

Wisconsin Historical Society: Placed the Farnsworth Public Library on the State Register of Historic Places

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Oconto, Wis. – The Wisconsin Historical Society placed the Farnsworth Public Library (Oconto, Oconto County) on the State Register of Historic Places on August 18, 2017.

The Farnsworth Public Library, designed by prominent architect Henry Foeller was constructed in 1903. The Wisconsin Public Library Act of 1872 allowed villages and cities to establish a library through the support of municipal taxation. This laid the groundwork for the establishment of Oconto’s library. In 1901, former resident and well-known Oconto lumberman and businessman, George W. Farnsworth, offered a gift of \$15,000.00 for the construction of a library. Not unlike Andrew Carnegie’s philanthropic library building program, the only stipulation of the gift was that the city agree to levy a tax totaling \$1,500 per year in order to cover the care and maintenance of the facility. The brick and stone, Neoclassical Revival style building was dedicated June 27, 1903, with Farnsworth giving the dedicatory address. The library has been an important institution in Oconto and in 1993 was expanded to continue to serve the community while preserving the historic exterior and interior which remains significantly intact.

The State Register is Wisconsin’s official list of state properties determined to be significant to Wisconsin’s heritage. The State Historic Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society administers both the State Register and National Register in Wisconsin.

To learn more about the State and National Register programs in Wisconsin, visit



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