

Pollard Memorial Library – Memorial Hall  
1893

Building History

Pollard Memorial Library, also known as Memorial Hall, was dedicated in 1893 “as a memorial to the soldiers and sailors of Lowell who lost their lives in the Civil War.” It was designed by prominent Lowell native and architect Frederick Stickney who achieved a national reputation by designing buildings in Chicago, Cincinnati, and New York. Taking three years to build, the final cost for the building was \$174,300.

Built of granite, the building was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style which was very popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for public and institutional buildings. Named for influential Boston architect H.H. Richardson, other architects like Frederick Stickney emulated his designs after his death in 1886. The building is typical of the style with rough-faced, square stonework while the wide, rounded arches and deeply recessed door and window openings are also characteristic of Richardsonian Romanesque buildings.

The building is one of three imposing Richardsonian Romanesque structures built in the early 1890s in Lowell that also includes City Hall (designed by Merrill and Cutler) and the former central post office built by the federal government (today the juvenile court at 89 Appleton Street).

Although the functions of the City Library have changed little through history, the building has seen alterations. In 1915, a disastrous fire destroyed much of Memorial Hall on the second floor. When it was reconstructed, murals of significant military events (painted by famous French artist Paul Philippoteaux who also painted the Gettysburg Cyclorama painting in 1883) and additional stained glass windows were installed in the large upstairs hall. In 1981, the building was named the Samuel S. Pollard Memorial Library in honor of the late Mayor.

In 2002, the library underwent a \$10 million renovation that after two years of work, modernized the facility at the same time respecting its historic architecture and design.



*The Pollard Memorial Library/Memorial Hall as seen in 1908. (Photo – Library of Congress)*