

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

JUN 19 1979 AUG 21 1979

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Taylor Memorial Library

AND/OR COMMON Taylor Library; Old Library

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 5 Broad Street

CITY, TOWN Milford

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Third

STATE Connecticut

VICINITY OF  
CODE  
09

COUNTY CODE  
New Haven 009

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME City of Milford, Milford City Hall

STREET & NUMBER River Street

CITY, TOWN Milford

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Connecticut

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. City Clerk's Office, Milford City Hall

STREET & NUMBER River Street

CITY, TOWN Milford

STATE  
Connecticut

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE State Register of Historic Places (Connecticut)

DATE 1978

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN Hartford

STATE  
CT

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<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 Taylor Memorial Library is a Richardsonian Romanesque building bearing a specific resemblance to H. H. Richardson's Crane Memorial Library in Quincy, Massachusetts, of 1880-83. It is located at the east end of the Milford Green. Its principle facade faces South Broad Street, at the corner of West River Street. This intersection in the center of downtown Milford forms the juncture of the city's main commercial district (North and South Broad Streets, Daniel Street, New Haven Avenue and part of River Street) and the municipal and educational buildings located nearby on River and West River Streets.

The library is constructed of a combination of materials -- local fieldstone, red sandstone and yellow brick -- resulting in a rich pattern of textures and colors which enhances its picturesque design. It is a single, 1½-story rectangular mass, set on a raised basement of untrimmed fieldstone boulders, achieving a very solid and monumental appearance. However, this simple mass is enlivened by architectural features which specifically recall Richardson's Crane Library. Dominating the main facade is a great round-arched entryway under a large central gable lit by a triplet of round-arched windows framed by Romanesque-inspired pilasters. To the right, or east, of this entrance pavilion the main facade terminates in a round corner tower with bell-shaped roof which faces the street intersection. The stack area which originally occupied the west side of the first floor is expressed by a row of tall windows divided by narrow stone mullions around this end of the building. On the west facade is a massive, stepped, exterior chimney. In the center of the rear (north) side is a central gable matching that of the main (south) facade, and a dormer in the center of the east facade is a smaller version of the same gable design.

Inside the library, on the first floor, the old stack room and reading room open to the right and left, respectively, off a central hallway connecting the main entrance and an oak stairway, opposite. The 3-flight stairway (open well) is embellished with oak columns and capitals inspired by 12th-century Romanesque designs (via Richardson's work) on the first level, and with carved leaf patterns on the newel posts of the upper landings. The band of windows around the stack room and the round niche inside the corner tower were originally all filled with finely-leaded colorless and stained glass. Several of these original windows are missing although four of them, commemorating Milford families who donated funds for individual stack alcoves (fixtures and books) are currently in storage and the present occupants hope to reinstall these windows in their original positions in the near future. One of these has been attributed to L. C. Tiffany Company. The main reading room contains a large hearth faced in the same yellow brick as the exterior of the building, with a large, round-arched fireplace opening reflecting the main entrance archway. In a niche above the fireplace is a plaque containing a poem referring to Henry Taylor's mother, whom the building was intended to commemorate. The present occupants have recently acquired a pair of andirons and a poker set for the fireplace, and a French clock and pair of French gilt urns, all belonging to the Taylor estate, for this room and plan to

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Milford, CT

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER **four** PAGE **one**

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Milford Historic Resources Inventory  
1977 - Local  
Connecticut Historical Commission  
Hartford, CT  
and  
Department of Community Development  
City of Milford  
Milford, CT

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furnish it with other period articles. The upper floor contains a small central room originally used for library board meetings, and two unfinished storage rooms, currently unused. Although a few panes are missing and others have become bowed, most of the original leaded glass in the first floor reading room and second floor board room is still in place. All windows in the building are in need of re-leading. The basement remained unfinished on the interior until 1964-66, when all but the furnace room was panelled and the floor covered with linoleum.

The building has undergone few major changes since it was completed. It was vacated in 1976, when a new Milford Public Library building was finished. The most important alterations to the building as of 1977, when it was closed and unoccupied, are:

- (1) the original tile roof was replaced, around 1920, by asphalt shingle covering;
- (2) a second, outside set of doors was added to the main entrance around 1950, negating the hollow, cavernous effect of the original entrance design;
- (3) all original furnishings, including bookstacks and gaslights, have been removed;
- (4) some of the original stained glass windows have been lost, although four are currently in temporary storage in the new library;
- (5) the oak molding around the walls of the stack room, just below the ceiling level, was cut into in several places when the original wooden stacks were replaced by steel fixtures (either in 1947 or in 1955).

Since September, 1978, the building has served as headquarters for two Milford civic groups, the Chamber of Commerce (first floor), and the Milford Arts Council (second floor). Prior to their occupancy, the interior of the building was cleaned, the floors sanded and the walls painted white. The Arts Council plans to solicit donations to finish and furnish the old reading room as a late Victorian period room. They also hope to use the basement rooms for arts and crafts workshops.

The grounds of the library have remained essentially unchanged since the building was completed with two exceptions: (1) trees on the site have grown considerably larger, screening some views of the building, and (2) an iron fence was placed around the library grounds about 1910.

# 6 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
___PREHISTORIC	___ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	___COMMUNITY PLANNING	___LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	___RELIGION
___1400-1499	___ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	___CONSERVATION	___LAW	___SCIENCE
___1500-1599	___AGRICULTURE	___ECONOMICS	___LITERATURE	___SCULPTURE
___1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	___EDUCATION	___MILITARY	___SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
___1700-1799	___ART	___ENGINEERING	___MUSIC	___THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	___COMMERCE	___EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	___PHILOSOPHY	___TRANSPORTATION
___1900-	___COMMUNICATIONS	___INDUSTRY	___POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	___OTHER (SPECIFY)
		___INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1894-5

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Joseph W. Northrup

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Criteria C

The Taylor Library is representative of H. H. Richardson's influence on public architecture in America during the last decades of the 19th century and, in particular, of the impact of Richardson's Crane Memorial Library on the design of subsequent library buildings throughout the north-east. Further, the Taylor Library diverges from its model in ways which typify the work of Richardson's followers, and provides an informative illustration of the Richardsonian Romanesque style after Richardson.

The library was designed by Bridgeport architect Joseph W. Northrup, an accomplished and eclectic architect who seems to have been thoroughly conversant with the significant architectural monuments of his day (his house at 475 Whitney Avenue in New Haven of 1896, for example, is a knowledgeable variant of the Chateausque mansions of Richard Morris Hunt). For the Milford Library, Northrup revised his Richardsonian model in the following major ways:

- (1) the mass is shorter, more compact and blocklike than the Crane Library;
- (2) the Crane Library's gable roof with eyelid dormers is replaced by a simple hip roof with gable dormers;
- (3) where the Crane Library's main entrance pavilion is placed slightly off center, and its great round-arched entranceway is pushed to one side by a stairway turret, the Milford building's entrance pavilion is centered on the facade, with entrance arch in the center of the pavilion -- the turret, no longer a stair-tower, is moved to the southeast corner of the building;
- (4) features such as the arch and the large masonry blocks and boulders in the Milford building are overscaled in relation to the whole, in comparison with the Quincy building;
- (5) Northrup made use of polychromy as a design element in a far more exaggerated way than Richardson's quiet stone colors of the Crane Library;
- (6) there is less carved ornament on the Milford building.

In other words, the Taylor Library exhibits a simplification of Richardson's overall design and an exaggeration of its most striking stylistic features. It acts as a symbol of Richardson's own architectural achievement and thereby, despite its small size, acquires a monumentality as symbol appropriate to its physical and historical importance within its Milford context.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Wallace Chase. "Taylor Library." Library Journal, XX, 2 (February, 1895) p. 60.

Wallace Chase. "Taylor Library, Annual Report." Library Journal, XX, 5 (May, 1896), pp. 244-5.

Susan E. Early. "The History of Public Library Service in Milford, CT." Unpub. Masters Thesis, So.Conn.State College, 1971, pp. 34-46.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 1/3rd acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Milford Quadrangle

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,8 6,6,2 8,2,9 4,5 6,5 0,5,0

B                  

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C                  

D                  

E                  

F                  

G                  

H                  

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property encompasses a lot identified on City Assessor's Map 54 as Block 398, Parcel 5. It is bounded on the east by the west line of West River Street, and on the south by the north edge of North Broad Street.

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

Susan Ryan, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

22 January 1979

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

(203) 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   x  

LOCAL   x  

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

Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

June 12, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
ATTEST: Carol Shull  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

8-21-79

DATE

8/20/75

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The library is also an excellent example of the Taylor family's ambitious and relatively unprecedented architectural patronage in Milford. Henry Augustus Taylor of New York, owner of several small railroad lines in the northeast and midwest, purchased the Governor Charles H. Pond estate at 200 High Street in Milford, a High Victorian Gothic mansion of 1864 (now Laurelton Hall) around 1890. In 1892-3, together with his brother John Howard and sisters Margharita and Mary Elizabeth, Taylor funded the Mary Taylor Methodist Episcopal Church (South Broad Street, Late Gothic Revival) as a memorial to their mother. Henry Taylor also tried to interest his business associates in developing the shoreline property as a summer resort community on the order of Newport, Rhode Island. Taylor's own summer home, Milford's largest and most elaborate Shingle Style mansion (6 Seaside Avenue), was the sole result of his ill-fated scheme. In 1893 Taylor offered to build a public library, again to commemorate Mary Taylor. The city was to furnish the land and the building's yearly maintenance costs. Since there is virtually no mention of the design or construction of the library in the minutes of the Library Board for the years 1894-5, it seems likely that Taylor had the building completed before turning it over to the city. Although related to the style of his summer home, the Taylor Library is the most successful design of this locally-significant group of buildings funded by the Taylor family.

Finally, the library plays a pivotal role in the historic character and visual organization of downtown Milford. Even with the present infiltration of commercial blocks and modern store fronts, the library dominates its environment architecturally, and is an important landmark for Milford citizens and visitors. The present use of the building by the Chamber of Commerce and Milford Arts Council is in keeping with its historic role, always as much public monument as public library. These groups plan to encourage public use of the building by acting as a tourist center, by holding public lectures and concerts in the Victorian period room when completed, and possibly in the future by holding arts workshops in the basement.

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Louise Green. "Taylor Library, Milford, Connecticut." The Connecticut Magazine, V, 5 (May, 1899), pp. 266-71.

History of Milford, Connecticut, 1639-1939. Compiled by the Federal Writer's Project of the Connecticut Works Progress Administration (1939), p. 122.

"Taylor Library Scrapbook." Milford Public Library.

Minutes of the Taylor Library Board, 1894-1969. Milford Public Library.

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Verbal Boundary Description    Item number ten    Page

The west boundary of the property commences at a point on the north edge of North Broad Street and proceeds northerly along the east property line of 21 North Broad Street, now or formerly owned by FirstBank, for 95 feet. At this point the north boundary proceeds easterly along the south property line of 21 North Broad Street, now or formerly owned by FirstBank, for 143 feet, to the west edge of West River Street