

# PASSPORT

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10

GEORGIA'S  
MOST BEAUTIFUL  
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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**Welcome to Georgia's 10 Most Beautiful Public Libraries!** It is with great pride that we at Georgia Public Library Service invite you to discover the many charms of our most beautiful facilities across the state.

While you can use the photos in this passport as a guide, we believe that great architecture and design should not be admired from afar. I am confident that, once you've experienced the architecture, heritage, scenery and friendly faces that await you here, you will fall under the spell of these 10 community treasures and the immense pride and joy that the librarians who work inside them will take in showing them to you! Please don't hesitate to come inside, spend some time, and perhaps apply for a library card.

Design knowledge isn't just for architects; we can all learn from the buildings around us, and every Georgia library is a great place to begin that lesson. Bring the whole family, too. Many of our branches offer hands-on learning that applies science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) skills that are sure to spike the interest of every budding young designer. After you have visited these lovely and unique libraries, we hope you will continue to seek out the exceptional libraries that can be found in every county in Georgia. We believe that, like those of us who work in the more than 400 public libraries across the state, you will come to the conclusion that by bringing culture, lifelong learning and discovery to Georgians every day, every library is beautiful.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Walker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

**Julie Walker**  
*State Librarian*

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Georgia Public Library Service hereby recognizes the following public libraries as the state's most beautiful, as nominated by the public and selected by a panel of public library and architecture professionals.

*We invite you to see them all and commemorate your visits with individual passport stamps on these pages.*



GEORGIA PUBLIC  
LIBRARY SERVICE

*A Unit of the University System of Georgia*

1800 Century Place, Suite 150; Atlanta, GA 30345 ■ [www.georgialibraries.org](http://www.georgialibraries.org)

*We thank the referenced library systems and design firms, as well as Burke Walker, for providing the included photographs.*

## Mary Willis Library

204 E. Liberty St.;  
Washington, GA  
30673



**Architect:** Edmund George Lind

*National Register of Historic Places*

**Headquarters of the Bartram Trail Regional Library System**

Noted London-born architect Edmund George Lind began designing the first free library in the state of Georgia in 1888, when Dr. Francis T. Willis founded it in memory of his daughter and as a gift to the people of his hometown. The original Queen Anne-style building features decorative brickwork, a steeply gabled roof and a dome-capped tower. Its interior features numerous stained glass windows,

including a central window memorializing its namesake that was crafted by Tiffany Studios. The building houses the chest that last housed the Confederate gold. On April 11, 1972, the library became the first in Georgia to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



# Carnegie Branch Library

537 East Henry St.; Savannah, GA 31401

**Architect:** Julian deBruyn Kops

*National Register of Historic Places*

A branch of Live Oak Public Libraries

In 1906, eleven African-American men formed the Colored Library Association of Savannah and established the Library for Colored Citizens. After years of acquiring books from personal libraries and public donations, the association successfully petitioned the Carnegie Corporation of New York for funds

to build a permanent home for the collection. Dedicated in 1914, Savannah's first freestanding public library — one of only two Carnegie library projects for African-Americans in Georgia — fulfilled its original mission from 1914 to 1962



before becoming part of the Savannah library system in 1963. The building was designed by local architect Julian deBruyn Kops and is the city's only example of the Prairie School of architecture pioneered by Frank Lloyd Wright.





## Washington Memorial Library

1180 Washington Ave.; Macon, GA 31201

**Architect:** Nisbet & Dunwody

Headquarters of the Middle Georgia Regional Library

The Washington Memorial Library opened in 1923 on the site of Washington Place, the home of former Macon Mayor James H. R. Washington. His granddaughter, Ellen

Washington Bellamy, donated the site and \$50,000 for a library to be built in honor of her brother, Hugh Vernon Washington. Memorials to the family are incorporated into the architecture, including a coat of arms above the original front door and bas-relief cameos high on the north and south interior walls. The Lanier Alcove houses a bust of poet

Sidney Lanier by Gutzon Borglum, designer of the sculptures on Mount Rushmore and Stone Mountain. The Genealogical & Historical Room here ranks among the best in Georgia.



# St. Simons Island Public Library

530-A Beachview Dr.;  
St. Simons Island, GA  
31522

**Architects:** Artley & Company  
(1936 original); John A. Tuten  
& Associates (2006 renovation)

*A designated National Literary  
Landmark of the American Library  
Association and United for Libraries*

A branch of  
Marshes of Glynn Libraries



In early 1937, the Cassina Garden Club organized the St. Simons Public Library in two rooms of the spanking new \$65,800 Glynn County Casino complex overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and St. Simons Sound. Thirteen years later, the library moved to its current location in the former bowling alley of the same complex. In October 2002, the library was designated a National Literary Landmark in honor of Eugenia

Price, who conducted research for her first novel, *The Beloved Invader*, at the library. Following a major renovation that began in 2005, the library reopened in its space beside the St. Simons Island Lighthouse a year later. Although currently hidden by carpet, the bowling alley flooring remains intact.



## Buckhead Branch Library

269 Buckhead Ave.;  
Atlanta, GA 30305

**Architect:** Mack Scogin  
Merrill Elam Architects



*2014 Georgia AIA (American Institute of Architects) Test of Time Award; 1993 National AIA Award of Excellence; 1991 National AIA and American Library Association Awards of Excellence; 1990 Georgia AIA Award of Excellence; 1990 Urban Design Commission Award of Excellence*

**A branch of Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System**

Long considered among the most dazzling contemporary designs in Georgia, this 1989 building is so eye-catching that it can be spotted as an occasional background set for movies, television shows and even fashion photographs. Its polarizing ultramodern design presents an angular black metal frame protruding from a facade of slate tiles that for many — admirers and detractors — resemble fish scales. Inside, it features a linear arrangement with tall ceilings and stark

white walls illuminated by natural light pouring in from numerous skylights. Thanks to community support, the library weathered a 2008 proposal to demolish it in favor of a mixed-use development, positioning it to remain among Atlanta's architectural landmarks for years to come.





# Columbus Public Library

3000 Macon Rd.; Columbus, GA 31906

**Architect:** Robert A.M. Stern Architects

Headquarters of Chattahoochee Valley Libraries

At 100,000 square feet, the Columbus Public Library is the second largest in Georgia. Completed in 2005, the New Classical red-brick-and-limestone building was designed by acclaimed architect Robert A. M. Stern. The facility is topped by a central, 60-

foot-diameter "lantern," which rises to a height of four stories and serves as a visual beacon to the surrounding neighborhoods. Inside, a grand stairway connects the lobby to the second floor collections. Other significant architectural features include the Grand Reading Room (an arced, double-height room reminiscent of great library reading rooms of the past), a dedicated children's storytime space and outdoor garden, and a front lawn and park used regularly for outdoor festivals and movies.





## Hamilton Mill Library

3690 Braselton Highway; Dacula, GA 30019

**Architect:** Precision Planning Inc.

*2011 Library Journal New National Landmark Library Award; 2010 Building of America Gold Medal Winner; Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certification*

**A branch of Gwinnett County Public Library**

The Hamilton Mill Library was designed with flexibility of space, efficiency of operation and aesthetic appeal equally in mind. The state's first LEED Gold-certified library, it features what looks like a traditional brick exterior. But those bricks are actually made of 100 percent recycled materials including glass, ceramics and incinerator ash. Patrons love the building's high ceilings, open sight lines, dramatically tall fireplace and outdoor patio garden. A visual highlight is the unique north wall's imprinted-glass windows that depict visual arts, mathematical notations, poetic verse and swirling galaxies. Titled "Poiesis," the glasswork was created by artist Maria Artemis.



# Dog River Public Library

6100 Georgia Highway 5; Douglasville, GA 30135

**Architect:** Ponder & Ponder

A branch of the West Georgia Regional Library

Since its 2011 opening, Dog River has been known as the library in the woods. Located on a 900-acre forested nature preserve owned by Douglas County, the building's exterior of stone, wood and other natural elements complements its setting. Through careful placement and layout, the library was designed for minimal impact to its environment with every design cue a response to its woodland location and to its functional needs. Even its parking lot is woven between existing trees. Native



plants feature prominently in the library's landscaping, eliminating the need for irrigation systems, while rainwater is captured and used in water features around the property. Visitors especially love the building's screened-in reading porch.

# Porter Memorial Library

6191 Highway 212; Covington, GA 30016

**Architect:** Craig Gaulden Davis

*2011 AIA South Carolina Committee on the Environment Honor Award; LEED Gold Certification*

A branch of the Newton County Public Library

Using regional materials with modern forms, the Porter Memorial Library was designed for strong architectural identity and small environmental footprint. The 19,200-square-foot building's heavily glazed north-facing front maximizes natural lighting while minimizing heat gain. Its roof is tiered into three sections, creating two south-facing clerestory windows whose exterior louvers and interior light shelves reflect the sun inside.

The roof also directs rainwater to the rear, where downspouts lead to an underground cistern that filters and stores it for nonpotable reuse, providing clean, filtered water for waste conveyance and drip irrigation of the native landscaping for up to three months of zero rainfall. Inside, visitors love the abundance of daylight, open floor plan, exposed wood-laminated beams and high ceilings.





## Metropolitan Library

1332 Metropolitan Parkway; Atlanta, GA 30310

**Architect:** Smith Dalia Architects

*2016 AIA South Carolina Design Honor Award and Interior Architecture Design Honor Award; 2016 International Interior Design Association Georgia Best of the Best Award; 2016 American Infrastructure Magazine Building of the Year; LEED Silver Certification*

**A branch of Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System**

Located in a transitional neighborhood, the glass-curtain-walled Metropolitan Library opened in October 2015, having been designed as a cultural center that would inspire — and contribute to — positive community change. Filled with public spaces for artworks supported by the Fulton County

Public Arts program, it also features several design acknowledgments in remembrance of the Capitol View Baptist Church, the site's former occupant that sat empty and crumbling for several years. Chief among these tributes is an entry-plaza installation spotlighting the four white granite Doric columns that once supported the church's façade.



*Royston  
Branch  
Library*



During your tour of Georgia's 10 Most Beautiful Public Libraries, you might also want to check out a few others whose architectural significance or spectacular settings make them popular destinations for travelers in the know.

## **Atlanta Central Library**

One Margaret Mitchell Square; Atlanta, GA 30303

The largest library in Georgia and a landmark of the brutalist architectural style, it is the last work by internationally renowned modernist Marcel Breuer, whose work includes New York's Whitney Museum of American Art.

## **Eatonton-Putnam County Library**

309 North Madison Ave.; Eatonton, GA 31024

The original one-room Carnegie Library opened in January 1916 and has been in use since with its architecture, featuring the original fireplace and an original granite water fountain, intact. A 1960s addition was recently renovated to be more in keeping with the original structure.

## **Lavonia-Carnegie Library**

28 Hartwell Rd.; Lavonia, GA 30553

In 1909, the Lavonia Woman's Club petitioned Andrew Carnegie and the town council to provide funds for a public library. Carnegie granted \$5,000, with the council chipping in \$500 a year for 10 years for books and upkeep. Two years later, another of the few Carnegie libraries continuously used as such was a reality.

## **Royston Branch Library**

634 Franklin Springs St.; Royston, GA 30662

One of Georgia's most creative examples of adaptive reuse, this library is the result of renovating two existing buildings (a city hall and a civic center) and enclosing in glass the open-air plaza that had connected them. Baseball fans will also delight in the memorial of hometown hero Ty Cobb near the building's entrance.

## **Savannah Bull Street Branch Library**

2002 Bull St.; Savannah, GA 31401

Restored to its original glory in 1999, the Bull Street Library celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2016. Its neoclassical design, evocative of the city's antebellum past, is by architect H. W. Witcover, who also designed Savannah's City Hall.

## **Senoia Branch Library**

148 Pylant St.; Senoia, GA 30276

Thanks to its exposed wood beams, floor-to-ceiling views and exterior wood-and-stone design, first-time visitors often mistake this library for a lodge, restaurant or bed-and-breakfast inn. After completing their checkouts and returns, patrons often stroll the adjacent path around scenic Marimac Lake or grab a fishing pole to catch dinner.

## **Towns County Public Library**

99 South Berrong St.; Hiawassee, GA 30546

Nestled beside Lake Chatuge, the building offers patrons views of not only the lake, but of the mountains including Brasstown Bald, the highest peak in the state of Georgia. The most popular area of the library is the Towns County Porch, added during a 2014 renovation and used for meetings, reading, crafting and relaxing by the fireplace.

