic Architecture, Facsimile Edition (Watkins Glen: American Life Foundation and Study Institute, 1978).
3. An annotated list of architect designed libraries in Maine is on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.
4. Annual Report of the Selectmen, Treasurer, and Other Officers of the Town of Houlton (Houlton: Town of Houlton, 1905), p. 29.