

MP 2752



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Brownsville Carnegie Library  
Other names/site number Brownsville-Haywood County Library; Brownsville-Haywood County Chamber of Commerce  
Name of related multiple property listing Historic Resources of Brownsville, Tennessee 1823-1970

## 2. Location

Street & Number: 121 W. Main Street  
City or town: Brownsville State: TN County: Haywood  
Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A Zip: 38012

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this  nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  
 national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Claudette Stapp 6/14/18  
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
Signature of Commenting Official: Date  
Title: State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain: \_\_\_\_\_)

*Jane Salter*  
 Signature of the Keeper

5.26.2018

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/Library

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Organizational

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Classical Revival

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; METAL; CONCRETE

**Narrative Description**

The Carnegie Library is a one-story rectangular plan building with a full, finished basement. It is wood-frame with a brick veneer. It is situated on a less than half-acre lot just west of the Courthouse Square in Brownsville, a low-density city of approximately 10,000 residents, in Haywood County in West Tennessee. The building is set on a hill that slopes downward to the west. There is angled parking in the street in front of the building and a parking lot to the rear of the building. The building exhibits a simple interpretation of the Classical Revival style with a prominent, projecting central entryway, cornice, fixed two-light windows, and a flat roof hidden by a parapet wall. Small shrubs are planted next to the foundation and there are some small trees and a historical marker in the yard. The interior retains the original plan with two fireplaces in the main library areas and open meeting space in the basement. The property retains its historic integrity.

**Exterior Summary**

The Brownsville Carnegie Library has a rectangular footprint with centered projecting sections on the façade and the rear, northern elevation. It is one story with a full, finished basement. The first floor is elevated and accessed via concrete stairs on the façade and a metal ramp on the rear elevation. The foundation and exterior walls are brick, set in common bond with five rows of stretchers for every header row. All bricks are painted yellow except for the gray parapet wall above the unadorned metal projecting cornice line. The building's flat roof is not visible from the street. A concrete belt course differentiates the

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first level and basement. There are symmetrically-placed, original fixed two-light windows on every elevation. The top light is significantly smaller than the bottom. All windows have concrete sills and no lintels. Originally, there were also symmetrically placed single-light windows set into the basement section on the façade, east elevation, and west elevation (see Figures 2 and 3), but these were bricked in during renovations in the early 1990s to correct problems with water infiltration into the basement.

**Façade (South Elevation)**

The façade is situated on West Main Street facing south. Landscaping at the building’s base covers much of the basement level and foundation. A concrete staircase with seventeen steps and metal railings allows access to the centered, elevated entryway. On either side of the entry section are three centered, but evenly spaced, windows. Although the centered doorway is flush with the building’s exterior brick wall, the surrounding entry section projects from the building in a stepped formation, forming flanking pilasters and reinforcing the classical feeling of this simple building. The furthest projecting portions feature narrow, single-pane, fixed windows with lantern-style light fixtures next to them. Extending across the entire entry section is a cornice line with “CHAMBER OF COMMERCE” within the frieze band, installed during renovations in the early 1990s. Originally, the frieze band stated “BROWNSVILLE CARNEGIE LIBRARY” (see Figure 3). The frieze also features dropped decorative elements.

The entryway has a single modern one-light glass and wood door with single-light sidelights. Originally, the building had a double entry door and no sidelights (see Figure 3). An original two-light transom window is above the doorway. To the west of the door, next to the transom, is a concrete block with “19” inscribed. To the east of the door, at the same level, is “10.” Together, these blocks spell “1910,” the year of the building’s construction.

Besides the projecting entry section, the most significant feature of the building’s façade is the thick metal projecting cornice which wraps around most of the building (the building’s cornice line is located immediately above the entryway’s cornice line). The cornice is rusting in some places.

The gray-painted parapet brick wall above the cornice also features the stepped, projecting central section and is capped with gray metal. Recessed behind the flanking pilasters of the projecting section is a single decorative brick panel. The metal cap is rusting in some places, and rust-colored water marks are present on some sections of the parapet wall.

**East Elevation**

The east elevation contains the concrete belt course, cornice line, and parapet wall at the roof. The first level has a series of five two-light windows.

**North Elevation**

The rear elevation of the building faces north and a parking lot. Similar to the façade it has a projecting central section, but it is not stepped. The cornice line, belt course, and parapet wall on the roof do not extend across this section. The eastern section of the elevation features two windows on the first level. These are spaced near the edges to account for an interior fireplace, which is not visible from the exterior. HVAC units are situated in front of the basement level.

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The central, projecting section has six windows on the first level and six windows on the basement level. The windows are the same style as those on the rest of the building, but they are taller. The basement windows extend below grade and have two concrete window wells.

The first level of the western section has a metal door on the eastern-most edge and a window on the western-most edge, which are set on either side of an interior fireplace that is not visible from the exterior. The door is non-original. Historically, there was a window there. The door is accessed via a metal ramp that extends from the parking lot. The door and ramp were likely installed during the early 1990s renovations. The change allowed the building to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which required public buildings to be accessible to people of all physical abilities. Although this is a modification to the building, it is located on the rear elevation and is not easily visible. Therefore, this modification does not negatively impact the building's historic integrity.

There is a metal door that allows access into the basement in the western-most section. Since there is no elevator in the building, this door allows ADA-compliant access to the basement, which functions as a community meeting room. This door replaced a window. The brick foundation near the door was covered with concrete or cement at an unknown date. Another window on the other edge of the section has been bricked in.

**West Elevation**

The west elevation has the same appearance as the east elevation. Landscaping obscures most of the foundation.

**Interior: Main Level**

The interior is extremely similar to the building's historical appearance; the only changes have been paint, flooring, and modern upgrades to the electrical, plumbing, and HVAC system. The room configuration, windows, doors, and trim are all original.<sup>1</sup>

Like most Carnegie Libraries, the Brownsville Library had a central, entry foyer. It has black and white tile floors, which were installed during renovations from 1957 to 1958 (see Figure 8), covering the original thin wooden floorboards. Decorative features include pilasters covered with non-original laminate designed to appear like blue marble, wide baseboards, prominent crown molding, and prominent door surrounds. There is a faux-moveable fireplace along the northern wall. There are double, multi-light doors that lead into the eastern and western rooms. All other doors on the first level are wood with six-panels. The entryway has a chandelier, but the rest of the foyer is lit by modern, recessed lights. The double-winder staircase to the basement is in the southwest corner of the foyer. The stairwell is open on the first level and becomes enclosed at the basement level.

All four rooms on the main level are accessible from the foyer (see Floor Plans). The east and west rooms are large, extending the full depth of the building, while the two rooms north of the foyer are small. All rooms have carpet, which covers the original thin wooden floorboards (see Figures 9 and 10).<sup>2</sup> All rooms have wide baseboards but narrow crown molding. All doors have wide, prominent surrounds. All rooms are lit by overhead modern lights. Soffits conceal HVAC ducts. There are two fireplaces on the main level, one

<sup>1</sup> Mary Ann Sharpe and Marty Williams, conversation with Rebecca Schmitt, February 1, 2018. Both grew up in Brownsville and visited the Carnegie Library throughout their lives.

<sup>2</sup> Carpet was originally installed during the renovations in 1977, but it is likely that the current carpet was installed more recently.

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each along the northern wall in the east and west rooms. The fireplaces are intact, though their openings have been covered by a board. The eastern and western rooms have white chair rails.

Historically there was an Adult Reading Room, Reference Room, and Children's area on the main level. Photographs indicate that the west and east rooms were the adult reading room and reference room (see Figures 9 and 10), but it is unclear which was which. Currently, the west room is used as an office, and the east room is used as a conference room. The two rooms to the north of the foyer are currently used as offices. One or both of these rooms was the children's area (see Figures 5 and 6).

**Interior: Basement**

The main feature of the basement is the large, open meeting room. The basement has always been used for meetings and events, necessitating the open space. A small kitchen, restroom, and storage rooms are along the southern edge of the basement. There is also a separate storage room in the western-most part of the basement. The floors throughout the basement are non-historic tile. There is a drop ceiling, most likely installed during the 1990s renovations. Electronic equipment, such as a projector and television screen, has also been installed on the ceiling and walls. All doors in the basement are six-paneled wood doors. Although the basement has been modified with new materials, the basement overall retains its most significant feature: the large open room that historically and currently allows it to function as a community space for meetings and events.

**Integrity**

The Brownsville Carnegie Library retains its historic integrity. Its location, setting, and feeling are the same as they were historically. Its association as an important community building has been retained. The library retains its character defining features on the exterior (central projecting entry, cornice line, elevated main level, and fenestration pattern) and on the interior (main level floor plan, wide trim and door surrounds, and open meeting room in the basement). Some aspects of the building have been modified, such as the installation of carpet in some rooms on the main level and the updating of electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems. A ramp was installed on the rear elevation, which allowed the building to continue to serve the public. These modifications do not negatively affect the building's integrity. Windows at the basement level on the façade, east elevation, and west elevation were bricked in, but this was to fix water infiltration issues that had been present since the building's construction. Therefore, this change was to correct an inherent structural deficiency, which was necessary to allow it to continue its function as a community building.

The Brownsville Carnegie Library meets the integrity and registration requirements to be listed under the Historic Resources of Brownsville, Tennessee 1823-1970 Multiple Property Documentation Form (accepted by the National Park Service 1/27/2015). This submission originally identified the Carnegie Library as potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its historical significance and under Criterion C for its Classical Revival architecture, which was one of the styles most commonly associated with Carnegie Libraries.<sup>3</sup> Upon further evaluation, Tennessee Historical Commission (SHPO) staff determined that other Carnegie Libraries in Tennessee better exemplify classical styles, such as the Jackson Free Library in nearby Madison County (Listed on 6/26/1975).

<sup>3</sup> Theodore Jones, Carnegie Libraries Across America: A Public Legacy (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1997), 53-82.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**  
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

1910-1968

**Significant Dates**

1910-1911, 1913, 1957-1958

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown Architect

Taylor, W.J. (Builder)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

N/A

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.



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### **Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

The Carnegie Library is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local historical significance within the community of Brownsville, Tennessee. Within the area of Education, the Carnegie Library is a local representation of the Progressive-era national movement to establish free public libraries, as well as the national development of libraries focusing on children’s education. The library is significant within the area of Social History for its role as the community’s main meeting space for civic groups, particularly women’s civic groups. The library is a physical representation of the impact of these civic groups, as they provided the majority of the library’s funding for books, other educational materials, furnishings, and physical upkeep. The property also represents the growing role of women in civic affairs, both through the participation of women’s civic groups and the employment of women as the librarians and on the library’s board. The Carnegie Library’s period of significance begins with its construction in 1910 and ends in 1968, which encompasses the majority of the library’s productive years, including its transition from a local library to participation in Tennessee’s regional library system, which expanded its patrons’ access to books and knowledge. The building retains its integrity as shown by its original interior library plan and few exterior modifications that do not diminish the overall design and feeling of the building.

### **Narrative Statement of Significance**

#### **Carnegie Library Program in the United States and Tennessee**

Prior to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, most libraries in the United States were not public. They were owned and managed by private citizens, usually wealthy citizens of European descent. The stacks were closed and required a trained librarian to retrieve books for the patrons. Children were often restricted from the library because of concerns with noise and the books’ safety. Essentially, a library was a “storehouse of treasures,” more concerned with protecting books as artifacts than allowing the knowledge within the books to be accessible.<sup>4</sup>

In the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century some scholars began to advocate for the “The Modern Library Idea.” The modern library would allow more access to the books by using open stacks and allowing patronage from all types of people, including children. The library would be designed so as to be inviting, utilizing open spaces rather than closed off nooks that libraries had historically used. The library would also be supported by public money. The idea caught on slowly, but by the 1870s and 1880s, some New England states passed public library laws that created a legal framework for establishing free libraries open to the public.<sup>5</sup> In the rest of the country, though, the new modern library often arrived via a grant from Andrew Carnegie.

Born in Scotland in 1835, Andrew Carnegie came to the United States with his family in 1848 and settled in Pennsylvania. As a businessman, he invented cost accounting, a technique that he used to become a steel magnate. After becoming one of the wealthiest men in the United States, Carnegie declared in an essay for the *North American Review* that it was the moral duty of wealthy men to not hoard their money but use it for the enrichment of society. He declared, “the man who dies thus rich dies disgraced.”<sup>6</sup> He argued that wealthy men should donate their excess funds to “help those who will help themselves,” chiefly through the creation

<sup>4</sup> Abigail A. Van Slyck, *Free to all: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 1-43.

<sup>5</sup> Van Slyck, *Free to All*, 1-43

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth* (1889; repr., New York: Carnegie Corporation, 2017), 15.



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of cultural buildings, such as music halls; educational institutions, such as universities and free libraries; and institutions that would alleviate human suffering, such as hospitals, medical colleges, and laboratories.<sup>7</sup>

Between 1886 and 1919, Andrew Carnegie donated more than \$40 million to build more than 1,650 public libraries across the United States, as well as hundreds of academic libraries on university campuses and libraries in other countries. The donations were not limited to one region or specific-sized communities.<sup>8</sup>

Within the State of Tennessee, Carnegie funded the construction of twenty library buildings, including public and academic libraries. More than half (eleven) were in East Tennessee, of which eight are extant. Nashville, the state capital in Middle Tennessee, had six libraries; four are extant. The fewest (three) were in West Tennessee; two are extant, including the Brownsville Carnegie Library. Of the fourteen extant libraries, twelve are currently listed in the National Register. Of these, nine were listed as contributing resources in historic districts and three were listed individually (Jackson Free Library, listed 6/26/1975; Old Library Building in Chattanooga, listed 3/14/1973; and the Etowah Carnegie Library, listed 3/23/2003). The only extant Carnegie Libraries not yet listed in the National Register are the Lincoln Memorial University Carnegie Library and the Brownsville Carnegie Library. Brownsville was the smallest Tennessee community to receive a Carnegie grant.<sup>9</sup>

### Carnegie Library for Brownsville

In early 1909, due to pressure from interested women and women's groups, Brownsville Mayor John O. Bonner wrote to Andrew Carnegie requesting a public library grant.<sup>10</sup> James Bertram, Andrew Carnegie's secretary who ran the library grant program on a day-to-day basis, replied on December 2, 1909 that Carnegie would donate \$7,500 (see Figure 1 for newspaper announcement of the grant). The grant conditions required the City to provide a site and resolve to provide at least 10% of the building's cost (\$750) for maintenance annually.<sup>11</sup> This sum was to pay for books, staff salaries, and the library's physical upkeep. These were the typical minimum requirements for obtaining a Carnegie Library grant.<sup>12</sup> The City resolved to fulfill its part of the conditions on January 10, 1910. On March 1, 1910, the City purchased a site, just west of the Courthouse Square, from W.T. and Annie Bullafin for \$1600.<sup>13</sup>

Per the policies of the Carnegie program, the grant was not dispersed until Bertram reviewed the city's plans.<sup>14</sup> The review was to ensure that the proposed structure would fulfill Carnegie's vision for public libraries. He believed that public libraries should focus on function and purpose, rather than devoting space

<sup>7</sup> Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth*, 22-25.

<sup>8</sup> Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America*, 69; Van Slyck, 22; Robbie Jones, "What's in a Name?" Tennessee's Carnegie Libraries & Civic Reform in the New South, 1889-1919" (Master's Thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2002), 165.

<sup>9</sup> Jones, "What's in a Name?", 165-185.

<sup>10</sup> Tennessee Federation of Women's Clubs, *Woman's Work in Tennessee* (Memphis: Jones-Briggs Company, 1916), 223; Jones, "What's in a Name?", 54; "Library for Brownsville: Andrew Carnegie Agrees to Donate \$7,500 Under the Usual Conditions," *The Tennessean*, December 18, 1909.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.; James Bertram, letter to Mayor Boner, December 2, 1909, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

<sup>12</sup> Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America*, 26, 29

<sup>13</sup> Brownsville Board of Mayor and Alderman, Resolution, January 10, 1910, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library; Property Deed, W.T. Bullefin and Annie Bullefin to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the Town of Brownsville, March 1, 1910. Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

<sup>14</sup> James Bertram, letter to Mayor J.O. Bonner, April 9, 1910, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

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and money to ostentatious architectural ornamentation.<sup>15</sup> Bertram attempted to guide communities and architects to acceptable designs by supplying a pamphlet entitled “Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings.” The pamphlet exemplified many tenets of the modern library idea. The pamphlet called for libraries with square or rectangular footprints and a doorway centered on the façade or at one corner. The libraries would be one-story with a full basement. The main level would be split into multiple rooms or areas by purpose: an adult’s reading room, a reference room, and children’s room. The librarian may or may not have her own space. The basement would be mostly open space for a lecture room and smaller rooms for restrooms, janitor’s closet, and boiler room. Though Bertram had specific requirements for the internal arrangement, he made no requirements for the building’s overall style.<sup>16</sup>

Though Brownsville’s Carnegie Library does not match any of Bertram’s plans exactly, the overall footprint and arrangement complied with the focus on function and purpose rather than ornamentation. The first level had multiple rooms, all accessed from the foyer. The basement was open and used as a meeting and event space. Bertram approved Brownsville’s designs and returned the blueprints per his policy.<sup>17</sup>

Construction began sometime after September 23, 1910 by builder W.J. Taylor of Brownsville.<sup>18</sup> Construction was completed sometime during 1911 (see Figure 1 and 2 for the earliest known images of the Library).<sup>19</sup> Though construction was complete, it took a few years for the procurement of furnishings and books, so the library did not open to the public until June 3, 1913.<sup>20</sup>

### Significance in Social History

The Carnegie Library is a local representation of a national Progressive-era belief that education and culture, supported by public money, would promote societal welfare. In many areas of the United States, late 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialization, urbanization, and immigration had intensified such problems as socio-economic inequality, racism, poverty, poor working conditions, corporate greed, and corruption. In response, reformers (or progressives) advocated for social, political, and moral reforms. Although they argued that some issues could only be solved by legal changes and regulation, they believed that many issues could be

<sup>15</sup> Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America*, 69.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*; Van Slyck, *Free to All*, 38-39.

<sup>17</sup> John O. Bonner, Letter to R.A. Franks, September 23, 1910, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library. Franks was Andrew Carnegie’s financial secretary and was responsible for releasing the grant funds. A bulletin from the American Institute of Architects in April 1910 indicates that an architectural competition was held for the design of the Brownsville library. The bulletin indicated that the Atlanta AIA chapter returned an adverse report on the competition, which could indicate that the competition did not comply with AIA’s rules governing such competitions. However, no further details about the competition could be located. Original plans or information about the architect could not be located. Brownsville newspapers from the time, which likely published details about the building and its construction, have not survived.

<sup>18</sup> John O. Bonner, Letter to Mr. R.A. Franks, September 23, 1910. Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

<sup>19</sup> Photograph in Thomason & Associates, City of Brownsville: Historic Properties Survey (2013), 20. Copies of this report are held by the Tennessee Historical Commission and the Brownsville-Haywood County Chamber of Commerce.

<sup>20</sup> “Report of Librarian Mrs. Dabney Sherrill” *States-Graphic*, undated, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library. The date of this report is likely 1914 based on context of the article. Many secondary sources state that the library opened to the public in 1912; this is based on personal memories recorded in 1948 and secondary sources that estimated the opening date as about 1912. The estimation was due to the fact that newspaper articles and documents from the library’s first few years have not survived. The newspaper article with the library’s first annual report has only recently been discovered, but it provides primary source evidence of the library opening on June 3, 1913.

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solved through societal reform, such as making education and culture more accessible. The creation of public libraries was one of the most common methods that civic reformers used to promote societal welfare. Women were often at the forefront of these reform movements, usually acting through civic groups.<sup>21</sup> In Brownsville, women's civic groups were not only the Carnegie Library's major patrons, but were instrumental in its operations and continued existence.

Despite the fact that Carnegie required communities to commit to maintaining the library building, it varied as to whether the city followed through on its pledge (and at the rate that Bertram and Carnegie believed was sufficient). In many cases, the city did fulfill the conditions but the annual pledged amount was insufficient. As a result, many Carnegie libraries lacked adequate funding.<sup>22</sup> The City of Brownsville did not immediately arrange to provide funds for maintenance. The lag in upkeep led the local newspaper editor to denounce the city, arguing that "the city has broken this pledge.... We boast of our culture, and of our desire to have our boys and girls enjoy the best advantages, yet by failing to place good books in this library and failing to furnish the necessary funds to maintain it, we deprive them of one of the greatest means of obtaining culture and refinement." He concluded by arguing that investment in the library was investment in the children and, by extension, society as a whole.<sup>23</sup> It was not until 1918 that the city's Board of Mayor and Aldermen voted to provide \$400 annually for the library, which was short of the \$750 annually that the grant stipulated.<sup>24</sup>

When cities such as Brownsville failed to fulfill the terms of the Carnegie grant, local women's civic groups often voluntarily took on responsibility for the library and its collections.<sup>25</sup> When the library opened in 1913, its entire collection of 300 books was donated by the Brownsville Review Club (a women's literary group), the Twentieth Century Club (a private women's club), and individuals. Thanks to civic groups, the library's collection continued to grow after opening. In the first annual library report (see Figure 4), the librarian reported:

Since [the opening] the librarian has catalogued and put on the shelves thirteen hundred and nine books; this includes all classes from reference books to fiction. Of this number the Review Club has given \$375 worth of new books, \$20 in periodicals and about a hundred other books, not new. The Music Club has given \$35 worth of books on music. The Twentieth Century Club gave \$46 for books; the D.A.R. about \$75 and U.D.C. \$65, all for books. The societies of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal churches have placed the periodicals of these churches respectively on the tables in the reading room. The library has purchased \$75 worth of literature, the rest has been generously donated by friends.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Robyn Muncy, "Women in the Progressive Era," National Park Service: Places where Women Made History, accessed March 22, 2018, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/pwwmh/prog.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> Van Slyck, 22, 34; Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America*, 100.

<sup>23</sup> F.R. Ogilvie, *States-Graphic*, February 18, 1916.

<sup>24</sup> "Carnegie Library Aided by City," *States-Graphic*, January 11, 1918; State of Tennessee Senate, Senate Bill No. 935, 1915, Historical documentation indicates that the city had to wait for the state to pass enabling legislation to allow them to enact a property tax to pay for the library's upkeep. This law appeared to have been passed in 1915, but it was not until 1918 that the city voted to provide annual funding for the library.

<sup>25</sup> Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America*, 40-43;

<sup>26</sup> "Report of Librarian Mrs. Dabney Sherrill," *States-Graphic*, undated. Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

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A few years later, the librarian again stated that although the library was becoming quite popular with townspeople and out-of-town people, “the greatest drawback is lack of funds for books, magazines and literature of all kinds.” She went on to say that the library was not able to keep with up demand, even though individuals and women’s civic groups donated books and money. During 1916, the library loaned 5,475 books, and 2,650 people used the reading room. Besides the support of local people and civic groups, new books were paid for by fines and fees from renting chairs for meetings.<sup>27</sup> The annual Librarian’s reports make it clear that although the Carnegie Library was a public library, its success and continued existence was made possible by the support of the townspeople, particularly the women’s civic groups.

Though the city had begun to pay for the library’s upkeep, civic groups continued to contribute to maintenance activities, such as beautifying the grounds.<sup>28</sup> Civic groups also continued to be a major source of the library’s collection as well as its major patrons.<sup>29</sup> The library’s basement functioned as a meeting room. The Review Club, a local literary women’s group that promoted education, was a frequent patron of the meeting space as was the Brownsville Civic League and the local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.<sup>30</sup> The meeting space was so popular that the librarian often had to publish public notices reminding patrons to schedule meetings ahead of time to avoid conflicts with other groups.<sup>31</sup> The Library also acted as the venue for special events, such as the Civic League’s one-day clinic providing free medical exams for babies. The clinic was part of their Better Babies Campaign, a “nationwide movement in the interest of child welfare, to reduce infant mortality...and to educate the people to the child’s need of fresh air, sunshine and wholesome food.”<sup>32</sup> These special events were part of the groups’ missions to promote societal welfare.

The Carnegie Library provided a means for women to have a societal impact. As a meeting place, it allowed a place for women to participate in civic groups that in turn had a broader impact on the community, particularly in the promotion of societal welfare. The library also provided employment for women, before they even had the right to vote. Similar to public libraries across the United States, the Brownsville Carnegie Library was run by female librarians.<sup>33</sup> From the library’s opening to its closure in the early 1990s, there were thirteen librarians, all were women. The librarians were responsible for managing the library’s day-to-day operations and helping patrons check out books. Some librarians took on additional responsibilities. For example, Libba Claiborne, who was librarian in the late 1950s, wrote a weekly column in the newspaper with the pseudonym “Miss Print” announcing past and future events at the library, as well as new books and

<sup>27</sup> “Librarian’s Report,” *States-Graphic*, March 16, 1917.

<sup>28</sup> “Civic League Department,” *States-Graphic*, May 11, 1917.

<sup>29</sup> “Local News,” *States-Graphic*, June 2, 1916.

<sup>30</sup> “Forrest Chapter, U.D.C.,” *States-Graphic*, January 11, 1918; “Local News,” *States-Graphic*, April 7, 1916; “Local News,” *States-Graphic*, April 28, 1916; “Social and Personal News Notes,” *States-Graphic*, September 7, 1917; “Social and Personal,” *States-Graphic*, October 6, 1916; “Forrest Chapter, U.D.C.,” *States-Graphic*, November 9, 1917; “Review Club,” *States-Graphic*, December 15, 1916; “Local News,” *States-Graphic*, April 2, 1916; “Brownsville Club ‘Tours’ Library,” *The Jackson Sun*, January 24, 1958; Mrs. William R. Miller, “The Golden Anniversary of Our Library, 1910-1960,” Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

<sup>31</sup> “Town and County,” *States-Graphic*, October 11, 1918; “Check Library for Use of Basement,” *States-Graphic*, April 25, 1958.

<sup>32</sup> “The Better Babies Campaign,” *States-Graphic*, May 18, 1917.

<sup>33</sup> Van Slyck, 126, 162-200.

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book club contests for children.<sup>34</sup> In addition, women served on the library board alongside men and therefore had power to influence its mission and operations, as well as to hire the librarians. Among the first female board members were Mrs. Helen Bond, Mrs. W.J. Shaw, Mrs. Ruth Hay, and Mrs. L.T. Bond. Some of these women were also active in the Review Club, which actively supported the library.<sup>35</sup>

Important to note among the Brownsville Carnegie Library's impact within the social history of the city is its equal treatment of African-American patrons. Although the Carnegie Library program was predicated on the idea of "Free to All," most Southern libraries were not free to all due to segregation, the societal and legal practice of separating people by their race and skin color. In some instances, African Americans were not allowed to use the public library at all. In other instances, they could check out books but were not allowed to use the reading room. Larger cities had segregated branches specifically for African American patrons though they often had substandard book collections. For example, Nashville, the State Capital of Tennessee, had a "Negro Branch" funded by a 1912 Carnegie grant. After the building became used for commercial purposes, the city built the Hadley Park Branch as the segregated library for African-American residents.<sup>36</sup>

The Brownsville Carnegie Library was unique among Southern libraries in that it did not appear to have been segregated. No written evidence of segregation policies could be located. African-American Brownsville residents Cynthia Rawls Bond and Sarah Russell, who grew up using the library in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, could not remember having any problems accessing the library, either to check out books or to use the reading room. Pearlle Hess, a former school teacher, did not remember having any issues with access, nor did she ever remember that her students had any problems with access.<sup>37</sup> Unlike many Southern Carnegie Libraries, the Brownsville Carnegie Library appeared to follow the standard of "Free to All."

The Brownsville Carnegie Library thus is significant in social history. It played a central role in local civic activity as a meeting and event space. As a free library, it is representative of the Progressive-era movement of enriching society through culture and education, particularly through its role as a recipient of financial and material donations from local civic groups who sought to promote societal welfare. It provided a means for women to play a larger role in civic affairs and provided access to knowledge for people of all genders and races.

<sup>34</sup> "Library Directors" Report, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library; "Local News," *States-Graphic*, October 12, 1917; "Librarian's Report," *States-Graphic*, March 16, 1917. "Brownsville Club 'Tours' Library," *The Jackson Sun*, January 24, 1958. "At the Library: A Weekly Feature," *States-Graphic*, multiple dates, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library; "Brownsville Carnegie Library Built in 1910," *The Jackson Sun*, July 23, 1936; *The Jackson Sun*, October 22, 1968.

<sup>35</sup> "Report of Librarian Mrs. Dabney Sherril," *States-Graphic*, undated. Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library; Mrs. Leo Haynes, "Brownsville Club Observes 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Library," *The Jackson Sun*, May 15, 1960.

<sup>36</sup> Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America*, 93; Jones, "'What's in a Name?'," 66-76, 180; Cheryl Knott, *Not Free Not For all* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015); "About Hadley Park Branch Library," Nashville Public Library, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://library.nashville.org/locations/hadley-park-branch>. The Carnegie Negro Branch was demolished in the late 1960s. The Hadley Park Branch Library has been determined eligible for the National Register by Tennessee Historical Commission staff.

<sup>37</sup> Mary Ann Sharpe, Telephone Conversation with Rebecca Schmitt, February 15, 2018. Mary Ann Sharpe, Director of the Brownsville Main Street, interviewed Cynthia Rawls Bond, Sarah Russell, and Pearlle Hess on behalf of the nominator on February 15, 2018. Notes from phone conversation on file at the Tennessee Historical Commission.

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### Significance in Education

The Brownsville Carnegie Library is significant in education. It was the community's first public library, and it served the community in that role for almost eighty years. It provided free access to books and knowledge to all community members. In particular, the library focused on the education of children. This is a local representation of a national development in the library field towards the modern library idea that emphasized education of children as well as cooperation with local schools.<sup>38</sup>

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, libraries often prohibited children under twelve years old. Librarians and institutional trustees distrusted the ability of children to handle the books carefully and disapproved of noise that children may bring into the library. The modern library idea challenged these attitudes as it emphasized service to children as part of the core educational purpose of libraries. As the modern library idea spread towards the end of the century, some libraries began to create separate areas for children. Most commonly referred to as children's rooms, these areas consolidated materials for young readers into a physical space that separated children from adults, thereby minimizing the possibility that the activities of children would irritate adult patrons.<sup>39</sup>

Bertram included a children's room in most of his recommended plans for libraries. The children's room was separated from the adult reading room by the foyer or partition walls. The inclusion of a children's area in the plans thereby instilled the modern library idea into the physical structure of the building. While communities ultimately had leverage to decide final room use after construction was complete, many Carnegie libraries did include children's reading rooms. As a result, "Carnegie Libraries provided the first library experience for perhaps tens of thousands of young readers in the first two decades of the twentieth century."<sup>40</sup> This was certainly true in Brownsville, Tennessee.

Photographs indicate that the children's area was in one or both of the main-level north rooms in the Brownsville Carnegie Library (see Figures 5, 6, and 7). The area was designed to accommodate children. The tables and chairs were child-sized. The walls were brightly painted and featured murals of popular story and cartoon characters such as the Cat in the Hat and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.<sup>41</sup> These murals were designed to make the library more inviting and engaging for children. During the 1960 Christmas season, temporary decorations of a "lollipop tree, with the theme 'Visions of Sugar Plums'" decorated the children's room.<sup>42</sup>

In contrast to earlier libraries that expressly prohibited children, the Brownsville Carnegie Library deliberately welcomed children by hosting children's educational programming. A story hour was held every week on Saturday, led by a member of the Review Club. Advertisements in the local *States-Graphic*

<sup>38</sup> Van Slyck, 25-27, 201-210

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 201-202.

<sup>41</sup> Donna Johnson, "Years take toll on Library: Haywood Faced with Rebuilding or Expansion," *The Jackson Sun*, April 24, 1990; Alex Claiborne, "Brownsville-Haywood County Library Among Historical Libraries," *States-Graphic*, April 19, 1984

<sup>42</sup> *The Jackson Sun*, December 4, 1960.

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newspaper explicitly welcomed all children less than sixteen years old.<sup>43</sup> The Library often cooperated with local schools to offer programs for children. For example, during National Library Week in 1959, the library sponsored a poster contest. Students from the local schools made posters that were displayed at the library. The students who made the best posters received prizes. A book was also given away to an adult and a child, whose names were selected during a random drawing.<sup>44</sup> Another year, the library sponsored a contest that awarded prizes to the students who read the most books.<sup>45</sup>

The library's emphasis on children made a strong impression on the townspeople. One parent wrote into the local newspaper and stated her pride in the Carnegie Library. She said that her children loved Story Hours and that they "get a particular kick out of the tables and chairs, and the whole atmosphere is so conducive to comfort and leisurely picking out of books." She went on to say that the librarians, Miss Ethel and Libba, "are perfect for their jobs, too. They have such a patient way with the children – and are efficient."<sup>46</sup>

Many people distinctly remember the impact the Carnegie Library had on their lives as children. Spence Dupree, an outdoorsman and writer for the *Jackson Sun*, recounted that his interest in hunting and the outdoors began when he was a teenager "when Pop brought a book home from the Carnegie Library in Brownsville. It was *Heart of the Hunter* by Edison Marshal." He said that the book opened up a whole new world for him. Beyond just describing hunting in faraway lands, it taught him that "hunting is a privilege and a responsibility, not a right." He recounted that the book instilled an excitement within him that he never got over, which set him on the course to becoming an avid outdoorsman and writer. He finished his remembrance by recommending that young readers go to the public library to read some of the books that he had enjoyed and which might give them the same excitement and inspiration.<sup>47</sup>

Other residents also fondly remember the role the Carnegie library played during their childhood. One Brownsville resident remembered that there was "something majestic about going up those steps.... like entering another world." Another resident said, "Oh how I loved going to the library!! I can still remember the smell of it...it was a magical place to me!!" A third resident remembered sliding down the hill outside of the library on cardboard boxes before going in to check out books.<sup>48</sup>

In 1956, the United States Congress passed the Library Services Act, which authorized an appropriation to extend and improve library services to rural areas. The appropriation allowed the Tennessee State Library

<sup>43</sup> "Story Telling Hour," *States-Graphic*, February 11, 1916; "Local News," *States-Graphic*, November 16, 1917; "Children's Story Hour," *States-Graphic*, March 16, 1917; "Children's Story House," *States-Graphic*, March 16, 1917; "Local News," *States-Graphic*, March 24, 1916; "Local News," *States-Graphic*, April 6, 1917; "Social and Personal," *States-Graphic*, April 27, 1917; "Local News," *States-Graphic*, September 19, 1916; "Local News," *States-Graphic*, October 27, 1916;

<sup>44</sup> "Poster Contest Winners Named for Library Week," *States-Graphic*, April 17, 1959; "A Weekly Feature," *States-Graphic*, undated, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library; "At the Library: A Weekly Feature," *States-Graphic*, April 24, 1959, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

<sup>45</sup> Romona Stevenson, "Library Corner," *States-Graphic*, undated, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

<sup>46</sup> "Every time I Enter Our Library," undated, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library

<sup>47</sup> Spence Dupree, "Books Started Fire Flickering for Young Hunter," *The Jackson Sun*, January 26, 1992.

<sup>48</sup> Various Authors, Comments on a Facebook post about the Brownsville Carnegie Library, February 22, 2018. Transcripts of the facebook posts are on file at the Tennessee Historical Commission.



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to invite local libraries to apply to join regional library systems for a two-year demonstration period. During this period, the local library would receive technical assistance from the State to organize the library and its collections to better serve its patrons. In 1957, the Brownsville Carnegie Library joined the Shiloh Regional Library Group and was renamed the Brownsville-Haywood County Library. By joining the regional library system, Brownsville residents gained access to thousands of more books that could be obtained from other libraries in the system, as well as mobile book stations.<sup>49</sup> The Carnegie Library's existing collection was also catalogued according to the Dewey Decimal System, which made it easier for patrons to find books on their own rather than having to rely on the librarian.<sup>50</sup> The institutional changes therefore represent the library's continued commitment to providing free access to knowledge and education.

At the same time as the reorganization, the library underwent a renovation. The electrical wiring was replaced and upgraded. The black and white tile floor was installed in the foyer. The roof was replaced. Additional murals of story book characters were painted in the Children's Room. According to newspaper accounts, it had become "one of the most modern [libraries] in West Tennessee." Similar to in earlier decades, civic groups played a role in the library's continued existence. Local civic groups donated furnishings, money, and labor to assemble new custom-built bookshelves and make repairs. The library reopened on January 21, 1958 with an open house.<sup>51</sup>

The people of Brownsville quickly took advantage of the increased access to books. During the 1958-1959 fiscal year, the Brownsville library circulated 16,459 books of the total 54,661 books available from the Shiloh Regional System.<sup>52</sup> The librarians frequently announced arrivals of new books in the local and regional newspapers.<sup>53</sup> In 1967, the Brownsville-Haywood County Library was transferred to the Forked Deer Region of the Regional Library System.<sup>54</sup>

In 1977, the building received cosmetic upgrades, including new carpeting and paint. More murals were also painted on the walls. It is unclear what the murals depicted, but it is likely that at least some of them were in the children's room depicting story book characters.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>49</sup> "Library Board Host at Dinner on Friday Night," *States-Graphic*, January 2, 1959. Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library; "Shiloh Regional Service Spurs Area Library Growth," *The Jackson Sun*, April 21, 1966; "The Story of the Services of the Tennessee Regional Library System: Opportunity on Wheels," *States-Graphic*, July 3, 1959;

<sup>50</sup> Undated Library Report, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library; Mrs. William R. Miller, "The Golden Anniversary of Our Library, 1910-1960," Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

<sup>51</sup> Undated Library Report, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library. Minnie McRae Powell, "Brownsville Opens Remodeled Library," *The Jackson Sun*, January 21, 1958; "The Story of the Services of the Tennessee Regional Library System: Opportunity on Wheels," *States-Graphic*, July 3, 1959; "Open House" At the Library," *States-Graphic*, January 17, 1958; George Jackson, "Board Announces Open House At Carnegie Library January 21<sup>st</sup>," *States-Graphic*, January 17, 1958; "Library Shows New Face Tuesday," *States-Graphic*, January 24, 1958; Paul Sims, "Good Reading," *States-Graphic*, 1957, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library; Alex Claiborne, "Brownsville-Haywood County Library Among Historical Libraries," *States-Graphic*, April 19, 1984

<sup>52</sup> "Haywood Library Leads Shiloh Region For Year," *States-Graphic*, September 11, 1959.

<sup>53</sup> "Brownsville Library Adds New Books," *The Jackson Sun*, October 25, 1957; "Brownsville Library Has Sports Books," *The Jackson Sun*, November 26, 1957; "At the Library: A Weekly Feature," *States-Graphic*, February 5, 1960.

<sup>54</sup> Edwin S. Gleaves and Charles A. Sherrill, "Brownsville: Pioneer Library City," Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

<sup>55</sup> "Brownsville-Haywood County Library Board," *The Jackson Sun*, October 26, 1977.

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### Rehabilitation to the Chamber of Commerce

By the early 1990s, the Carnegie Library could no longer meet the needs of the community, primarily because of limited space. The building had less than 2,000 square feet of space to serve the city's population, which had reached more than 10,000 people.<sup>56</sup> It was estimated that a new building with between 6,000 and 12,000 square feet would be necessary to meet the community's needs. The building was also in need of renovations as the bricks were cracked and falling, and there had been water leaks into the basement since it was built in 1910. Dick Ross, owner of Ross Manufacturing Company just outside of Brownsville, donated \$250,000 of the \$550,000 needed to build a new library at a site east of the courthouse square. His only condition for his donation was that the new library be named after his late wife, Elma Ross. The newly constructed Elma Ross Public Library opened on May 2, 1992.<sup>57</sup>

The Carnegie Library sat vacant until local people, led by Mayor Jimmy Halbrook, decided to rehabilitate it for a new use.<sup>58</sup> In 1993, the State appropriated \$175,000 to renovate the former library.<sup>59</sup> This money was combined with \$15,000 from county and city funds and \$40,000 from private donations and fundraisers to convert the Carnegie Library into the Brownsville-Haywood County Chamber of Commerce. Brownsville-based D.C. Construction Company handled the construction. Most of the basement windows were bricked in during these renovations to correct the long-standing issues with water infiltration.<sup>60</sup> Though the bricking of the windows was a modification, this was done to ensure the long-term stability of the building and to fix a structural deficiency that was present since its construction.<sup>61</sup> It is likely that the accessibility ramp at the rear of the building was also built during these renovations as the Americans with Disabilities Act had recently been enacted which required public buildings to be accessible to people of all physical abilities.

The building reopened as the Chamber of Commerce in 1994. Today, it also houses the offices of the Brownsville Main Street Program. The basement is used for civic events and meetings, as it was historically.<sup>62</sup> The building continues to serve a central role in the community of Brownsville. Its historical role as a center of civic activity and promotion of societal welfare by providing free access to books and knowledge with emphasis on children's education makes it worthy of inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

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<sup>56</sup> United States Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics Tennessee*, accessed March 12, 2018, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1990/cp-1/cp-1-44.pdf>.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Clouse, "86-year-old Businessman Works Because It's Fun," *The Jackson Sun*, July 20, 1992; Patsy J. Thomas, "Library Project Succeeds: Gifts, Public Funding Get Construction Going," *The Jackson Sun*, January 2, 1991; Donna Johnson, "Years take toll on library: Haywood Faced with rebuilding or expansion," *The Jackson Sun*, April 24, 1990. Dedication Invitation and Napkin, Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

<sup>58</sup> Julie Dodson, "Former Brownsville Mayor, 74, Dies," *The Jackson Sun*, September 2, 2004.

<sup>59</sup> "Local Projects Added to Budget," *The Jackson Sun*, May 19, 1993; "Pork Barrel Holds \$15 million for State Legislators' Project," *The Jackson Sun*, May 21, 1993.

<sup>60</sup> "Librarian's Report," *States-Graphic*, March 16, 1917; Mrs. William R. Miller, "The Golden Anniversary of Our Library, 1910-1960," Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

<sup>61</sup> Erick Johnson, "Carnegie's New Look, Tenant," *The Jackson Sun*, June 1, 1994; "Landmark and Legacy: The Brownsville-Haywood County Library," *Brownsville States-Graphic*, June 7, 1990.

<sup>62</sup> "Contributions taken for further renovations," *The Jackson Sun*, January 7, 1994; Erick Johnson, "Carnegie's New Look, Tenant," *The Jackson Sun*, June 1, 1994.

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<b>Previous documentation on file (NPS):</b>		<b>Primary location of additional data:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	State Historic Preservation Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously listed in the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other State agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously determined eligible by the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	designated a National Historic Landmark	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local government
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	<input type="checkbox"/>	University
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	Name of repository: Elma Ross Public Library	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):			



Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Haywood County, TN  
County and State

---

**10. Geographical Data**

---

**Acreage of Property** Less than one **USGS Quadrangle** Brownsville 422-SE

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84:

1. Latitude: 35.594064 Longitude: -89.263638

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Carnegie Library property is bounded to the south by West Main Street and to the west by Wilson Avenue. It is bounded to the north by a parking lot. It is bounded to the east by its legal property line and a commercial building. These boundaries are shown on the accompanying tax maps for the property's lot, Parcel Number 075F F 013.00.

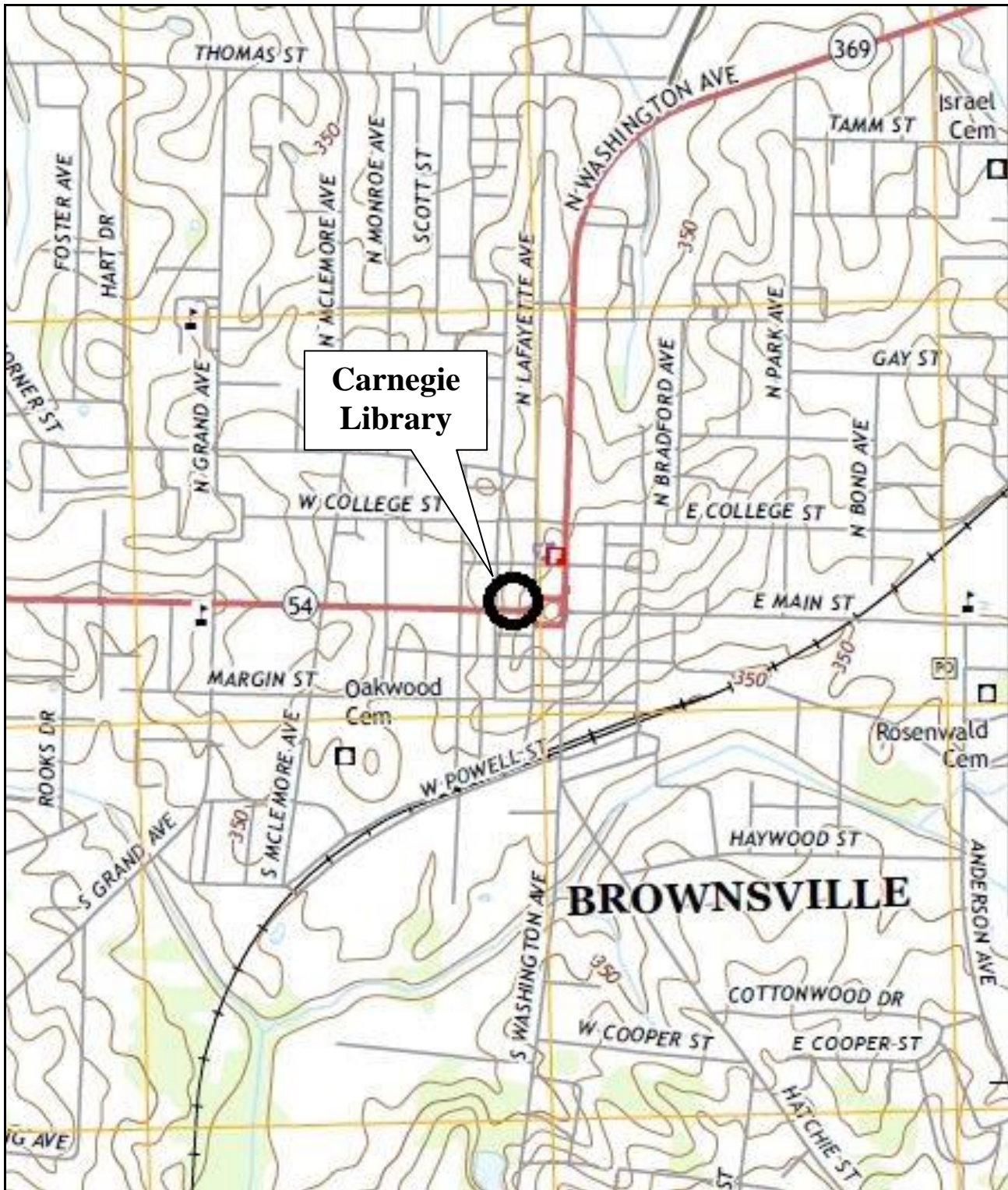
**Boundary Justification**

These boundaries are the same as the property's historic and current legal boundaries. The boundaries encompass the entire historic resource and modern modifications, such as its rear accessibility ramp.

Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Haywood County, TN  
County and State

USGS Map, Brownsville 422-SE Quadrangle, with Carnegie Library property circled



Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

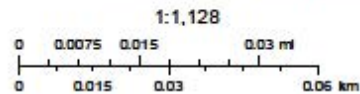
Haywood County, TN  
County and State

Haywood County Tax Map showing the boundaries of the Carnegie Library Property

Haywood County - Parcel: 075F F 013.00



Date: January 24, 2018  
County: Haywood  
Owner: BROWNSVILLE LIBRARY  
Address: MAIN ST 121 W  
Parcel Number: 075F F 013.00  
Deeded Acreage: 0  
Calculated Acreage: 0  
Date of Imagery: 2012



TN Comptroller - OLG  
Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, NGCC, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

The property lines are compiled from information maintained by your local county Assessor's office but are not conclusive evidence of property ownership in any court of law.



Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Haywood County, TN  
County and State

---

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

Name Rebecca Schmitt

Organization Tennessee Historical Commission

Street & Number 2941 Lebanon Pike Date March 26, 2018

City or Town Nashville Telephone (615) 770-1086

E-mail [Rebecca.Schmitt@tn.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Schmitt@tn.gov) State TN Zip Code 37214

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Haywood County, TN  
County and State

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Carnegie Library  
City or Vicinity: Brownsville  
County: Haywood State: TN  
Photographer: Holly Barnett, unless noted.  
Date Photographed: February 2, 2018, unless noted.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 29. Façade, Lot, and Setting. Photographer facing north
- 2 of 29. Façade. Photographer facing north.
- 3 of 29. Oblique View of Façade and East Elevation. Photographer facing northwest.
- 4 of 29 Close-up of Oblique View of Façade and East Elevation. Photographer facing northwest.
- 5 of 29 East Elevation. Photographer facing northwest.
- 6 of 29 Oblique View of East Elevation and Eastern Section of North Elevation. Photographer facing southwest.
- 7 of 29 North Elevation. Photographer facing South.
- 8 of 29 North Elevation, East Section. Photographer facing Southwest.
- 9 of 29 North Elevation, Central Section. Photographer facing Southwest.
- 10 of 29 Window Wells in front of the Central Section of the North Elevation. Photographer facing west.
- 11 of 29 Basement Window on the North Elevation, Central Section. Photographer facing south.
- 12 of 29 North Elevation, West Section, featuring rear entrance and ramp. Photographer facing south.
- 13 of 29 North Elevation, West Section, Rear Entrances in Basement and on First Level. Photographer facing south.
- 14 of 29 Accessibility Ramp on North Elevation. Photographer facing west.
- 15 of 29 Oblique View of North and West Elevations. Photographer facing southeast.
- 16 of 29 West Elevation. Photographer facing east.

Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

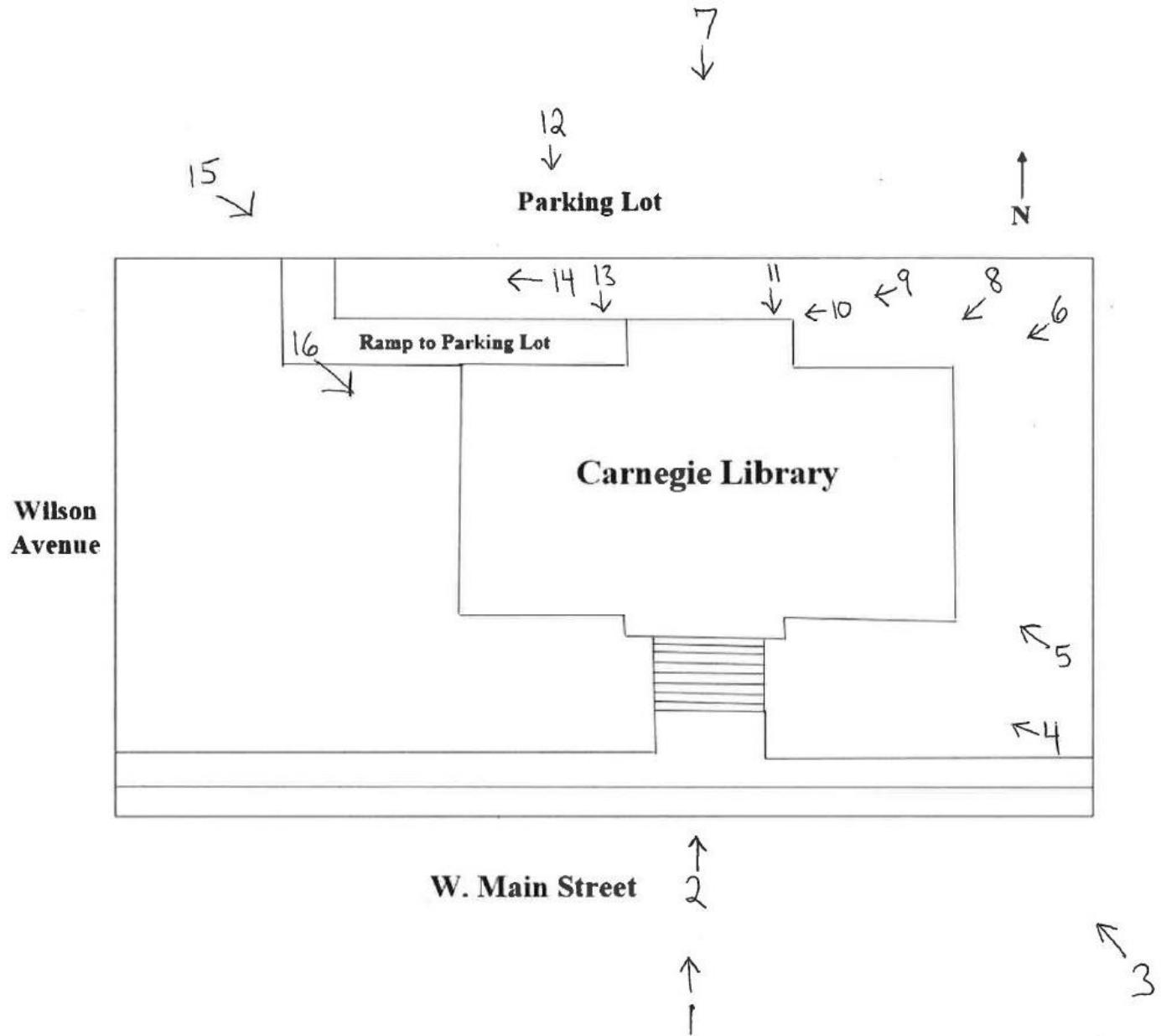
Haywood County, TN  
County and State

- 
- 17 of 29 Front door and Light Fixture in Entry Foyer. Photographer facing south.
- 18 of 29 Entry Foyer looking towards the East Room. Photographer facing east.
- 19 of 29 Entry Foyer looking towards the West Room. Photographer facing west.
- 20 of 29 Staircase to basement, as seen from main level. Photographer facing southwest.
- 21 of 29 Trim Details in the Foyer. Photographer facing northwest.
- 22 of 29 Decorative Details and Light Fixture in Foyer. Photographer facing south.
- 23 of 29 West Room. Photographer facing north.
- 24 of 29 East Room. Photographer facing south. Photo taken March 15, 2018 by Mary Ann Sharpe
- 25 of 29 East Room. Photographer facing north. Photo taken March 15, 2018 by Mary Ann Sharpe
- 26 of 29 Fireplace in East Room. Opening has been covered but is intact. Photographer facing northeast.
- 27 of 29 Office in one of the two rooms north of the foyer. Picture is representative of both rooms. Photographer facing north.
- 28 of 29 Basement Meeting Space. Photographer facing east.
- 29 of 29 Basement Meeting Space. Photographer facing west.

Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Haywood County, TN  
County and State

**Site Plan with Photos Keyed**  
Not to Scale

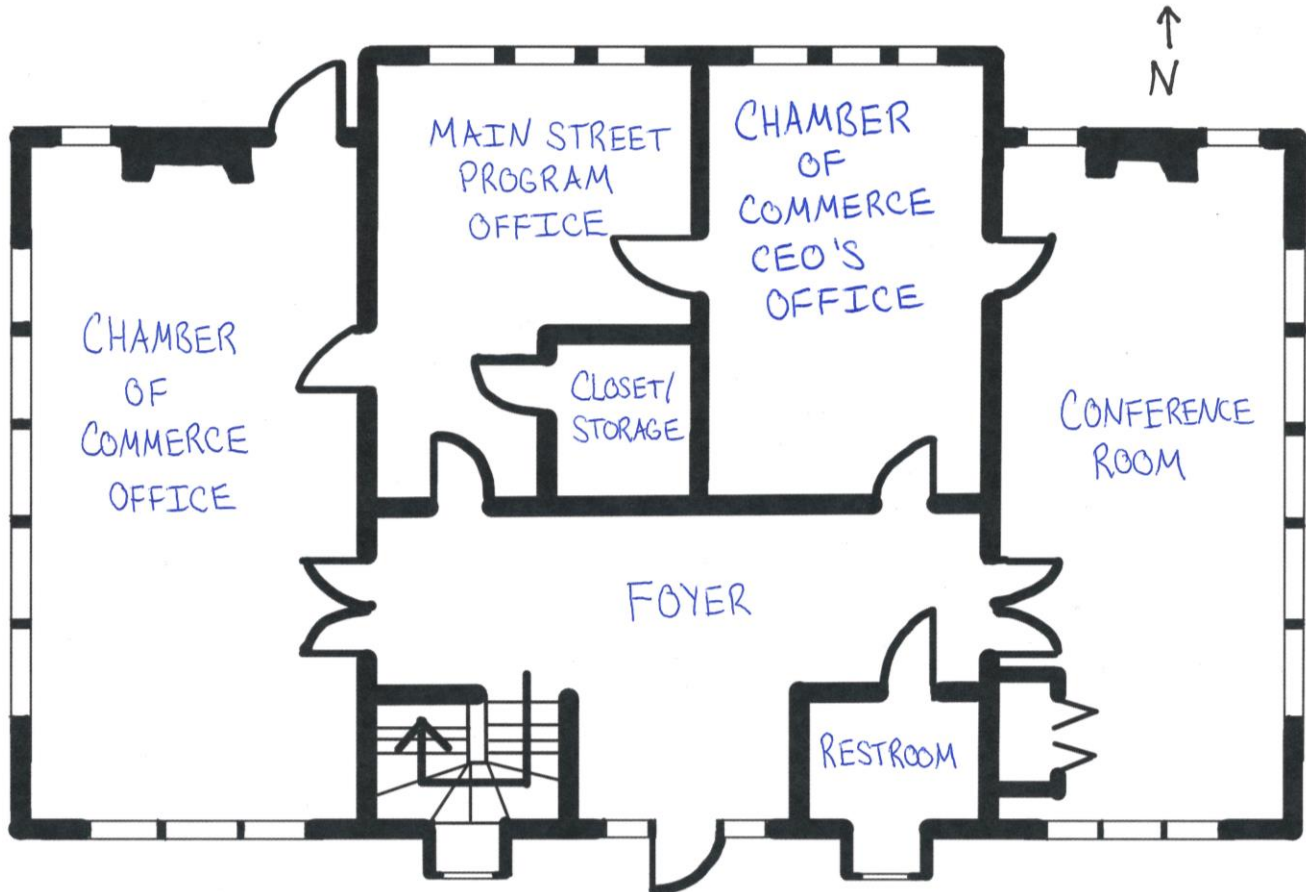




Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Haywood County, TN  
County and State

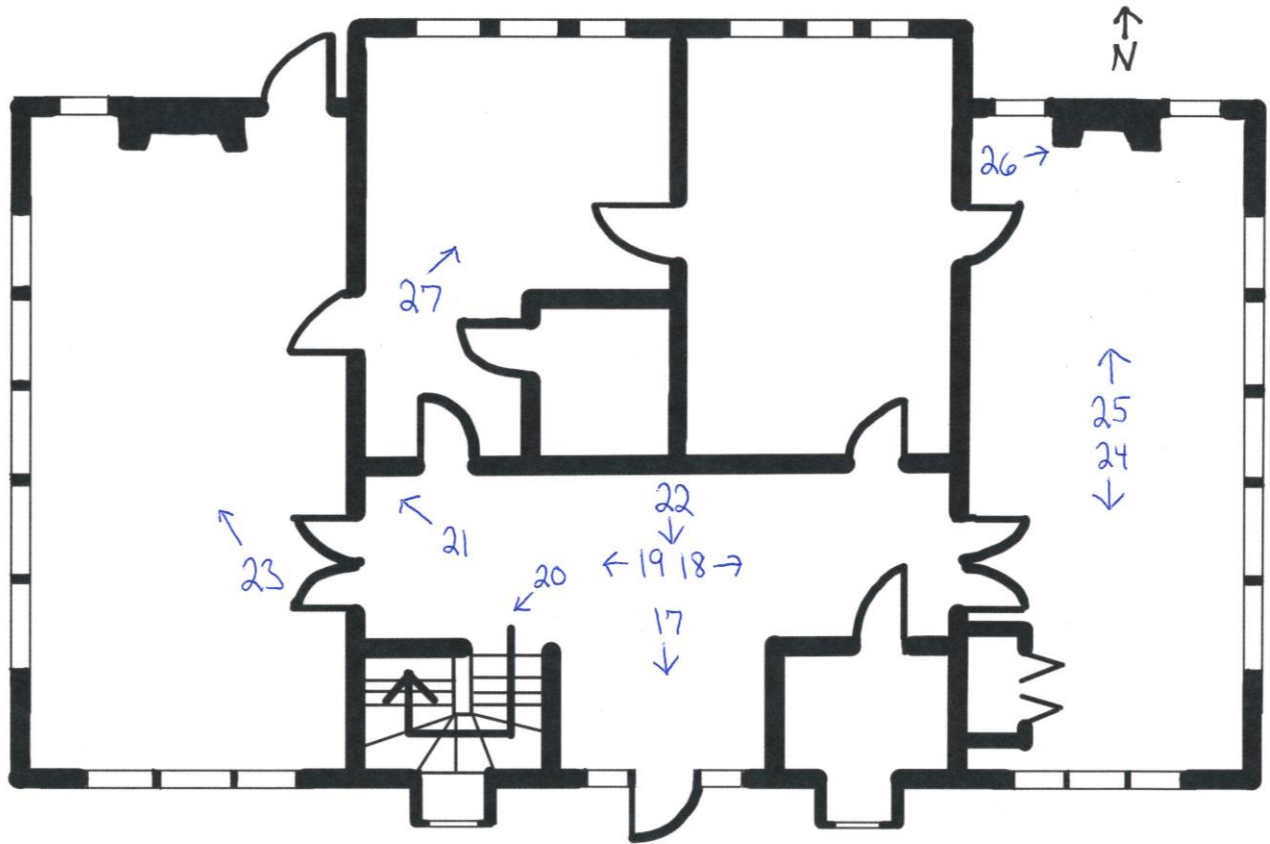
First/Main Level Floor Plan with Rooms Labelled by Current Use  
Not to Scale



Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Haywood County, TN  
County and State

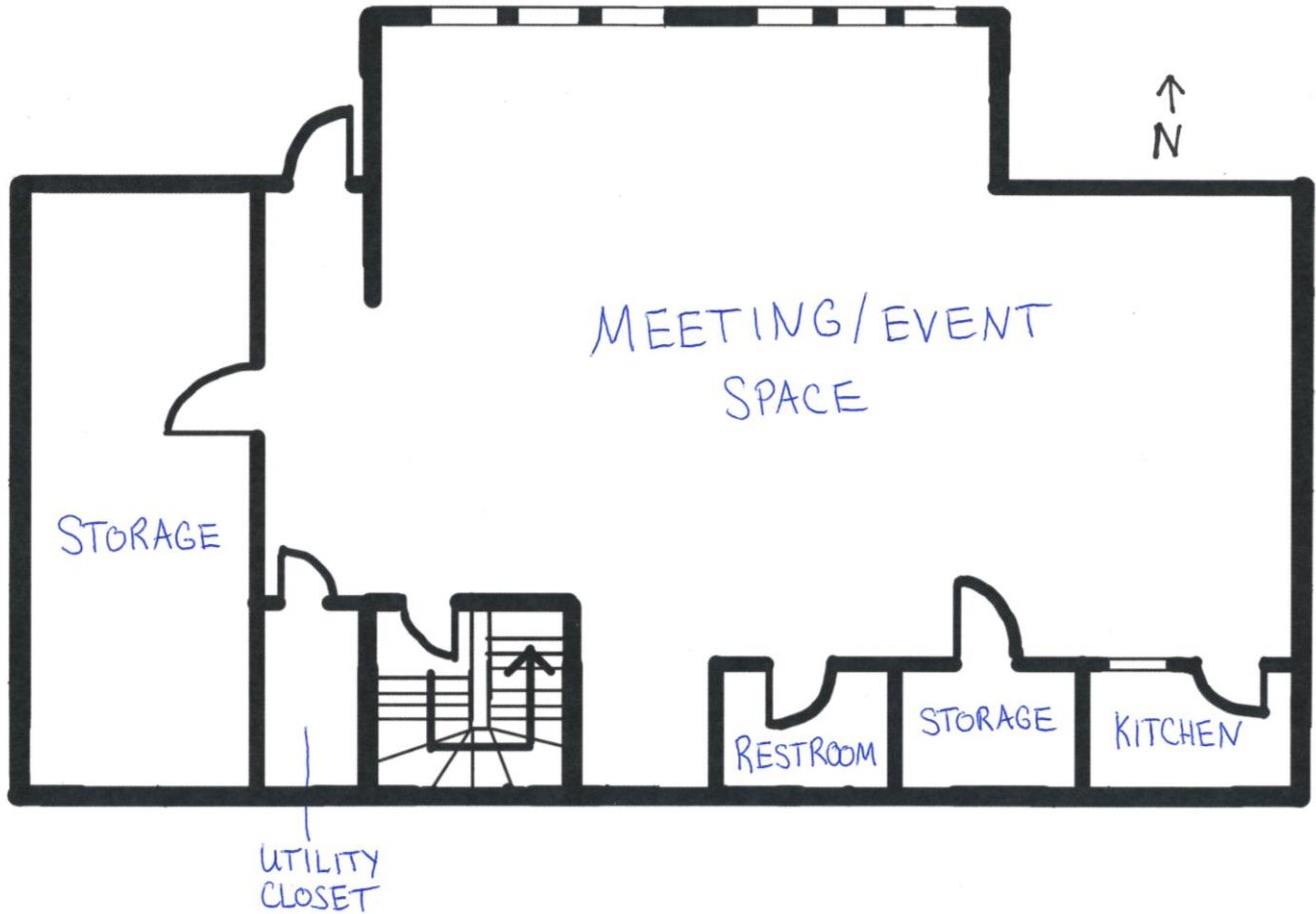
**First/Main Level Floor Plan with Photos Keyed**  
Not to Scale



Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Haywood County, TN  
County and State

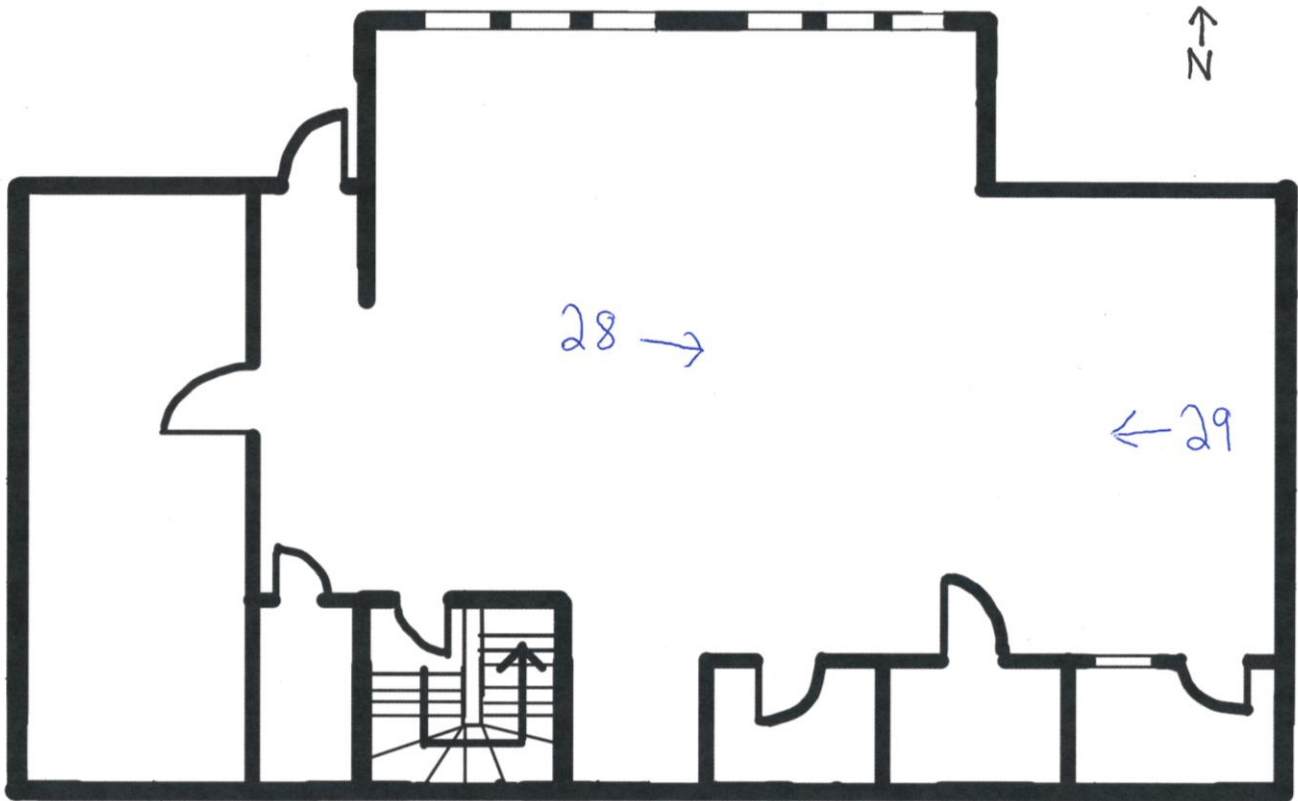
Basement Floor Plan with Rooms Labelled by Current Use  
Not to Scale



Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Haywood County, TN  
County and State

**Basement Floor Plan with Photos Keyed**  
Not to Scale



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Carnegie Library
Name of Property
Haywood County, TN
County and State
Historic Resources of Brownsville, 1823-1970
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 34

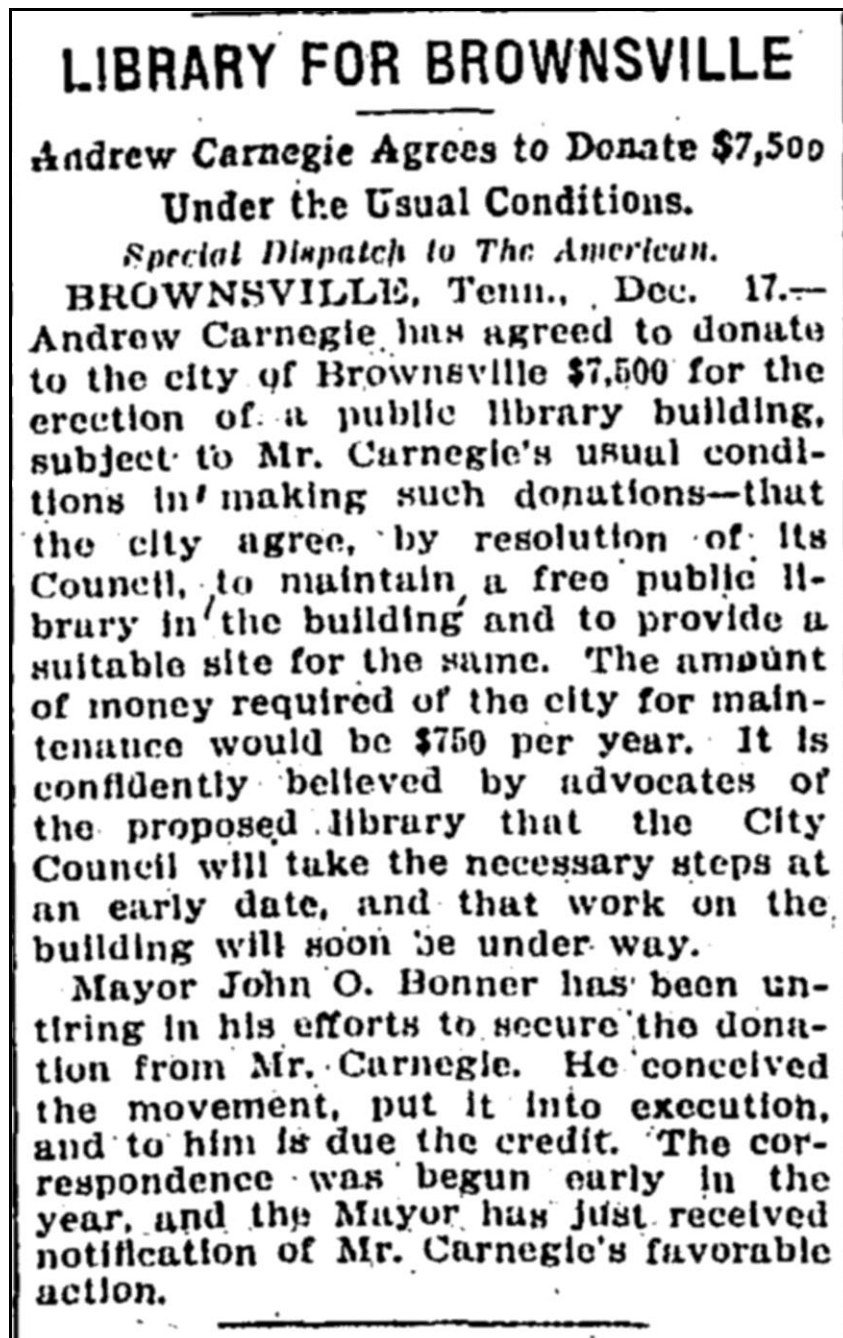


Figure 1: Newspaper Announcement of the Carnegie grant for a Public Library in Brownsville, Tennessee. Printed in the *The Tennessean*, December 18, 1909.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Carnegie Library
----- Name of Property
Haywood County, TN
----- County and State
Historic Resources of Brownsville, 1823-1970
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 35

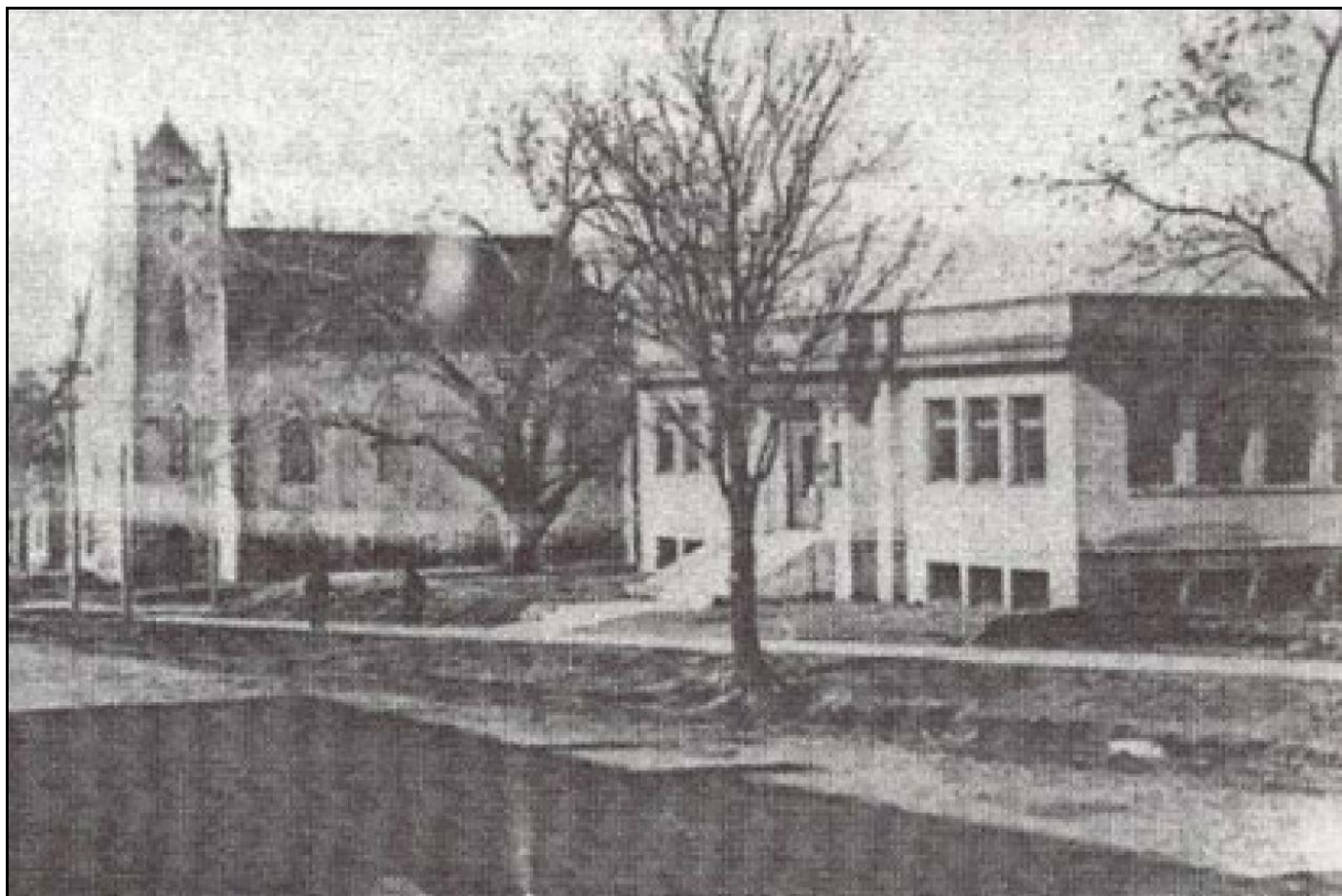


Figure 2: Earliest Known Photograph of the Brownsville Carnegie Library, 1911. From Thomason & Associates, *City of Brownsville: Historic Properties Survey* (2013), 20.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Carnegie Library
----- Name of Property
Haywood County, TN
----- County and State
Historic Resources of Brownsville, 1823-1970
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 36



Figure 3: Postcard of the Carnegie Library, Brownsville, Tennessee, 1929.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Haywood County, TN

County and State

Historic Resources of Brownsville, 1823-1970

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 37

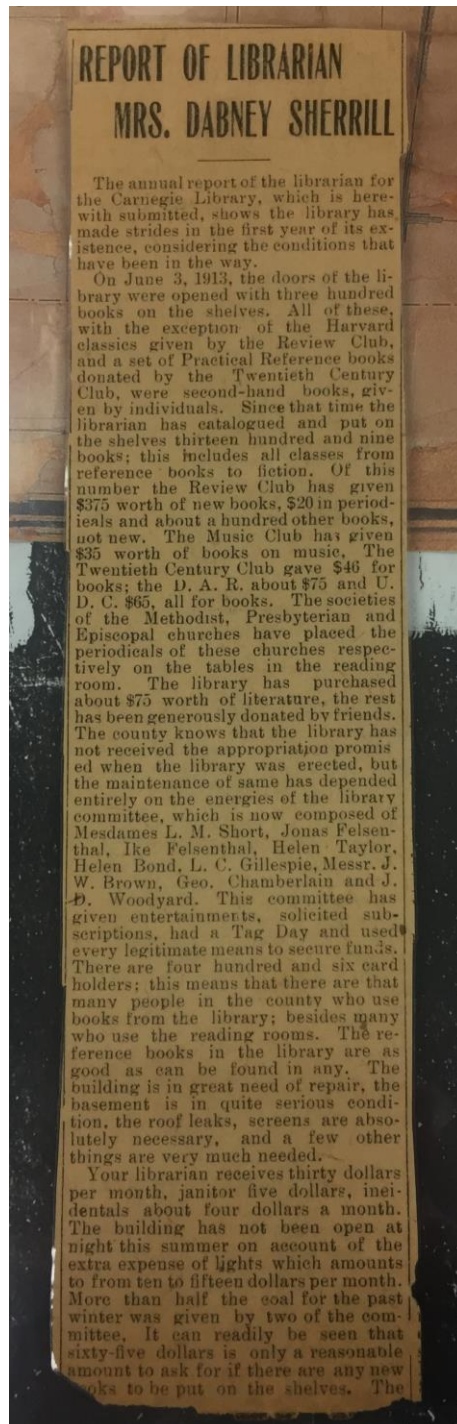


Figure 4: First Annual Report of the Brownsville Carnegie Library showing the contributions of civic groups, as well as the Library's Opening Date. From Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Haywood County, TN

County and State

Historic Resources of Brownsville, 1823-1970

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 38



Figure 5: Photo from *Jackson Sun*, February 23, 1958, showing the furniture and decorations in the Children's Area of the Carnegie Library. A copy of the photograph is also held in the Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Haywood County, TN

County and State

Historic Resources of Brownsville, 1823-1970

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 39



Figure 6: Photograph taken April 22, 1965 showing the Children's Reading Room, including a mural of story book characters, as well as the furniture and shelving designed for children's use. Also included is a shopping cart that children could use to carry books that they wished to check out from the shelves to the librarian's desk. Photo from the Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Carnegie Library
----- Name of Property
Haywood County, TN
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Historic Resources of Brownsville, 1823-1970
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 40



Figure 7: Photograph showing an example of the Murals in the Children's Room of the Carnegie Library.  
From *The Jackson Sun*, April 24, 1990.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Carnegie Library
----- Name of Property
Haywood County, TN
----- County and State
Historic Resources of Brownsville, 1823-1970
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 41



Figure 8: Photograph showing the foyer after the 1957-1958 renovations. With the exception of different paint on the walls and trim, the foyer has this same physical appearance today.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Carnegie Library
----- Name of Property
Haywood County, TN
----- County and State
Historic Resources of Brownsville, 1823-1970
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 42



Figure 9: Photograph of the East Room after the 1957-1958 renovations. From Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Carnegie Library
----- Name of Property
Haywood County, TN
----- County and State
Historic Resources of Brownsville, 1823-1970
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 43



Figure 10: Photograph of the west room after the 1957-1958 renovations. From the Carnegie Library Vertical File, Elma Ross Public Library.



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Jackson Howell

13200

TAMM



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
BUILT IN 1921  
BY THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON  
D. C. AS A MEMORIAL TO  
THE CITY OF WASHINGTON  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
BUILT IN 1921  
BY THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON  
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PARKING  
ONLY  
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM





















Hatchie Chamber of Commerce

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Chamber of Commerce

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Community  
*Chamber of Commerce*  
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MONDAY - FRIDAY  
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PUBLIC  
RESTROOMS

EXCHANGE CLUB MEETS  
1ST & 3RD WEDNESDAY  
WELCOME  
TO THE  
*Hatchie  
Room*  
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The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966:  
Preserving the Department of Economic Cultural Heritage for All  
The Heritage Foundation  
COMMUNITY  
4  
TENNESSEE  
HERITAGE





Memories  
Staircase







EXIT

















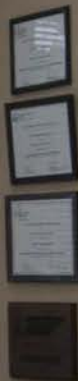
St. John's Church  
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1000 St. John's Church

St. John's Church  
1000 St. John's Church  
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1000 St. John's Church



MAIN STREET  
Brownsville

MEMBER  
The CHAMBER







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BROWNSY

Chamber of Commerce



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WALL OF FAME





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 6/18/2018      Date of Pending List: 7/9/2018      Date of 16th Day: 7/24/2018      Date of 45th Day: 8/2/2018      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLG  |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      7/26/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

# CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW

CLG: BROWNSVILLE  
PROPERTY: CARNEGIE LIBRARY  
ADDRESS: 121 W MAIN STREET

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION EVALUATION

NAME OF COMMISSION: *Historic Zoning Commission*

DATE OF MEETING: *4/19/18*

HOW WAS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED OF THE MEETING? *Local newspaper / standing meeting notice*

ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

### REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY OR NON-ELIGIBILITY:

*The Historic Zoning Commission voted unanimously to nominate the Carnegie Library for the National Register of Historic Places.*

SIGNATURE: *Jean Carnes*

TITLE: *Chairperson*

DATE: *4-19-18*

## THC STAFF EVALUATION

ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

### REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY OR NON-ELIGIBILITY:

The Carnegie Library is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local historical significance within the community of Brownsville, Tennessee. Within the area of Education, the Carnegie Library is a local representation of the Progressive-era national trend of establishing free public libraries, as well as the national development in the library field of focusing on children's education. The library is significant within the area of Social History for its role as the community's main meeting space for civic groups, particularly women's civic groups. The library is a physical representation of the impact of these civic groups, as they provided the majority of the library's funding for books, other educational materials, furnishings, and physical upkeep. The property also represents the growing role of women in civic affairs, both through the participation of women's civic groups and the employment of women as the librarians and on the library's board. The Carnegie Library's period of significance begins with its construction in 1910 and ends in 1968, which encompasses the majority of the library's productive years, including its transition from a local library to participation in Tennessee's regional library system, which expanded its patrons' access to books and knowledge. The building retains its integrity as shown by its original interior library plan and few exterior modifications that do not diminish the overall design and feeling of the building.

SIGNATURE: *Rebecca Schmitt*

TITLE: Historic Preservation & National Register Specialist

DATE: **March 27, 2018**

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN BEFORE: **May 14, 2018**

RETURN FORM TO:

REBECCA SCHMITT  
TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
2941 LEBANON PIKE  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0442  
[REBECCA.SCHMITT@TN.GOV](mailto:REBECCA.SCHMITT@TN.GOV)

Main Street Brownsville  
Mary Ann Sharpe, Executive Director  
121 West Main Street  
Brownsville, Tennessee

May 2, 2018

Rebecca Schmitt, Historic Preservation & National Register Specialist  
Tennessee Historical Commission  
2941 Lebanon Pike  
Nashville, Tennessee 37214

Ms. Schmitt,

I understand that the Andrew Carnegie Library located at 121 West Main Street, Brownsville, Tennessee is being nominated for the National Register of Historic Places and I wish to express my strong support of this nomination as it makes its way before the Tennessee Historical Commission.

The Carnegie Library has played a significant role within the community since its construction in 1910. It was originally established as a free public library which served as a supplementary educational source for all of the local citizens. The library also represents the impact of civic groups and the growing role of women within the community. Currently the building serves as the Brownsville Haywood County Chamber of Commerce and continues to host educational sessions, civic events and meetings on a monthly basis.

The building has retained its original interior library plan as well as its exterior façade appearance. Preservation plays a significant role in our community and it is with great pleasure I send this letter of support for the nomination of the Andrew Carnegie Library to the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Ann Sharpe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Mary Ann Sharpe





**Brownsville/Haywood County**

# Chamber of Commerce

121 West Main Street • Brownsville, TN 38012 - 2552

(731) 772-2193 • (731) 772-2195 fax

Thursday, May 03, 2018

Rebecca Schmitt  
Historical Preservation & National Register Specialist  
Tennessee Historical Commission  
2941 Lebanon Pike  
Nashville, Tennessee 37214

Dear Ms. Schmitt:

It is with pleasure that I am writing to you after I found out that our Carnegie Building has been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places, and I wish to express the Board's and my strong support of the nomination as it makes its way to the State Historical Commission.

Our building has played a vital role in the history of Haywood County since Mr. Carnegie made possible its construction in 1910. It was the county's free public library that served as an additional education resource for citizens of this community. Its rich history of providing books and a meeting place of civic groups and the role it played is impossible to replace in offering the men and women of Haywood County an escape into worlds unknown through the words on its shelves. It also served as one of the regions first children's reading facilities, something we're most proud of.

The building currently serves as the economic center of Haywood County, housing the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Brownsville, Vision Haywood, Brownsville Haywood County Industrial Board and the Haywood County Joint Economic and Community Development Board. It hosts the Exchange Club as a permanent home, and provides meeting space for city and county community organizational events, as well as its own membership.

The building has maintained much of the original floor plan with some modern updates, but its exterior façade still reflects its original design. Preservation of our historic district and buildings is very important to the citizens of Haywood County, and again, on behalf of everyone at the Chamber and its board and affiliates, we send this letter of support for the nomination of the original Andrew Carnegie Library to the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Steve Hilton  
President and Chief Executive Officer



**Mission Statement:**

*To unite, guide, support and speak for business, industry, agriculture and quality of life issues of the people of Haywood County by sponsoring programs and activities which stimulate economic growth, promote civic pride and encourage community involvement.*

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

[www.bhcchamber.org](http://www.bhcchamber.org) ■ [info@bhcchamber.org](mailto:info@bhcchamber.org)





**TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
2941 LEBANON PIKE  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37214  
OFFICE: (615) 532-1550  
E-mail: [Claudette.Stager@tn.gov](mailto:Claudette.Stager@tn.gov)  
(615) 770-1089



June 7, 2018

J. Paul Loether  
Deputy Keeper and Chief,  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20240

*National Register Nomination*

- *Brownsville Carnegie Library, Haywood County, Tennessee*

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct nomination for listing of the *Brownsville Carnegie Library* to the National Register of Historic Places. We received CLG comments and two comments from the public in support of the *Brownsville Carnegie Library* nomination.

If you have any questions or if more information is needed, please contact Rebecca Schmitt at (615) 770-1086 or [Rebecca.Schmitt@tn.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Schmitt@tn.gov).

Sincerely,

Claudette Stager  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

CS:rs

Enclosures(2)