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October 8 2014

**CHASE LIBRARY, HARWICH, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL
REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Chase Library in Harwich for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its September 10, 2014, meeting. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the Chase Library in the National Register will help to raise awareness of this architecturally and historically significant one-room library that has been operating for more than 100 years.”

The Chase Library, located at 7 Main Street in the village of West Harwich, is a modest example of the Craftsman style with Shingle Style elements. Constructed in 1911, the 1½-story, wood-frame, shingle-clad building retains its historic massing, symmetry, floor plan, scale, and most of its original exterior and interior architectural features. Of the three public libraries in Harwich, the Chase Library was the first one designed and built for the purpose. The building has been in continuous use as a library since its construction and, due to its proximity to the Harwich/Dennis town line, has always served both towns. As a one-room library with an ell, it is a rare example of its size, type, and age remaining in use as a library in the region.

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Named for its principal benefactors, Harwich native Caleb Chase and his wife, Salome, the library reflects the patterns of library philanthropy and construction that accompanied the Free Library Movement in late 19th - and early 20th -century America. While the first libraries in the American colonies were private collections, and, later, subscription libraries supported by dues-paying members, the Free Public Library Movement grew from the belief that an educated and well-informed population was essential to democracy, and that this education should not be limited to wealthy and high-status citizens.

Chase founded the Chase and Sanborn Coffee Company in 1874, and portraits of Chase and his wife hang in the building. Chase Library also benefitted from the philanthropy of the Nickerson family, particularly Ruth Nickerson, who led the effort to establish a library in the village of West Harwich. She and her husband, Dr. John Nickerson, donated the land on which the building stands. Electricity was added to the building in 1923, and a small bathroom was added in 1953. The building has had no major additions, but it has lost a Shingle Style front porch, as well as small eyebrow dormer windows on the side elevations. In spite of these losses, the building retains a significant amount of its historic and architectural integrity, and remains a representative example of a small Cape Cod village library.

Another small library on the Cape that dates to the same period as the Chase Library is the Cobb Memorial Library in Truro, which was listed in the National Register in 2013. Dating to 1912, the Cobb Memorial Library is also a one-room building in the Craftsman style; however, the Cobb is no longer used as a lending library, making the Chase Library unique in the region as a small, modest library still operating in its original function.

The Chase Library is one of 8 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

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The National Register is the nation's official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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