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NATIONAL REGISTER

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 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 Minot-Sleeper Library
other names/site number none

2. Location

street & number 14 Pleasant Street not for publication N/A
city, town Bristol vicinity N/A
state New Hampshire code NH county Grafton code NH 009 zip code 03256

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
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.

R. Stuart Wallace July 28, 1988
Signature of certifying official Date
New Hampshire
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. Beth Sauge 9-15-88
 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education / library

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education / library

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

walls brick

roof slate

other wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Minot-Sleeper Library is a one story library building, which stands on its own lot on the south side of Pleasant Street (Routes 104 and 3A) in the village of Bristol. The brick building has a somewhat irregular form. The gable roofed main block is set with its north gable end facing the street. In the center of its east facade is a shallow but wide projecting bay, covered by a gable roof of the same height as the main roof. The north half of the main block's west facade is covered by a five foot deep projection, which is sheltered by an extension of the west slope of the main block roof. The north walls of the main block and this western projection are continuous, giving the building an asymmetrical street facade, with the main entry at the west end. The entry is sheltered by a one story, gable roofed, open wooden porch. The Late Victorian library is eclectic in its decoration, combining Gothic arches on windows and entry with a bracketed overhanging cornice and decorative gable trusses, which are more typical of the Stick Style. The exterior and main level of the Library, which stands on its original site, have seen only minor changes since the Library's construction in 1884. The basement, formerly an unfinished storage space, was renovated in 1977 and is now modern in appearance. Basically, however, the building retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The building's brick walls are laid in common bond, flemish variation, on a cut granite block foundation with a dressed watertable (save, on the rear south gable end of the main block, where the basement level is exposed and the granite foundation was omitted). The slate roofs, trimmed with copper flashings and ridge mouldings, have wide overhanging wooden eaves with sloping soffits and mouldings. The lateral eaves are supported by triangular sawn brackets, ornamented by chamfered edges and decoratively sawn ends. The eaves of the two public gables (the north gable of the main block and the gable of the eastern projecting bay) are somewhat more elaborate. In addition to the usual mouldings, they can boast shallow vergeboards with chamfered edges and decoratively sawn ends (omitted on the western end of the north gable eaves, which merge with the porch roof), as well as larger brackets and decorative trusses. The gable brackets, although somewhat different in design from the smaller lateral brackets, are again triangular sawn brackets with chamfered edges, decoratively sawn lower ends on the vertical members, and small pyramidal ornaments on the upper horizontal members. These brackets are found at both corners of the east gable,

See continuation sheet

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

Period of Significance

1884-1885

Significant Dates

1884

1885

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hutchinson, Ebenezer B.

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

The Minot-Sleeper Library is significant under Criteria A in the area of education as the first public library building erected in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire. Built in 1884 and opened to the public in 1885, the Minot-Sleeper Library represents an important step in the evolution of the region's public library system. The movement of public libraries from makeshift quarters and rented rooms to separate buildings specifically designed for library use, beginning in this region with the Minot-Sleeper Library, marks, in effect, the maturity of the public library. Not counting two short-lived experiments, the Minot-Sleeper Library was the fourth municipal library in the Lakes Region to open its doors to the public, being preceded by town libraries in Ashland (1871), Laconia (1879), and Meredith (1882).¹ These earlier public libraries were all housed in whatever quarters could be found for their collections, however inappropriate those rooms might be for a public institution. The Minot-Sleeper Library was the first building erected in the region for the specific purpose of housing a public library. It was followed by another four public library buildings in the remaining years of the 19th century, and by an additional sixteen library buildings by 1939, as the region's towns and cities either established public libraries or moved existing institutions into new buildings. (By the early 20th century, public libraries had been created to serve every community in the region.) The Bristol library was therefore the pioneer in an important advance for the region's public libraries, a movement to appropriate quarters that allowed the municipal libraries to reach their full potential as educational institutions serving their communities. The Bristol library, little changed on its exterior and in the main level of its interior, is a well preserved example of the earlier public library buildings, using the single multi-purpose room plan typical of such early libraries. The gift of the Minot-Sleeper Library by private individuals and the use

1. The history of the Lakes Region's public libraries in this paragraph is based on David Ruell, PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY (Meredith, N.H.:1986).

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE TOWN OF BRISTOL, NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31,1977 (Bristol, N.H.: Town of Bristol,1978)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE TOWN OF BRISTOL, NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31,1983 (Bristol,N.H.: Town of Bristol,1984)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE TOWN OF BRISTOL, NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31,1986 (Bristol,N.H.: Town of Bristol,1987)

George F. Bacon THE LEADING BUSINESS MEN OF CONCORD AND VICINITY (Boston: Mercantile Publishing, 1890)

Charles A. Bemis HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH, N.H. (Marlborough,N.H.: Frost Free Library, 1974 reprint of 1881 edition)

See continuation sheet

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
- Specify repository:
Minot-Sleeper Library, Bristol,N.H.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately .4 acre

UTM References

A 19 278925 4829825
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is described as follows: beginning at the northwest corner of the Minot-Sleeper Library lot, then east along Pleasant Street approximately 85 feet, then south on the boundary with land of V.S.H. Realty, Inc. approximately 170 feet to the Newfound River, then west along the bank of the Newfound River approximately 90 feet, then north on the boundary with the land of See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property is that of the lot which was donated with the Minot-Sleeper Library building to the Town of Bristol in 1885. The lot has been historically associated with the library building since its construction in 1884.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David L. Ruell
 organization Lakes Region Planning Commission date February 29, 1988
 street & number Main Street telephone 279-8171
 city or town Meredith state New Hampshire zip code 03253

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(8-88)

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at the east corner of the north gable, and supporting the truss in the north gable. The north gable truss is composed of a horizontal beam, from which rise a kingpost and two flanking shorter vertical struts to the vergeboards. The east gable truss is composed of a horizontal beam, a kingpost, and two diagonal struts which rise from the junction of the kingpost and the beam to the vergeboards. The members of both trusses are decorated with chamfered edges. And suspended from the center of both beams (beneath the kingpost) are identical sawn ornaments. Beneath the shorter flanking struts on the north gable truss, the beam is supported by two "gable" brackets. By contrast, the rear (south) gable of the main block has neither brackets, vergeboards, nor a truss. The building's tall brick chimney with corbeled cap rises from the west slope of the main roof, near the rear inner (south-east) corner of the western projection. On the three public sides, the basement is lit by short two pane windows, with moulded wooden frames, built into the granite foundation, with granite sills and lintels that are continuous with the granite foundation blocks, the lintels having the same dressed watertable as the foundation blocks. The main level is lit by Gothic arched windows, all having moulded wooden frames, granite sills with rockfaced fronts trimmed by dressed margins, and pointed brick arches formed of stretchers. The arched windows in the lateral walls have two over two sash, with arched upper sash. The taller windows, found in pairs in the three gable ends, have rectangular two over two sash, beneath arched two pane transom windows in the tympanums. (The lower two over two sash sections of the gable end windows have been covered by aluminum storm windows. Less conspicuous plexiglass covers their transom windows and the shorter lateral windows.)

The three bay north gable end is asymmetrical in shape, because of the western projection. "Centered" beneath the gable is a pair of tall arched two over two sash windows with two pane transom windows. Beneath each of these arched windows is a typical two pane basement window. (Above the porch roof is mounted a metal box with the light for the alarm system installed in the early 1980's.) At the west end of the facade is the main entry, double doors set in a wide Gothic archway, with deep moulded wooden frame, granite sill, and a pointed brick arch of stretchers. The two leaves of the door are covered with diagonal beaded boarding, which, on both leaves, slants toward the center of the doors to echo the shape of the arch. (The west leaf now has a mailslot and a large metal book return drawer, installed in the early 1980's.) Above the door is mounted a small painted wooden sign with the date "1885", the year the library opened. The entry is sheltered by a spacious entry porch with a low granite foundation, a granite step stretching the full length of of its open north front, and a board floor with board friezes. (In 1986, two ramps with board floors and bases and simple wood handrails, were installed for handicapped access, one rising from the paved library walk over the granite step to the porch

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floor, the other from the porch floor to the entry sill.) The porch's four corner posts have chamfered edges and elaborate sawn brackets, triangular in shape but with curved undersides, decorated with chamfered edges and decoratively sawn ends. The east and west sides of the porch are enclosed by railings, with heavy moulded upper and lower rails and turned round spindles, stretching between the corner posts. The posts and their brackets support square beams with chamfered edges. Resting on the side beams are rafters with chamfered edges inside the porch and decoratively sawn ends beneath the eaves. Beaded boarding covers the ceiling and the sloping soffits of the wide overhanging eaves, which are decorated with the same mouldings found on the main building eaves. The open north gable is filled by another truss similar to the main block's north gable truss, with a kingpost and two flanking vertical struts rising from the northern horizontal beam to two rafters. The kingpost and struts have the usual chamfered edges. And suspended beneath the center of the horizontal beam is a short square pendant with pyramidal termination. Attached to the gable truss is a cast metal sign with the words "Minot-Sleeper Library, Bristol, New Hampshire" in raised letters, eared corners, and a curved upper edge. (Now mounted above the sign is a pseudo Colonial electric light fixture on a metal bracket.) The west slope of the porch's slate sheathed gable roof is continuous with the west slope of the main roof of the building.

The central third of the main block's east facade is covered by the projecting bay. The sides of the projecting bay are windowless. But, in the center of the east gable end are found another pair of tall arched main level windows with two over two sash and two pane tympanums and, beneath them, a corresponding pair of two pane basement windows. In the east facade of the main block are found arched two over two sash windows with arched upper sash, one to the north of the projecting bay, two to the south of the projecting bay. (In the south corner of the projecting bay and the main block is now found a cast iron pipe, a sewer vent, mounted on the walls.) The two bay west facade of the western projection has two basement windows with wooden frames, but now filled with metal louvers for the furnace room, and two arched two over two sash windows in the main level. The south end of the western projection is windowless. But, to the south of the projection, the west facade of the main block contains three more arched two over two sash windows and, beneath the central window, another two pane basement window. On the south gable end of the main block, the brick basement wall is only partly exposed, as the earth banks slope from the corners down towards the center, leaving only a narrow section in the center of the basement wall exposed to its full depth. In the center of the basement level is found a modern six panel door with plain wooden frame beneath a segmental brick arch and a

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modern light fixture. To each side of the door is a two over two sash window (now covered with plexiglass) with a rough granite sill and a plain wooden frame beneath a segmental brick arch. (Mounted to the west of the door is the metal electric box.) In the main level of the south gable end is found another pair of tall arched windows with two over two sash and two pane transom windows.

The main level of the Library has a simple but asymmetrical layout. The eastern projecting bay and most of the main block are occupied by the main library room. A rectangle composed of the western projection and a corresponding four and a half foot deep section of the main block is devoted to three subsidiary spaces, the vestibule at the north (street) end, a narrow stairhall for the basement stairs in the center, and a storage room at the south end. The vestibule, main room and storage room share basic features, all having plaster ceilings, plaster walls above vertical beaded board wainscoating with moulded rails, and heavily moulded frames around the doors and windows. The window frames, with their moulded sills, are rather deep, because of the thickness of the brick walls, and all descend into the wainscoating. (The three rooms also have linoleum tile floors, installed over their original wooden floors sometime in the mid 20th century.)

The main entry opens into the small vestibule, which is lit by a central hanging light fixture and a western Gothic arched two over two sash window. The main entry, found in the north wall, is Gothic arched double doors, each leaf having two panels (a square lower panel and a half arched upper panel), with beaded board infill and chamfered edges on the panel frames. (The west leaf of the doors now has the mail slot and the book return drawer.) To the east of the entry, a moulded coat rail with metal hooks is mounted on the plaster wall. At the east end of the south wall is a deep builtin cabinet, whose moulded outer frame rests on the wainscoating rail. Two glass doors with moulded frames reveal a display space with beaded board sides and a plaster ceiling with ceiling moulding. The vestibule has two inner doors of the same design, each with four panels, the panels having moulded upper and lower (horizontal) edges and chamfered side (vertical) edges. The door at the west end of the south wall opens into the stairhall, onto the landing of the basement stairs. The eastern door opens into the main library room.

The plan of the main room is a rectangle with one addition, the eastern projecting bay, and one deletion, a four and a half foot deep rectangle taking half of the long west side and occupied by the three subsidiary rooms (vestibule, stairhall, and storage room). However, not all of the space occupied by these western rectangle is lost to

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the main room, as the subsidiary rooms are shorter than the main room. The space above their ceilings is incorporated into the main room and used as an open storage loft. The main room has, save for the eastern projecting bay, a high pitched ceiling corresponding to the main block roof. The eastern projecting bay has a lower flat ceiling, as the upper space covered by the projecting bay's gable roof is neither incorporated into the main room, nor made accessible in any other fashion. The main room's high plaster ceiling is divided into thirds by two fine kingpost trusses. Each truss is composed of two rafters, a collarbeam, a kingpost with a short pendant, and two long curved collarbraces that rise from decoratively sawn lower ends on the walls beneath the rafters to the kingpost pendant, and cover the undersides of the rafters and the collarbeam. The long curves of the collarbraces give the truss a graceful "arched" design. All of the members of the trusses have chamfered edges. (Emergency lights are now attached to each collarbeam and a fluorescent light fixture is suspended from the pendant of each kingpost.) Stretching the full length of the ceiling are two purlins with chamfered edges, one in each slope at the collarbeam level. The junction of the main ceiling and the flat ceiling of the projecting bay is marked by a boxed beam with vertical beaded boarding on the sides and a plain board on the underside, on which is mounted a fluorescent light fixture. The walls of the main room, where visible, are plastered above the beaded board wainscoating, but most of the walls are now covered by wooden bookcases. And the south end of the room is devoted to wooden stacks, both freestanding and projecting from the lateral (east and west) walls. The north wall has a pair of tall arched windows, with two over two sash and arched two pane transom windows. Bookcases cover the wall beneath the windows and on each side of them. The taller flanking bookcases rise to the impost level of the arched windows and are topped by simple mouldings. The east wall north of the projecting bay has a single arched two over two sash window and bookcases as tall as the window and topped by simple mouldings, covering the flanking sections of the wall. The north and south walls of the eastern projecting bay are also covered by tall bookcases. Two tall arched windows of the same design as the northern windows are found in the projecting bay's east wall. Beneath these windows are short bookcases built over the wainscoating. The northern half of the west wall, the wall of the three rooms projecting into the main space, has the usual plaster above beaded board wainscoating and is topped by a moulded cornice. This long wall contains two four panelled doors of the original design, with chamfered vertical edges and moulded horizontal edges on their panels. The north door leads to the vestibule, the south door to the storage room. The loft area above the projecting rooms is used for storage and display. At the south end of this loft area is a short builtin bookcase, with beaded board sides and a crowning moulding. On the main level, the south

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end of this western projection is largely covered by a wooden bookcase with beaded edges, a moulded cornice, and a wider base, providing a shelf about waist high. Similar bookcases fill the south end of the room, south of the projecting bay, the original stack area. These stacks are symmetrically arranged in two rows of three bookcases. Projecting from each side (east and west) wall are two bookcases, while two more bookcases are built against the south wall, flanking the pair of tall arched windows in the center of the south wall. (These southern windows are identical to their northern counterparts and now have a bookcase built over the wainscoating beneath them.) Lighting the aisles between the stacks are early 20th century electric light fixtures attached to metal rods that run between the bookcases. The stacks are also lit by arched two over two sash windows, two in the east wall at the ends of the stack aisles and three in the west wall, two at the ends of the two stack aisles and one to the north of the northernmost projecting stack. (New bookcases have been built against the west wall beneath the windows and north of the northern window.) The broad space between the two rows of stacks contains a free standing bookcase, similar in design to the stacks, with the same decoration, but without the wider base.

The storage room has the same linoleum tile floor, plaster walls with wainscoating, and plaster ceiling as the more public rooms. It is lit by an arched two over two sash window, with heavily moulded frame, in the west wall and by a central hanging light fixture. A bookcase fills a shallow indentation at the east end of the south wall, which also features a wall mounted sink. The north wall is largely covered by another bookcase. The door to the main room in the east wall is an original four panel door with a moulded frame. However, the door in the north wall is a five panel door with plain frame, which appears to be an early or mid 20th century addition. The north door opens onto the landing at the west end of the stairhall, which is also served by the older four panel door with moulded frame from the vestibule. The narrow stairhall has plain plaster walls and ceiling. From the carpeted landing, carpeted steps with wooden handrails descend steeply to the east to the plain framed opening into the main basement room.

The layout of the basement is a variation of the main level layout. Again, most of the space is devoted to a single large library room, the reference/children's room, which occupies most of the main block, as well as the space beneath the vestibule in the western projection. The space beneath the stairhall and the storage room is devoted to the furnace room. The eastern projecting bay is used for a small storeroom and a restroom. The main room, renovated in 1977, has a carpeted floor, modern vertically grooved laminated plywood on the walls, plain window and door frames, and

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a suspended acoustic tile ceiling with plastic panels for the electric lighting. Running down the center of the room is a row of three square pillars, covered by the same plywood and connected by low bookcases. Bookcases also cover a section of the north wall, much of the east wall, and all of the west wall south of the stairhall opening. A row of short doors covers the cabinets beneath the builtin bookcases south of the projecting furnace room in the west wall. Glass cases with wooden frames, at the east end of the north wall and the north end of the east wall, are used to display a collection of mounted birds. The interior doors, a door to the furnace room in the south wall of that part of the main room beneath the vestibule, and the doors to the storeroom and the restroom in the east wall, are plain wooden doors with simple frames. In the center of the south end of the main room is the six panel outside door, which is flanked by a two over two sash window on each side. The southern door and windows are set in deep recesses with the same grooved plywood. Between the door and the west window, a small plain framed door of the same plywood hides the electric panel. The other rooms are simple spaces. The furnace room, largely filled by the furnace, has a concrete floor, plasterboard inner walls, exposed stone and brick outer walls, and a plasterboard ceiling. The storeroom has a concrete floor, north and east walls of exposed stone and brick, a western plasterboard wall, a southern beaded board wall, and an unfinished board ceiling with exposed joists. The restroom, to the south of the storeroom, has a carpeted floor, three board walls and a western plasterboard wall with baseboards, a beaded board ceiling with ceiling moulding, and modern sink and toilet. The store-room and restroom are each lit by a high, small, plain framed, two pane window in the east wall.

The only other building on the library lot is a small, one story, gable roofed storage shed, which stands to the south of the library. Built in 1983, it is considered non-contributing because of its age. The wooden shed is set on concrete blocks. The vertically grooved plywood walls are trimmed with cornerboards. The asphalt shingled gable roof has simple lateral box cornices and overhanging gable eaves with fascia boards. The only openings are small metal louvers in both gables, and a plain framed door of vertical beveled boarding in the east gable end. The interior is unfinished, with exposed studding and rafters, plywood floor, walls, and ceiling.

Save for its irregular southern boundary, the Newfound River, the lot is basically rectangular in shape. The lot slopes down from Pleasant Street on the north to the river on the south. To the north and west of the library and for a few feet to the east of the building, the lot is flat. But, the land slopes steeply south of the building to the parking

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lot to the rear, which is served by a driveway down from the street along the east edge of the property. The driveway is continued as a fire lane to the stone retaining wall near the riverbank. The driveway, parking lot, and fire lane are paved, but the rest of the lot is grassed with some trees and shrubs. A wide asphalt paved walk leads from the Pleasant Street sidewalk to the porch step. And a concrete walk leads from the parking lot past the storage shed to basement door. Along the street sidewalk and the main walk is found rather high, rounded concrete curbing, curved at the corners of the main walk and at the west corner of the driveway, and interrupted near each end to leave room for a tree. (These two sidewalk trees have, however, since died and have not been replaced.) Only a few trees and shrubs, notably foundation shrubs on the north gable end of the building, are found around the library building. On the front lawn stand a fireplug and a painted wooden sign on wooden posts announcing the library hours. A wooden pole carrying an electric light for the parking lot stands near the southeast corner of the building. A fringe of trees and shrubs grows along the south and west edges of the parking lot. Set a few yards back from the actual riverbank is a retaining wall of rough cut granite blocks. The riverbank below the retaining wall is covered by a dense growth of trees and shrubs.

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of masonry in its construction were also prophetic of later public library buildings in the Lakes Region.

The historic context for the Minot-Sleeper Library is Public Library Development in the Lakes Region, 1870-1939. Before the appearance of public libraries, the region was served by many private subscription libraries. The subscription libraries were supported by private associations and, generally, their books were available only to dues paying association members. Typical of these early libraries was the Bristol Library, which was incorporated in 1823 and flourished for two decades before declining in the late 1840's and early 1850's.² The subscription libraries were limited in the number of people that they served and, in rural New Hampshire, at least, in the size of their collections. The free public library movement began in New Hampshire in 1833, when the Town of Peterborough established its municipal library. Two attempts, both ultimately unsuccessful, were made in the mid 19th century to establish public libraries in the Lakes Region, in Tuftonboro in 1837 and in Bristol in 1868.³ The Town of Bristol did appropriate \$75 for a public library at its 1868 annual meeting. But, proper quarters were not provided for the library, and many books were lost. In 1872, the Town decided to abandon the experiment and voted to sell the books at auction.⁴ The first successful public library in the Lakes Region was established in Ashland, by a vote of the 1870 annual town meeting, and was opened to the public in 1871. Public libraries opened in Laconia in 1879 and in Meredith in 1882. So, by late 1883, when the first steps were taken to establish the Minot-Sleeper Library, there were only three public libraries in the region. However, four more followed the Bristol library in the 1880's. And, with the encouragement and the prodding of the state legislature, twenty-one public libraries opened in the 1890's. Another seven public libraries were established in the early 20th century, giving every citizen in the Lakes Region access to a public library. With a few exceptions, these libraries were at first housed in makeshift quarters, often in the librarian's home, a spare room in a public building, or rented rooms in a commercial building. The Ashland Town Library, to cite an extreme example, had seven different homes between its opening in 1871 and the construction of a library room in the town's new fire station in 1895-6. With time, however, the vast majority of the region's libraries have moved into buildings designed specifically for library use. The first public library to take this important step was the Minot-

2. Richard W. Musgrove, HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF BRISTOL, NEW HAMPSHIRE (Bristol, N.H.:1904), pp. 352-353

3. Ruell, PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY p. vi

4. Musgrove, p.353

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Sleeper Library, which actually began with the building, rather than the books.⁵

In late November of 1883, Judge Josiah Minot of Concord, N.H. and Col. Solomon S. Sleeper of Cambridge, Mass., both natives of Bristol who had prospered in their legal and mercantile careers, wrote to the Bristol selectmen, explaining that they had purchased a lot on Pleasant Street, one of the village's major streets, and proposed "to erect on it a suitable building for a public library" and to convey the property to the Town, if the Town would agree to establish and maintain a public library in the building.⁶ This offer, and the offer of the two men to contribute additional funds for the purchase of books, was apparently warmly received in Bristol. In mid-December, a citizens meeting was called to begin fund raising for library books.⁷ At a special town meeting on January 16, 1884, the Town voted to accept the gift of the library building and the lot and to agree to maintain and manage the public library to be established in the new building.⁸ Ground was broken for the building on April 22, 1884.⁹ The contract for the building was given to Ebenezer B. Hutchinson of Concord, N.H., described in the local newspaper as "the architect and builder" of the library.¹⁰ Hutchinson apparently subcontracted portions of the construction to others. The Pattee Brothers, local stonemasons, installed the stone foundation, completing their work by mid June.¹¹ According to the Bristol newspaper, Ordway & Ferrin, masons from Concord, were assigned the brickwork, and Frank A. Gordon, a Bristol carpenter, the woodwork.¹² By early July, the newspaper could report "The walls of the new public library are up and roof on."¹³ And, by late September, it could state "The public library building is practically completed."¹⁴ The

5. The history of the development of the region's public library system in this paragraph was based on individual library histories in David Ruell, PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

6. Musgrove, p.353

7. Bristol Weekly Enterprise November 29,1883,p.2; December 6,1883,p.2; December 13,1883, p.2; December 20,1883, p.2

8. "Bristol Town Records, Vol.5, 1882-1946" (manuscript, Bristol Town Offices, Bristol, N.H.) pp.35-37

9. Bristol Weekly Enterprise April 24,1884, p.2

10. Bristol Weekly Enterprise June 12,1884, p.2

11. Bristol Weekly Enterprise April 24,1884,p.2; June 12,1884, p.2

12. Bristol Weekly Enterprise June 12, 1884, p.2. The newspaper identified the brick masons as "Ordway & Co. of Concord". But, it is clear from THE CONCORD DIRECTORY for the years 1883 and 1885 that this must refer to the firm of Ordway & Ferrin.

13. Bristol Weekly Enterprise July 3,1884, p.2

14. Bristol Weekly Enterprise September 25,1884,p.2

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public was invited to inspect the new building in October.¹⁵ But, the town historian states that the building was finished in December;¹⁶ and the furnace was not installed until January.¹⁷ December saw the appointment and organization of the library trustees and the establishment of a book committee to expend the funds raised from the public and given by Minot and Sleeper.¹⁸ A librarian was chosen and books delivered in January, and the books cataloged and shelved in February.¹⁹ On February 28, 1885, the Minot-Sleeper Library opened to the public for the first time.²⁰ Minot and Sleeper did not, however, actually deed the building and lot to the Town until June of 1885.²¹

The building has changed little since its construction. The exterior has been left virtually untouched. The windows were covered by storm windows in the mid 20th century or by plexiglass about 1980.²² The rear basement door was apparently replaced during the 1977 basement renovation.²³ The early 1980's saw the installation of a book return slot and an alarm box.²⁴ Wheelchair ramps were placed at the main entry in 1986.²⁵ The main level of the library did see some 20th century changes, linoleum tiles on the wooden floors, modern light fixtures, some additional bookcases, and a new door from the storage room to the basement stair-hall. But, basically, the main level and exterior appear today almost exactly as they did in 1885. The library's need for additional space was met in 1977, when the basement was thoroughly renovated to house the reference and children's sections of the collection.²⁶ Previously

15. Bristol Weekly Enterprise October 9, 1884, p.2

16. Musgrove, p.354

17. Bristol Weekly Enterprise January 22, 1884, p.2

18. Bristol Weekly Enterprise December 11, 1884, p.2; December 18, 1884, p.2; December 25, 1884, p.2

19. Bristol Weekly Enterprise January 15, 1885, p.2; January 22, 1885, p.2; February 26, 1885, p.2

20. Musgrove, p.355

21. Deed, Josiah Minot and Solomon S. Sleeper to the Town of Bristol, June 26, 1885, Grafton County Registry of Deeds, Book 380, Page 429 (manuscript, Grafton County Registry of Deeds, Haverhill, N.H.)

22. Interview of Doreen Plowden by David Ruell, January 25, 1988

23. "Minot-Sleeper Library", ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE TOWN OF BRISTOL, NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1977 (Bristol, N.H.: 1978) p.72

24. Interview of Doreen Plowden by David Ruell, January 25, 1988

25. "Minot-Sleeper Library" ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE TOWN OF BRISTOL, NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1986 (Bristol, N.H.: 1987) p.50

26. "Minot-Sleeper Library" ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE TOWN OF BRISTOL, NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1977, p.72

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an unfinished space used for storage and the furnace, the basement now contains very modern rooms. The only other major change was the erection of a small storage shed behind the library in 1983.²⁷ All of these changes have helped to keep the library functionally up to date, but they have not effected the basic historic integrity of the building. It remains a strikingly well preserved late 19th century library building.

Ebenezer B. Hutchinson (1831-1909) was, according to his obituaries and other published biographical sketches, a contractor and builder, a dealer in building supplies, and a manufacturer of mouldings, brackets, and other building trim.²⁸ No mention is made in his advertisements in the Concord city directory,²⁹ nor in the obituaries and biographical sketches, of any activity as a designer of buildings. Nevertheless, like most builders of the day, Hutchinson was no doubt quite willing to provide a design when called for, even if it was not his usual practice. The building he designed for Judge Minot and Col. Sleeper is a competent and pleasant building, a modest late Victorian brick structure combining Gothic arched windows and doors with brackets, trusses, and other trim (perhaps made in Hutchinson's own Concord mill) that are more typical of the Stick Style. In early 1884, there were few public library buildings in New Hampshire to serve as models for the new Bristol library. Although there were approximately forty-five public libraries in operation in the state, only four municipal libraries were housed in buildings specifically designed and built as library buildings.³⁰ This handful

27. "Minot-Sleeper Library" ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF BRISTOL, NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1983 (Bristol, N.H.: 1984) p.50

28. George F. Bacon, LEADING BUSINESS MEN OF CONCORD AND VICINITY (Boston: 1890), p.47; REPRESENTATIVE CITIZENS OF THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE (Boston: 1902), pp.75-76; Ezra Stearns, GENEALOGICAL AND FAMILY HISTORY OF THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE (New York: 1908), Vol.4, p.1766; "Obituary, Death of Eben B. Hutchinson at the Residence Wednesday" Concord Evening Monitor December 2, 1909, p.2; "E.B. Hutchinson, Former Prominent Contractor, is Dead" The Daily Patriot (Concord, N.H.) December 2, 1909, p.8

29. Hutchinson's entries in THE CONCORD DIRECTORY were reviewed for the years 1860 through 1895, the years of his business career in Concord.

30. The numbers of existing libraries and library buildings were obtained by a review of "Histories of Public Libraries" REPORTS OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE STATE LIBRARY AND THE STATE LIBRARIAN FOR THE PERIOD BEGINNING JUNE 1, 1904 AND ENDING MAY 31, 1906 (Manchester, N.H.: 1906) pp.363-497, supplemented by a review of town histories and town reports for the few towns not included in this very comprehensive survey of the state's public libraries. The number of public libraries must be approximate because of some questions of definition, particularly when dealing with private libraries that ultimately became municipal libraries.

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of library buildings included the Frost Free Library in Marlborough (1867), the Manchester City Library (1871), the Shedd Free Library in Washington (1881) and the Hancock Town Library (1882). Also under construction in the summer of 1884 and completed in the fall of that year was the John Webster Hall, the home of the Newmarket Public Library. The Bristol library does not echo the architectural style of any of these five library buildings, with the possible exception of the Gothic Revival Manchester City Library. However, in other respects, the Minot-Sleeper Library is reminiscent of its four predecessors and its single contemporary. Save for the Manchester library, which was erected by the city, the buildings were the public spirited gifts of individuals.³¹ All were built of masonry, usually brick, or, in the single case of the Marlborough library, stone. In internal layout, the library buildings did show some more variety. In the earliest American public libraries, the library functions of book storage, patron service, and reader usage were usually combined in a single multi-purpose room. This plan was used in the small Marlborough and Washington libraries, and even in the larger Manchester library. The Manchester City Library had a large room containing the reading area, the circulation desk, and bookcases that lined the walls but were separated from the readers by a room encircling wire grille, so that only the library staff had access to the books. The Hancock and Newmarket libraries show the later distinction of functions that would become the usual library plan, with the books placed in stack rooms, separate from the reading room. The Minot-Sleeper Library used the earlier layout with the readers and the bookcases placed in a single large room. A "reading area" was established at the north end of the room, and the bookcases were, to some degree, concentrated in a "stack area" at the south end of the room.³² But, the Bristol library basically clung to the early single room plan.

The Minot-Sleeper Library was the first building erected to house a

31. For the histories of these buildings, see the entries in "Histories of Public Libraries" REPORTS OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE STATE LIBRARY AND THE STATE LIBRARIAN FOR THE PERIOD BEGINNING JUNE 1, 1904 AND ENDING MAY 31, 1906; Charles A. Bemis, HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF MARLBOROUGH, N.H. (Marlborough, N.H.: 1881, reprint 1974); SEVENTY FIVE YEARS OF THE CITY LIBRARY, MANCHESTER, N.H. (Manchester, N.H.: 1929); HISTORY OF WASHINGTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME 1768-1886 (Claremont, N.H.: 1886); Exeter News Letter, November 21, 1884 (a report on the dedication of John Webster Hall in Newmarket), p.2; Hancock History Committee, THE SECOND HUNDRED YEARS OF HANCOCK, NEW HAMPSHIRE (Canaan, N.H.: 1979)

32. Interview of Doreen Plowden by David Ruell, January 25, 1988

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public library in the Lakes Region.³³ By 1939, another twenty public library buildings had been erected in the region. Only one more library building appeared in the 1880's and three more in the 1890's. But five were built in the first decade of the 20th century, six in the 1910's, four more in the 1920's, but only one in the Depression years of the 1930's.³⁴ So, a little over half of the region's thirty-nine public libraries had obtained their own specially designed buildings by World War II. Although a half dozen of these libraries began their career in a proper library building, most had humbler beginnings, in the librarian's home, such as the Gilford Public Library and Holderness Free Library, a space in the Town Hall, such as the town libraries of Alexandria and Danbury, or rented rooms in a commercial block, such as the Meredith and Laconia libraries. The provision of properly designed quarters was a great step forward for these libraries. In the Lakes Region, the Minot-Sleeper Library pioneered the move to specially designed library buildings. After the establishment of the libraries themselves, this movement to appropriate buildings does represent the greatest advance in the evolution of the region's public library system, one that allowed the libraries to develop their full potential, a potential that could not be realized in their original inadequate and inappropriate quarters.

The Minot-Sleeper Library did not serve as the architectural model for later library buildings in the Lakes Region, most of which followed the Classical and Colonial Revival styles. But, in some respects, the Bristol library building was prophetic of its twenty successors. Like the Minot-Sleeper Library, most of the later buildings were the gifts of private individuals. The only town to build its own library with public funds was Gilford, although Moultonboro did have to vote a substantial appropriation to supplement the bequest used to build its library. Fund raising campaigns led to the erection of the libraries in Gilmanton Iron Works and Holderness. But, the sixteen other library buildings were all built entirely with the gift or bequest of a public spirited individual, and not with public funds. The masonry construction of the Bristol library is also found in three-quarters of the later buildings, twelve built of brick, two of stone, and one of "rock-faced" concrete block. Only five of the region's pre-World War II libraries were built of wood. We are so used to brick and stone library buildings, that the preponderance of masonry construction among the Lakes Region libraries does

33. The comparison of the Minot-Sleeper Library with the other libraries in the region found in this paragraph and the following paragraph is based on David Ruell, PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY.

34. This trend continued in the post-war era, as six more public library buildings were erected in the Region between 1951 and 1978.

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not seem unusual. But, given the overwhelming dominance of wood as virtually the only construction material in the Lakes Region, particularly in the 19th century, this preference for masonry is of some significance. In Bristol, for example, only a few houses, some commercial blocks, a few mill buildings, and the village schoolhouse were built of brick in the 19th century. (Stone buildings were unknown.) Most Bristol buildings, including almost every residence and such public buildings as the town hall and the churches, were built of wood. So, the use of brick for the Minot-Sleeper Library was unusual in Bristol, as it was for the later libraries in other towns of predominantly wooden construction. If the Bristol library's use of masonry construction was followed by later libraries in the region, its plan was not. Three-quarters of the later libraries, beginning with the region's second library building, the Hall Memorial Library of Northfield (1885-6), abandoned the single multipurpose room for a more advanced plan with separate rooms for different library functions. Only five library buildings, in Alexandria, Lakeport, Holderness, Danbury, and Belmont, used the single multipurpose room. (The Haynes Memorial Library, built in Alexandria in 1894, is quite close in its plan, if not its architecture, to the Minot-Sleeper Library, suggesting that it was modeled to some degree on the nearby Bristol library.) But, if the region's other later libraries followed different models for their designs, the importance of the Minot-Sleeper Library as the Lakes Region's first library building should not be underestimated. The Bristol library demonstrated, just as the public library system was beginning to develop in the region, the importance of a separate and appropriately designed library building for the success of this new institution. And its early example has since been followed by the majority of the Lakes Region's public libraries.

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"Bristol Town Records, Vol.5, 1882-1946" (manuscript, Bristol Town Offices, Bristol, N.H.)

Bristol Weekly Enterprise November 29, December 6, 13 & 20, 1883; January 3, 10 & 17, April 24, May 2, 22 & 29, June 12, July 3, September 4 & 25, October 9, December 11, 18 & 25, 1884; January 15 & 22, February 26, March 12, 19 & 26, July 9, 1885

THE CONCORD CITY DIRECTORY (Concord: Rufus Merrill & Son, 1860; McFarland & Jenks, 1864)

THE CONCORD DIRECTORY (Boston: Dudley & Greenough, 1867; Dean Dudley & Co., 1870, 1872, 1874, 1876; Greenough & Co., 1878, 1880; W.A. Greenough & Co., 1881, 1883, 1885, 1887, 1889; Littlefield Directory Publishing Co., 1891, 1893, 1895)

"Deed, Josiah Minot and Solomon S. Sleeper to the Town of Bristol, June 26, 1885" Grafton County Registry of Deeds, Book 380, Page 429 (manuscript, Grafton County Registry of Deeds, Haverhill, N.H.)

"E.B. Hutchinson, Former Prominent Contractor, is Dead" The Daily Patriot (Concord, N.H.), December 2, 1909, p.8

Exeter News Letter November 21, 1884, p.2, (untitled report on dedication of John Webster Hall in Newmarket)

Hancock History Committee THE SECOND HUNDRED YEARS OF HANCOCK, NEW HAMPSHIRE (Canaan, N.H.: Town of Hancock and Phoenix Publishing, 1979)

HISTORY OF WASHINGTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME 1768-1886 (Claremont, N.H.: Claremont Manufacturing Co., 1886)

Richard W. Musgrove HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF BRISTOL, NEW HAMPSHIRE (Bristol, N.H.: R.W. Musgrove, 1904)

"Obituary, Death of Eben B. Hutchinson at the Residence Wednesday" Concord Evening Monitor December 2, 1909, p.2

REPORTS OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE STATE LIBRARY AND THE STATE LIBRARIAN FOR THE PERIOD BEGINNING JUNE 1, 1904 AND ENDING MAY 31, 1906 (Manchester, N.H.: John B. Clarke Co., 1906)

REPRESENTATIVE CITIZENS OF THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE (Boston: New England Historical Publishing, 1902)

David Ruell PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY (Meredith, N.H.: Lakes Region Planning Commission, 1986)

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SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OF THE CITY LIBRARY, MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE (Manchester:
John B. Clarke, 1929)

Ezra Stearns GENEALOGICAL AND FAMILY HISTORY OF THE STATE OF NEW
HAMPSHIRE (New York: Lewis Publishing, 1908)

Interview of Doreen Plowden, Librarian, Minot-Sleeper Library, by David
Ruell, January 25, 1988

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UTM References Because of discrepancies between the two adjoining quadrangles (Cardigan and Holderness) used to calculate the UTM references, the maps were lined up by natural features, instead of by the tick marks, before the UTM references were calculated. It should also be noted that the numbers assigned to the easting tick marks on the bottom of the Cardigan quadrangle are in error, and that, therefore, the north-south line was drawn using the accurate numbers on the Holderness quadrangle.

Verbal Boundary Description Hampshire Investment Co. and Downeast Energy Corporation approximately 205 feet to the point of beginning. The property is described in the Deed of Josiah Minot and Solomon Sleeper to the Town of Bristol, Grafton County Registry of Deeds, Book 380, Page 429, and appears as Lot 96 on Bristol Property Map U4. Boundaries of the nominated property are highlighted in yellow on the attached sketch map.

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