

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SG 3512

# 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: Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library  
Other names/site number: Merom Public Library  
Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 8554 Market Street  
City or town: Merom State: Indiana County: Sullivan  
Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this x 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 x 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   x   local  
Applicable National Register Criteria:  
  x   A     B   x   C     D

[Signature] ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
OF  
PRESERVATION SERVICES 1.18.2019  
Signature of certifying official/Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date  
Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology  
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

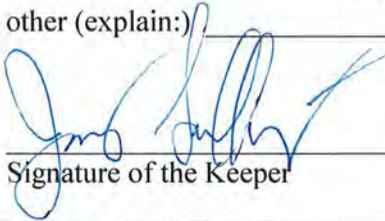
Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Sullivan County, IN  
County and State

**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:)

  
Signature of the Keeper

3-11-2019

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

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Sullivan County, IN  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION:library

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION:library

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Sullivan County, IN  
County and State

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:

Classical Revival

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

foundation: BRICK

walls: BRICK

STONE: limestone

roof: ASPHALT

other: METAL: tin

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library is located at 8554 Market Street in the town of Merom, Indiana. Sitting in a small residential neighborhood about a quarter mile east of the Wabash River and Illinois state line, the building is situated at the northwest corner of the Market and Fifth Street intersection. Constructed in 1918 from funds donated by Andrew Carnegie, the Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library is a one-story, hip roofed, five-bay, three-pile deep rectangular massed brick structure set on a partially raised basement. Due to its high level of integrity and the existence of many original furnishings, the library is an exceptional example of a restrained Classical Revival style civic building. It is also a significant representation of a Carnegie Library designed in reference to the "type A" template from James Bertram's 1911 memorandum, *Notes on the Erection of Buildings*. As this memorandum was

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

Sullivan County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

written after three-quarters of all Carnegie libraries were built,<sup>1</sup> Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library is a relatively rare design from the Post-“Notes” era.

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## **Narrative Description**

### Exterior

The Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library has a foundation and exterior walls composed of brushed red brick in a running bond pattern. Indiana limestone is used sparingly for details throughout the exterior, but enough to create a modest decorative effect. A stairway composed of brick with concrete treads and limestone copings ascends from grade level to the open-pedimented main entrance, which is centrally located within the five-bay primary façade. The primary façade faces south towards Market Street. The basement level of the east elevation, which faces Fifth Street, is fully exposed, and features a multi-paned vinyl double door that serves as a secondary entrance. Surmounting each elevation’s symmetrical fenestration, and applied to the exterior brick approximately three-feet below the roofline, is a pressed metal entablature with a projecting cornice ornamented with block modillions. Above this is a powder-coated aluminum gutter at the base of the hipped roof.

The windows of the main level are arranged evenly around the building at every bay and pile, excluding the central bay of the south façade which features the main entrance (photograph 0001). Flanking this entry, the eastern and western two bays feature double-casement windows with transoms. Each casement sash is composed of five vertically stacked glass panes while the transom above features two panes divided by a thick mullion. Below each of the main level windows on the primary façade are smaller basement windows, featuring double-casement sashes as well. These sashes are composed of three glass panes. The first floor and basement windows of the remaining elevations (north, east, and west) feature these same three-pane vertical casements. All first floor windows have exterior storm windows. All windows feature limestone sills.

Two rowlock brick soldier courses wrap around the exterior raised basement. The top soldier course runs three brick courses above the basement windows. The lower is fifteen courses of running bond brick below the top soldier course. These soldier courses are ornamented with square limestone blocks at each corner of the building. Each of the basement windows are framed with decorative brickwork as well. Running across the top of the windows is a course of row-lock bricks that terminate at the corners with small square blocks of Indiana limestone. Framing the sides of the window openings are vertical stacks of header bricks, which extend from the squared limestone blocks at the top corners down to the limestone sills (photograph 0002).

The entry doors on the primary façade were replaced in 2010, but the undertaking was done sensitively. The original doors were similar in appearance to the first floor windows in that they featured a vertical stack of 5 glass panes. These doors were tall and extended the length of the opening. The new double doors bear a strong resemblance to the originals in that they contain five vertically stacked panes. Differing from the original, the modern replacement doors are shorter and feature a fixed transom also composed of five panes (photograph 0003).

The main entry on the south façade features an open pedimented door surround with pilasters featuring squared Tuscan capitals and bases (photograph 0003). Within the open pediment is a cartouche with garland swags carved in bas-relief. Below this a decorative molding curves upwards to enclose a

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America: A Public Legacy* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Preservation Press, 1997), 35.

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

Sullivan County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

rusticated keystone motif. This keystone is centered above yet another bas-relief molding that is ornamented with guttae and encloses the carved words: Public Library.

The west elevation's main level features three three-paned double casement windows evenly spread just below the cornice. The top soldier course that wraps around the exterior divides the main level from the partially raised basement level. Here, two basement windows appear—one at the northernmost pile and the other at the southernmost pile, leaving no opening in the center. The grade is just below the limestone sills of the basement windows (photograph 0004).

The east elevation is identical to the west elevation in that it features three evenly spaced windows just below the cornice on the main level (photograph 0005). The first floor is also divided from the basement level by the top soldier course. Unlike the west elevation, the basement on the east elevation is fully exposed. It features a centered entrance with a double-door and a basement window in the southernmost pile. The original window opening of the northernmost pile has been bricked up. This was done sensitively with brick identical to the original.

The north, or rear elevation of the building, features five three-paned double casement windows evenly spaced in each of the five bays just below the cornice. Placed just east of the window in the central bay is a chimney of the same red brick as the exterior walls that extends upward from the raised basement. No basement windows exist east of this chimney. Starting in the central bay, three basement windows appear to the west of the chimney. At the eastern corner, a chain-link fence surrounds a liquid propane tank that sits atop a stone platform (photograph 0006).

### Interior

The side entrance located on the east elevation provides an entry to the library's basement level. Upon entering, a hallway extends straight (westward) to a set of double doors, each with a vertical stack of five wavy glass panes (photograph 0007). The hallway has a concrete slab floor, wallpapered walls, and an acoustical drop ceiling. The southern interior wall of this hallway features three original 5-paneled wood doors with original hardware made of brass that lead to a remodeled bathroom and two storage rooms.

Through the double doors at the end of the hallway is a large open storage room originally used for public meetings, lectures and other programs held by the library (photograph 0008). It features a concrete slab floor, painted plaster walls, and oriented strand board (OSB) for the ceiling. HVAC ductwork is visible along the ceiling. Near the southeast corner of the room, on the south wall, is an original 5-panel wood door with period hardware made of brass that leads to a small room with a water pump. West of the door on the south wall are two three-paned double casement windows. The southwest corner of the room, which is also the southwest corner of the building, sits between the westernmost window on the south wall and another three-paned double casement window on the west wall. Similarly, the northwest corner of the room, which is the northwest corner of the building, is situated between a single three-paned double casement window on the west wall and two three-paned double casements on the north wall. A third window of the same type is featured on the north wall by the northeast corner of the room. At this northeast corner, on the east wall, is an original 5-panel wood door with period hardware that opens to a narrow unfinished hallway (photograph 0009). This leads to the boiler located in the northeast corner of the building.

On the northern interior wall at the westernmost end of the basement hallway, adjacent to the storage room doors, is a dog-leg stair with a half landing that connects the basement with the first floor of the library (photograph 0010). The staircase terminates at the main floor just east of the librarian's desk,

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

Sullivan County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

which is situated in the center of the room and faces south toward the historic main entrance. Surrounding the stairway on this main level is an original wood handrail and balusters (photograph 0011).

The main floor of the library is a single, open, rectangular room with a carpeted floor, painted plaster walls, an acoustical drop ceiling, and fluorescent lighting (photograph 12). The original black tile flooring remains, albeit, under a number of carpets dating from various periods. A total of fifteen windows evenly spaced around the building flood this open interior space with natural light. The southern interior wall features four double-casement windows of the primary façade. These original window sashes are composed of five vertically stacked glass panes and are capped by a two-paned transom. Like the north wall, which has five, the west and east walls each have three evenly spaced windows with double-casement oak sashes containing three vertical glass panes. Each of the windows on the north, east and west walls are positioned close to the ceiling so that they are above the original oak bookshelves.

In contrast to the Classical Revival exterior, the interior of the main level displays a modest Craftsman style influence. The original window sashes, like the jambs, and the interior sills are all made of local oak and feature a natural finish. Original brass hinges appear on the sashes as well. Roller blinds are featured over every window and on the window transoms on the south wall.

Also adding to the Craftsman aesthetic is the main entry's original oak and multi-paned glass vestibule (photograph 13). From the center of the southern interior wall, the vestibule projects inward toward the center of the room. Other original oak furnishings include tables, chairs, book shelves, a magazine rack, card catalogue, and the librarian's desk. (photographs 0014, 0015). Due to the growing number of books, a couple new book shelves have been added to the library. Made of pine, these differ from the original oak shelves but are compatible to the historic aesthetic.

Two paintings by prominent local artist Will Turman were gifted to the library. The first was dedicated at the library's opening in 1918 and is currently located above the bookcases on the western interior wall (photograph 0016). The second painting was gifted in 1938 and currently hangs on the southern interior wall just west of the entry vestibule (photograph 0017). Also given to the library at its 1918 opening was a framed roster listing the names of the men from Sullivan County who fought in the Civil War (photograph 0018). This hangs on the northern interior wall, just west of the central window. In 1920, the library made a request to the Carnegie Corporation of New York for a lithograph of Andrew Carnegie so that they may honor the man who provided the funds for construction. Shortly thereafter, a print of the man was sent and still remains in the library, hanging on the western interior wall near the southwest corner of the room (photograph 0019).

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Sullivan County, IN  
County and State

## 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.)

- 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.)

- 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



Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Sullivan County, IN  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1918-1967

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1918

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person (last name, first name)**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder (last name, first name)**

Wallick, Frederick W.

Adler, S.Louis

\_\_\_\_\_

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Sullivan County, IN  
County and State

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins in 1918, the year the Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library was constructed, and ends in 1967, the mandatory fifty year mark for eligibility. The library has been in continuous use since its construction.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

Not Applicable.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The building is an outstanding example of a civic building in a restrained Neoclassical Revival style of architecture. It is also a significant representation of a Carnegie Library designed in reference to the “type A” template from James Bertram’s 1911 memorandum, *Notes on the Erection of Buildings*. As this memorandum was written after three-quarters of all Carnegie libraries were built,<sup>2</sup> Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library is a relatively rare design from the “Post-Notes” era. The Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library is also representative of an important 19<sup>th</sup> century movement in which communities across the United States sought to establish libraries for the education of its citizenry. Lastly, with much of its original architectural features and furnishings intact, the building retains a remarkably high degree of historic integrity.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

ARCHITECTURE

The Merom-Gill Township Carnegie was designed in a restrained Neoclassical Revival style. The style’s roots began with the 1893 World’s Columbian Exhibition and the City Beautiful movement. It then spread across the country by subsequent exhibitions in Buffalo and St. Louis, and later San Francisco. The style became more common when the Federal government adopted the Neoclassical Revival style for its expanding number of courthouses and post offices. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the style became a favorite for banks, city halls, and libraries. Steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie’s funding of library buildings in many cities and towns in the years immediately following the exposition also contributed to the proliferation of the Neoclassical Revival style.

The Neoclassical Revival style lent itself well to defining a period of explosive wealth due to its formality, scale and sense of permanence. While the style began with fairly limited detail or classical ornamentation, by the late 1910s and into the 1920s, as a robust American economy permitted, the style was being executed with greater attention to classical details. Extensive bas-relief carving and highly accentuated columns and pilasters, along with the almost exclusive use of limestone expressed the most

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<sup>2</sup> Theodore Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America: A Public Legacy* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Preservation Press, 1997), 35.

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

Sullivan County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

refined execution of the Neoclassical Revival style. A high level of detail and use of elaborate finishes was most evident in public building construction related to civic uses such as municipal and federal buildings, libraries, and banks.

The Neoclassical Revival reached its apex during the mid-to-late 1920s. After the stock market crash in 1929 and subsequent period of depression, few institutions were able to expand if they remained solvent at all, slowing their contribution to construction. As municipal construction continued, in large part due to the federal relief works program, the style became more restrained as other architectural styles of the period were having influence on design.

While Carnegie libraries were designed in other styles popular during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a large percentage was designed in the Neoclassical Revival style because of the popularity of its use for civic buildings. In Indiana, where 164 Carnegie libraries were built between 1901 and 1918, the most of any state, those in the Neoclassical Revival style were among the most commonly built. In his book *Carnegie Libraries Across America*, Theodore Jones notes that whereas “Carnegie provided the construction funds for these landmarks, [he] left the book-club presidents, mayors, clerks, and big-city committees in the charge of design, which resulted in the construction of hundreds of classically influenced libraries.”<sup>3</sup> The ubiquity of important civic buildings in the style had doubtlessly influenced public perception about what an important civic building should look like.

Although Carnegie never dictated which style the libraries built in his name should be, over time, he did become concerned with the architectural exorbitance of many libraries at the expense of a functional layout and a complete collection of books. From 1893, when the first Carnegie library was built, to 1904, there were little restrictions and even less oversight regarding the design of Carnegie funded libraries. To ensure libraries were being built instead of temples, James Bertram, secretary to Andrew Carnegie, began reviewing architectural plans in 1904. In 1911, Bertram issued *Notes on the Erection of Buildings*, a memorandum on the construction of libraries. Paired with diagrams of six recommended floorplans, this pamphlet was aimed at facilitating the design process faced by small communities and their architects. In describing these six templates, Theodore Jones notes that “all six floorplans involved one-storey buildings over partially exposed basements with large windows; they all featured a flight of steps leading to the main floor.”<sup>4</sup>

Although these pamphlets were sent to each community upon the promise of funds, the six floorplans were intended to be seen as guidelines, rather than a restrictive set of plans that had to be followed. As Jones points out in his book, however, “Bertram did expect small communities to follow the principles given in *Notes* to divert their seemingly natural tendencies for library grandeur to more functional designs.”<sup>5</sup> A great example of this can be found in the correspondence between Bertram and the town of Merom in regards to the interior layout of the Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library. In this correspondence, which was typical of many other library projects after 1911, Bertram outright rejected the preliminary plans for the library, writing “it would appear...from the plans that [the architects] have sent that you have paid very little attention to the communications sent you and to the memorandum on library building with diagrams.”<sup>6</sup> He continued to state that “the plans will not do. Please see the memorandum on library building with diagrams accompanying it.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>6</sup> James Bertram to J.J. Parker, December 14, 1916, Sullivan County Library Genealogy Collection.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Sullivan County, IN

County and State

Bertram continually pushed the design of the Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library closer to one of the six suggested in his pamphlet. According to him, “efficiency in administration [and] economy in construction”<sup>8</sup> was paramount, and the first plans for the library submitted by architect S. Louis Adler featured many unnecessary elements and spatial arrangements. In February 1917, Bertram again wrote to the town of Merom stressing his disapproval of a set of newly revised plans. He wrote, “you hav destroyed the efficiency of the layout by changing the proportions of the plans...In what way is the bilding you hav plannd better than a bilding of the proportions of our type Plan B.”<sup>9</sup>

Taking over the design of the library from Adler was fellow Indianapolis architect Frederick Wallick. Under Wallick’s direction, plans for the library were altered to adhere more closely to Bertram’s design guidelines. In a letter to Dr. J.J. Parker, secretary of the “Merom Public Library Board”, Wallick explained the latest set of plans, writing:

“concurrent with Mr. Bertram’s request...these plans (marked ‘Plan X’) conform very closely to ‘Plan A’ shown on the blue prints provided by the Carnegie Corporation for aiding architects in planning new libraries. The only radical difference between these two plans is that ‘Plan A’ is somewhat larger than ‘Plan X’ and its stairway is placed adjacent to the Vestibule instead of opening out of the children’s room and librarian’s room as indicated on ‘Plan X’.”<sup>10</sup>

Due to rising construction costs, these small differences were made to the plans in order not to exceed the \$10,000 donation by Carnegie. With the plans for the library finalized in March 1917 and approved by Bertram of the Carnegie Corporation the next month, the first allotment of Carnegie’s \$10,000 donation was paid to the town of Merom so construction could begin. The groundbreaking took place on May 5, 1917 with construction lasting a little over a year. The library was completed in August of 1918. The limited funds donated by Carnegie were just enough to finish the library. The overall cost for construction, furnishings, and equipment, as stated in a letter in June of 1917, was \$9998.67.<sup>11</sup>

It was because of these limited funds that the Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library is a modest representation of the Neoclassical Revival style. The \$10,000 grant by Carnegie dictated the need for an economic and efficient design, and limited the amount of architectural ornamentation. The library does, however, feature two elements that are highly developed representations of the Neoclassical Revival style. At the façade’s main level entrance is an open-pedimented door surround with squared pilasters and Neoclassical Revival inspired motifs carved in bas-relief. Additionally, a pressed metal entablature featuring a projecting cornice with block modillions wraps around the entire building.

In contrast to the classically inspired exterior, the interior displays a modest Craftsman style influence. Original architectural features include the oak trim, window sashes and entry vestibule. The library also retains the original librarian’s desk, original oak bookcases, tables, chairs, and card catalogue. The historic wood paneled doors still remain in the basement level as well.

## EDUCATION

<sup>8</sup> James Bertram to J.J. Parker, February 19, 1917, Sullivan County Library Genealogy Collection.

<sup>9</sup> James Bertram to J.J. Parker, February 1, 1917, Sullivan County Library Genealogy Collection.

<sup>10</sup> Frederick Wallick to J.J. Parker, February 23, 1917, Sullivan County Library Genealogy Collection.

<sup>11</sup> J.J. Parker to James Bertram, June 27, 1917, Sullivan County Library Genealogy Collection.

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

Sullivan County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

The Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library was the result of a desire by several individuals in the town and township to provide a supply of books for the continued education of its citizenry. This initiative was part of what local newspapers called the “Library Movement”—a period of explosive popularity in education within Sullivan County that resulted in the establishment of libraries and the erection of publicly funded library buildings in each township and many small towns. Interestingly, it was also related to the larger state and federal movement of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that sought to establish libraries in both large and small communities across the country. Industrialist Andrew Carnegie was largely responsible for funding this movement.

Public education has always been an issue of major importance for Sullivan County, and efforts to establish the county’s first library occurred surprisingly early in its history. Indiana was admitted to the United States on December 11, 1816, and occurring that same month was the act of legislation that officially founded Sullivan County. A provision was included in this legislation that required 10% of all proceeds arising from the sale of town lots to be used for the establishment and maintenance of a county library. Five years later, in 1821, Sullivan County’s first library was formed along with an election of a President and seven Trustees. This first library was nothing more than a collection of miscellaneous books that would have most likely been housed in the log courthouse located in Merom, which served as Sullivan County’s first county seat until 1842. Unfortunately, little else is known about this inaugural library.

During the 1850s, Sullivan County then saw a library boom. After the death of William Maclure, philanthropist and founder of the New Harmony Workingmen’s Institute, Indiana’s oldest continuously operating public library, his estate was bequeathed to local associations around Indiana in the form of libraries. Four of these associations, then referred to as Maclure Institutes, were established in Sullivan County during this time. One of which was located in the town of Merom. It was also in the 1850s that the Sullivan County library was expanded due to a new tax law that allocated funds for the purchasing of books. By December 1854, about \$690 had been expended for books for the county library alone. Additionally, an office in the Sullivan County Courthouse, located in the city of Sullivan, the new county seat, was established to house the collection with the county clerk serving as custodian. Furthermore, this law enabled individual townships throughout the state to receive or expand upon their own library collections. By 1855, the townships of Jackson, Fairbanks, Turman, Hamilton, and Gill each received a full library of 325 volumes. This investment in the education of the public by the state government was well received, with one local newspaper noting that it “flooded the county with a valuable collection of reading matter and had an excellent effect in the diffusion of knowledge.”<sup>12</sup>

By 1857, there were 14 libraries in Sullivan County—one for each township, one for the county, and four from the Maclure fund. Aside from the Sullivan County library, which was housed in the courthouse office, the township libraries were mostly located within the homes of local residents. A Sullivan Daily Times article dating from 1922 noted how one Sullivan man recalled “that as a very small boy, it was an event to ride horseback to the residence of John W. Davis in Turman township where the township library was kept and secure books out of which his mother read to him.”<sup>13</sup> This quote is interesting in that it sheds light on how these township libraries were housed at the time, but it also expresses how meaningful library collections were to the local population.

The “Library Movement” of Sullivan County slowed significantly during the civil war, and it was not until the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century that an interest in libraries was renewed. By this time, the people

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<sup>12</sup> Onlooker, “Sidelights of Local History: Chapter I,” *Sullivan Dailey Times*, Jan. 20, 1922, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Onlooker, “Sidelights of Local History: Chapter III,” *Sullivan Dailey Times*, February 28, 1922, 5.

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

Sullivan County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

of Sullivan County, the state of Indiana, as well as the entire country seemed to have outgrown the poorly housed and limited libraries of the early-to-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The single “reading room” within the home of a local resident or within an office of a civic building no longer provided the necessary amount of books or space for reading and other activities related to public education. Moreover, the Maclure Institutes that once provided rural cities and towns like Sullivan and Merom with a fine collection of books were by this time mostly defunct, with a majority of the collection missing or stored away.

An expanded literary collection and a proper building with which to house it, as well as to hold additional educational activities, such as group meetings and lectures, was now seen as a necessity for any respectable community. In his book *Carnegie Libraries Across America*, Jones writes that during this time:

“[a] public library was...considered the civic center, a repository of a community’s history and culture. As such, a public library in its own building was visual proof of a town’s commitment to education, and to the community’s history and future. A public library gave a town the appearance of stability usually only seen in big cities. This was especially important to young towns trying to distinguish themselves from surrounding communities.”<sup>14</sup>

During the final years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while the desire for public education and proper libraries was reaching its highest point, steel magnate Andrew Carnegie began a program that would become one of the greatest philanthropic undertakings in American history. Starting with the Braddock Carnegie Library in Braddock, Pennsylvania, which was completed in 1888, Andrew Carnegie began funding the construction of free libraries all across the country. News of Carnegie’s largesse spread quickly and he began to receive letters from communities within each of the 48 contiguous states, as well as the District of Columbia, and the territories of Hawaii and Puerto Rico, with hopes of receiving funds for the construction of their own free libraries.

One of the communities to inquire with Carnegie was the City of Sullivan. Funding from Carnegie was received and in 1904 the Sullivan Carnegie Library was built. In 1905, after Sullivan’s success, the President of Merom’s Union Christian College decided to appeal to Mr. Carnegie for a \$25,000 donation with the hopes of erecting a library on the college campus. This appeal was later denied by the Carnegie Corporation of New York because Union Christian College only had 125 students at the time. In May of 1916, a donation of \$10,000 had been approved for a free library in Carlisle, in southern Sullivan County. This success had inspired the people of Merom to try again. In an effort to better their chances for a successful appeal, local citizens established the Merom Library Board in September of 1916. Later that fall several letters were sent to Mr. James Bertram, secretary to Andrew Carnegie, advocating for the town’s desire and suitability for a library.

After the town of Merom and Gill Township had both levied a tax to provide at least \$1,000 a year towards maintenance of a library building, an official application was submitted to Bertram and the Carnegie Corporation. This time, Merom’s efforts were approved and the town was promised a donation of \$10,000 to build their library.

The Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library in Merom officially opened on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918 and contained a total of 1,124 books.<sup>15</sup> Although a local newspaper stated there were no dedicatory services,<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America*, 17.

<sup>15</sup> Alan McPherson, *Temples of Knowledge: Andrew Carnegie's gift to Indiana* (Kewanna, IN; Hoosier’s Nest Press, 2003), 96.

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

Sullivan County, IN  
County and State

Name of Property

prominent local artist Will Turman did present one of his paintings as a gift to the library. A framed roster of all the Sullivan County men who served in the Civil War was also presented at the opening. In 1920, the library requested a portrait of the benefactor himself, Andrew Carnegie, be sent so it may hang in the building he funded. The Carnegie Corporation obliged. Remarkably, these three pieces, along with another painting by Mr. Turman that was donated in 1938, still remain in place today.

Merom is the smallest town in Indiana, and one of the smallest in the nation, with a Carnegie Library. It was perhaps due to the town's small size that the library was as frequently used and cherished as much as it was. Although, as a local newspaper stated in 1922, "Merom is proud of her college...churches and schools," the town "takes especial pride in her Carnegie library."<sup>17</sup> Whereas the main level of the library catered to the intellect, the auditorium in the basement provided a civic space for the community. Although this room is currently used for storage, it originally served as a voting center, a meeting place for different organizations within the town, and a space to hold the library's educational programs.

Miss Bonnie Milam served as the first librarian from 1918 to 1920. Since that time, the Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library has had eighteen librarians. Moreover, by 1931, the library's collection grew to 4,306 books. Today, the library contains over 9500 books and magazines, as well as a varied collection of digital media.

With the construction of Sullivan County's fourth library, and the third funded by Andrew Carnegie, the question raised by many was when the next would be built. One local newspaper wrote "We are wondering which will be the first town in the northern half of this county to enter the library movement. Graysville, Fairbanks, Farmersburg, Shelburn and Hymera all have the 'hustlers.' All they need is to crystalize the sentiment."<sup>18</sup> Although Shelburn would establish a library in the mid-1960s, the Merom Library would prove to be the last major construction resulting from the library movement that had swept through Sullivan County. Indeed, it was also among the last libraries in Indiana, as well as the entire nation, to be built with Carnegie funds, since the corporation's final grant was made in 1919.

The Merom Library Board, the organization most instrumental in the acquisition of Carnegie Funds, held its last meeting on December 28, 1967. This was due to a county wide consolidation of all Sullivan County libraries into a single system. Since this time, the building has been referred to as the Merom Public Library.

---

### **Developmental History/Additional historic context information**

N/A

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<sup>16</sup> Onlooker, "Sidelights of Local History: Chapter III," 1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Onlooker, "Sidelights of History: Chapter III," 5

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Sullivan County, IN  
County and State

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Jones, Theodore. *Carnegie Libraries Across America: A Public Legacy*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Preservation Press, 1997.

McPherson, Alan. *Temples of Knowledge: Andrew Carnegie's gift to Indiana*. Kewanna, IN: Hoosier's Nest Press, 2003.

### Newspapers

Onlooker. "Sidelights of Local History: Chapter I." *Sullivan Daily Times*, Jan. 20, 1922.

Onlooker. "Sidelights of Local History: Chapter III." *Sullivan Daily Times*, February 28, 1922.

---

### **Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### **Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 153-401-41018

---

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** less than one acre



Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library  
Name of Property

Sullivan County, IN  
County and State

Use the UTM system

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 16 | Easting: 451122 | Northing: 4323214 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The east half of Lot One Hundred Sixty Four (164) of the original town of Merom, as the same appears of record on the recorded plat of said addition in the office of Recorder of said County, INCLUDING all improvements located thereon.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The description provided represents the lot conveyed by Joseph and Lutisha Lee to the Gill Township Library Association in March 1918 for construction of the Carnegie library later that year.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Christopher Usler  
organization: Indiana Landmarks

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

Sullivan County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

street & number: 669 Ohio Street

city or town: Terre Haute state: IN zip code: 47807

e-mail: [TKleckner@indianalandmarks.org](mailto:TKleckner@indianalandmarks.org)

telephone: 812-232-4534

date: 6/29/2017

---

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

The following items are common to all photos:

Name of Property: The Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

City or Vicinity: Merom

County: Sullivan

State: Indiana

Photographer: Christopher Usler

Date Photographed: 6/9/2017

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

0001 Primary façade and east elevation, facing northwest.

1 of 19.

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

Sullivan County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
0002 Basement window just east of staircase on primary façade, facing north.

2 of 19.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
0003 Replacement door with open pediment surround, facing north.

3 of 19.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
0004 View of west elevation, facing northeast.

4 of 19.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
0005 East elevation, facing west.

5 of 19.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
0006 View of north elevation, facing southwest.

6 of 19.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
0007 Basement level hallway from the east entrance, facing west.

7 of 19.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
0008 Storage room/historic meeting room, facing southwest.

8 of 19.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
0009 Northeast corner of storage room, facing east. 9 of 19.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
0010 Double doors and dog-leg stair at end of basement hallway, facing northwest.

10 of 19.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:  
0011 View of library main level from top of dog-leg stair, facing southwest.

11 of 19.

Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

Sullivan County, IN

Name of Property

County and State

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

0012 Library main level, facing northeast.

12 of 19.

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

0013 Entrance vestibule, facing southwest.

13 of 19.

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

0014 Original librarian's desk, facing northwest.

14 of 19.

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

0015 Original chairs, table, and bookshelves, facing northwest.

15 of 19.

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

0016 Painting by Will Turman gifted at library's opening in 1918, facing west.

16 of 19.

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

0017 Painting of the ferry on the Wabash River in Riverton, Indiana on October 17, 1931.

Presented to the library on July 31, 1938 by Will Turman, facing south.

17 of 19.

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

0018 Roster of men from Sullivan County who served in the Civil War presented to library at its opening in 1918, facing north.

18 of 19.

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

0019 Portrait of Andrew Carnegie presented by the Carnegie Corporation of New York circa 1920, facing west.

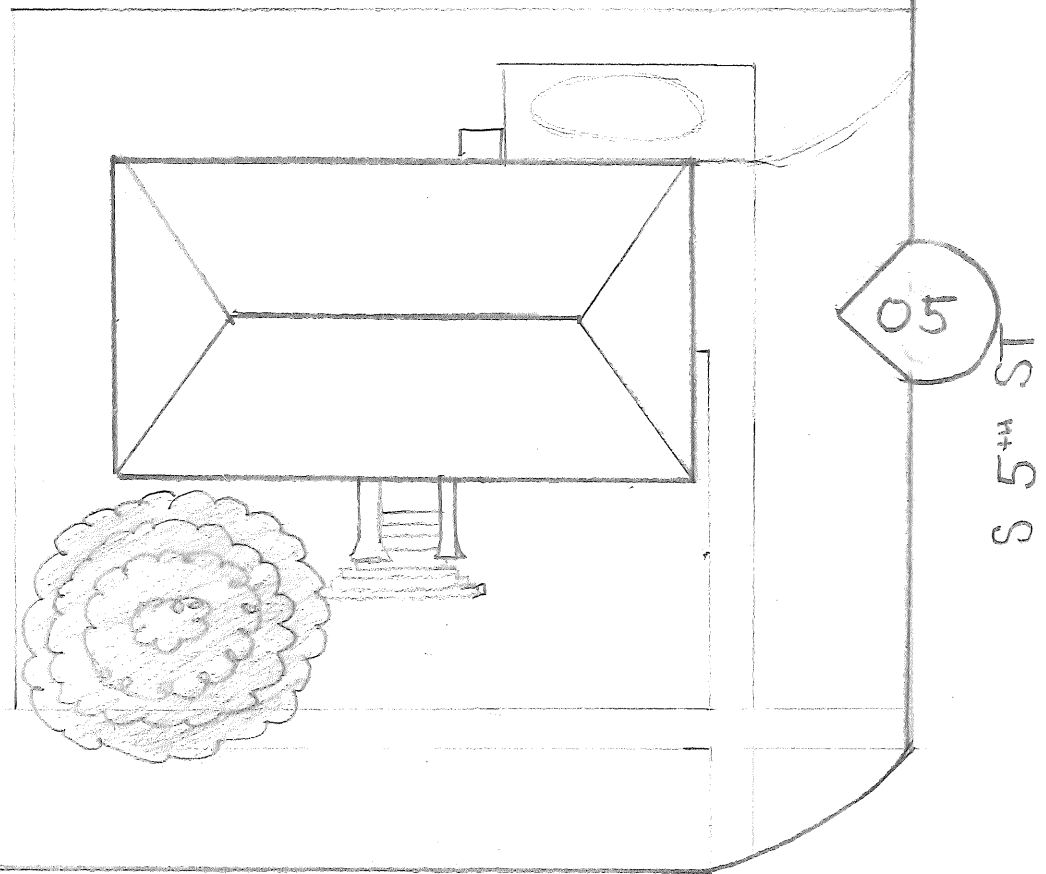
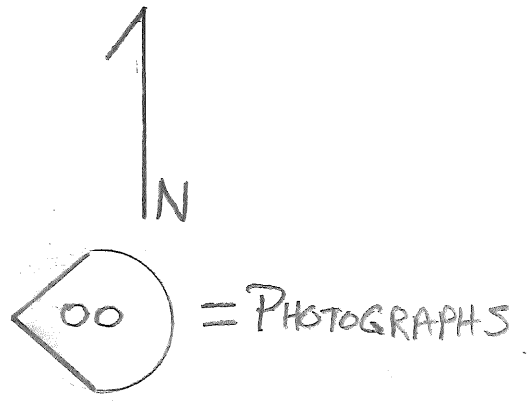
19 of 19.

**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.

# SITE PLAN

06



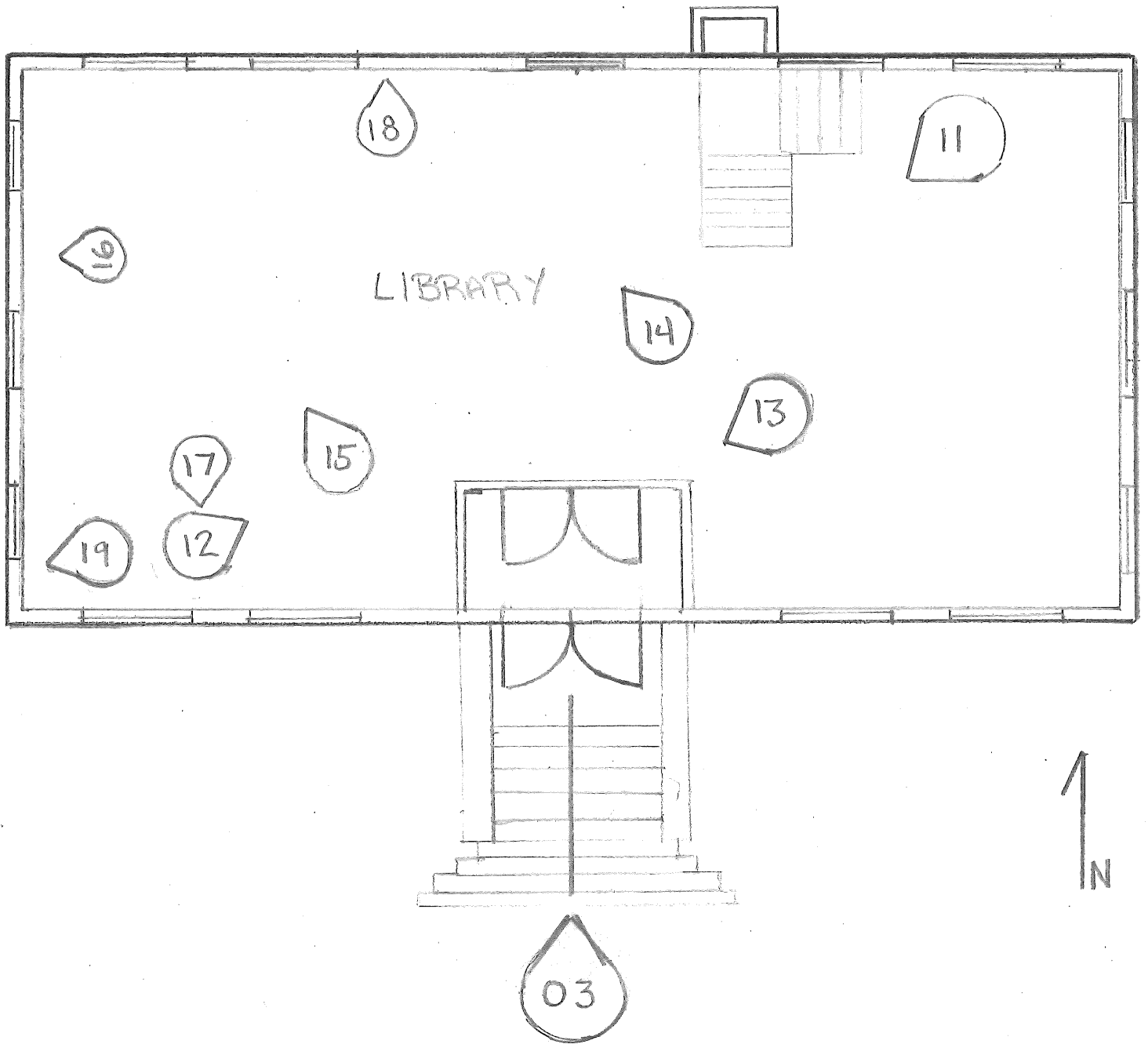
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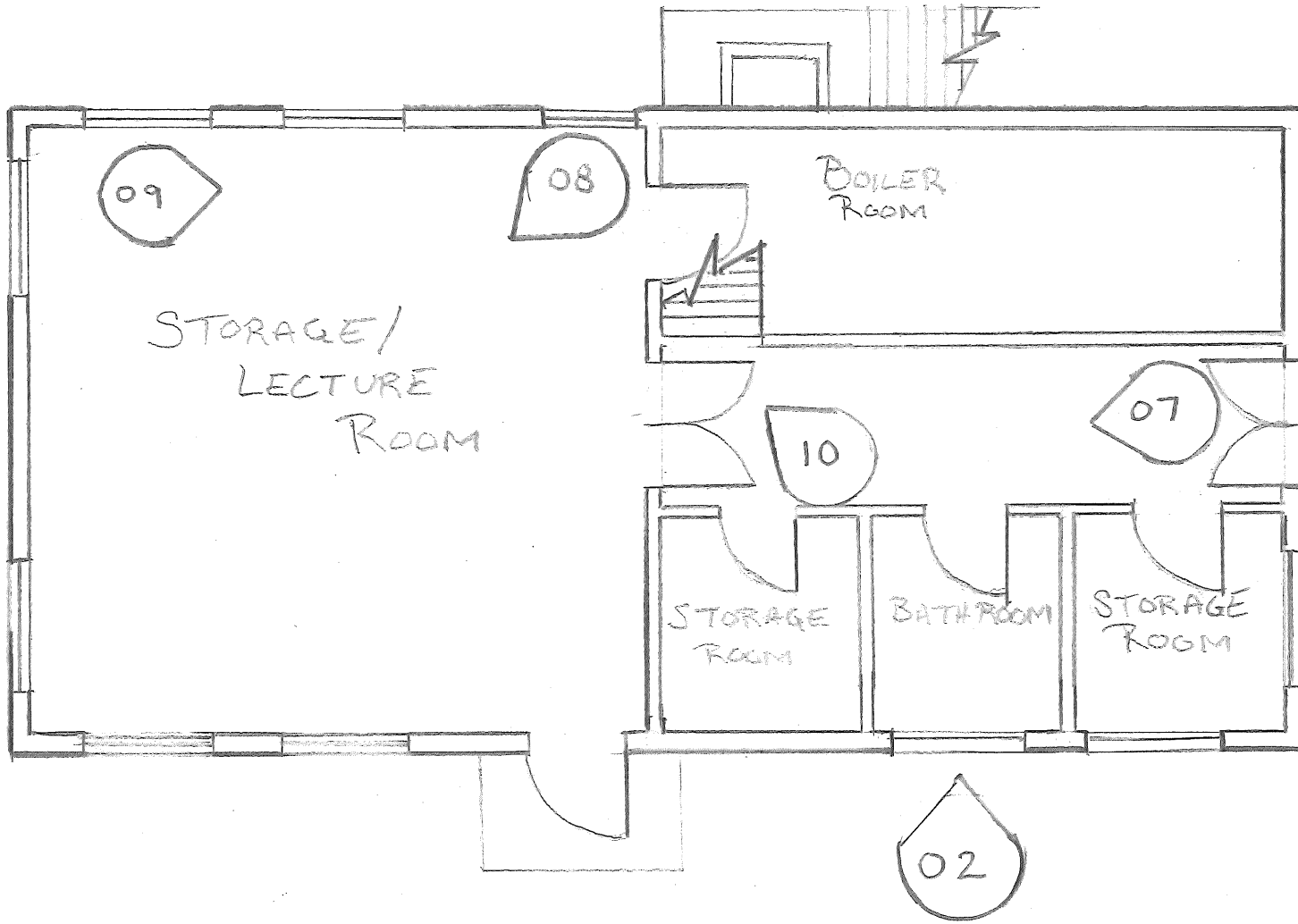


LIBRARY

MAIN LEVEL

MEROM-GILL TOWNSHIP CARNEGIE  
LIBRARY

00 = PHOTOGRAPHS



BASEMENT LEVEL

00 = PHOTOGRAPHS



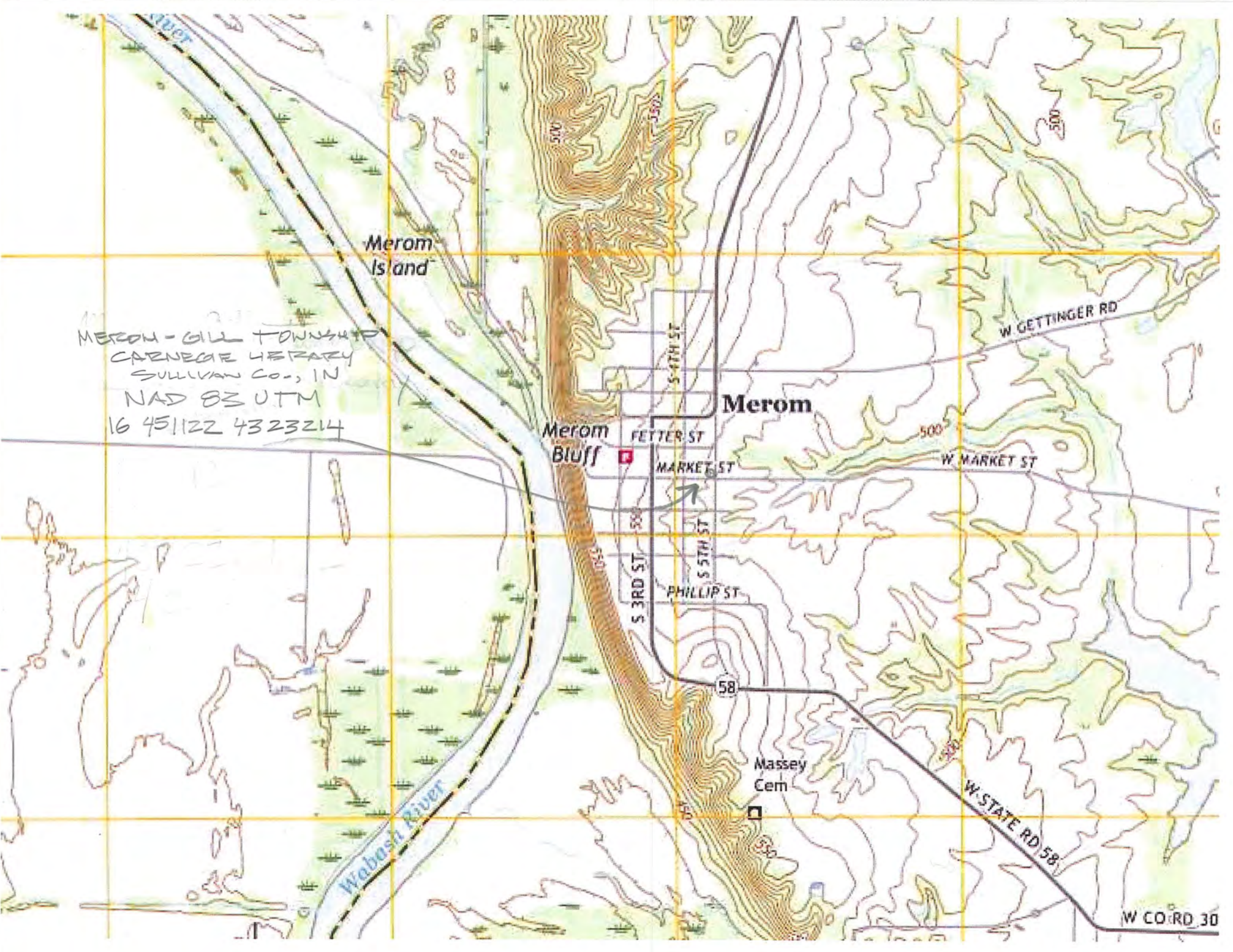
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LINDA JAE MILLER  
MILLER

WIND  
MARTIN  
AGAINST  
WIND

FILE

TRACIA

FILE





**HOW-TO**  
**Summer Reading Festival**  
SATURDAY, JUNE 17TH 2017  
ALL AGES WELCOME

**HOW TO CREATE HAND-MADE STAMPED JEWELRY**

**How to Thrive: The Family Tip**

Based on The Librarian's Government Funding, No Person under the age of 18 may have the black box off of his/her computer.











Painting of the ferry on  
the Wabash River in  
Riverton Indiana by  
William Turman on  
October 17, 1931. It  
was presented to the  
library on July 31, 1938  
by Mr. & Mrs. Turman.

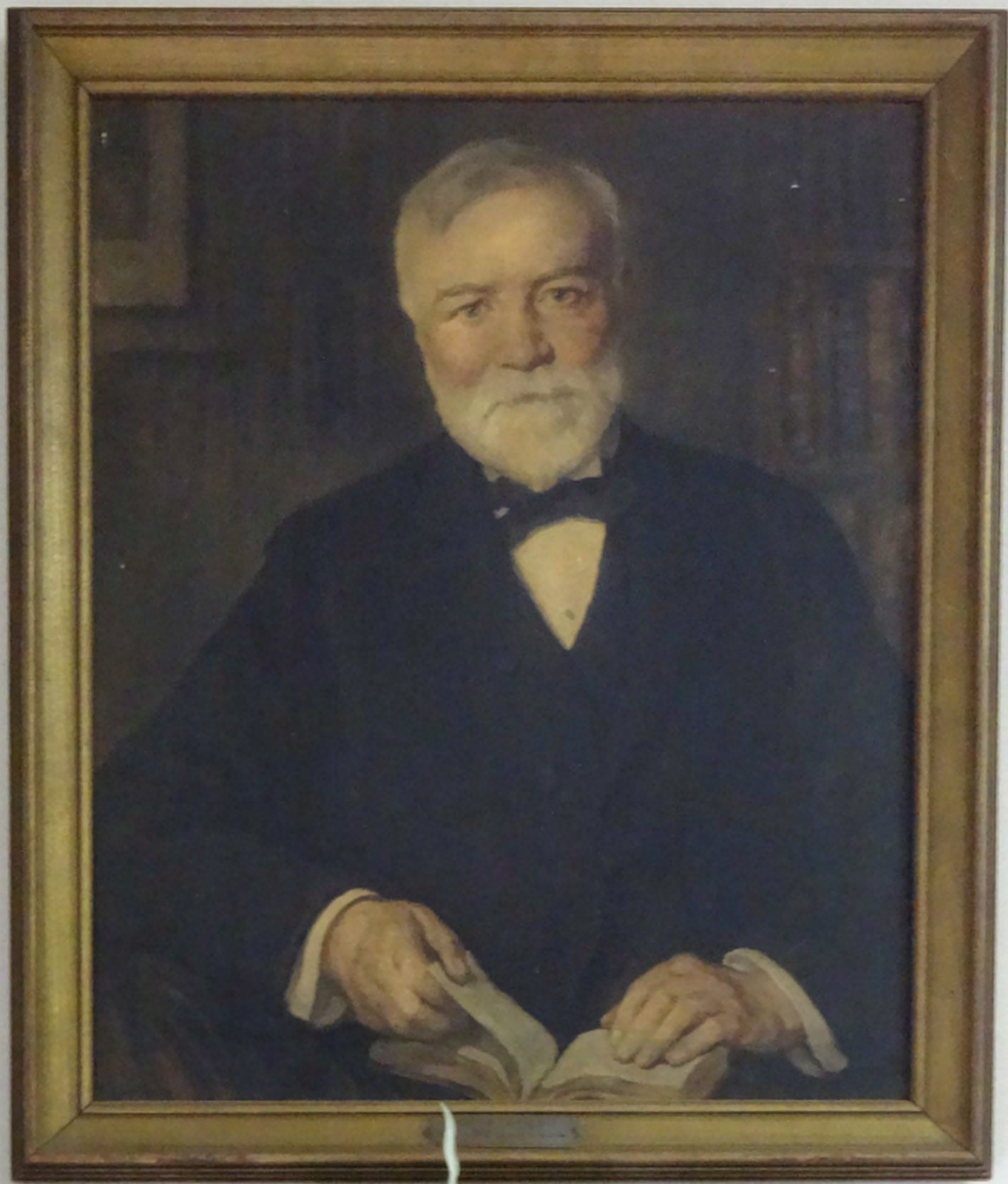


Men of Sullivan County who Served their Country During Civil War, 1861-1865

Table listing names of men from Sullivan County who served during the Civil War (1861-1865). The table is organized into columns, likely representing different military units or regiments. The text is extremely small and difficult to read, but it appears to be a multi-column list of names.

THE SULLIVAN COUNTY

THE HORIZONTAL NAMES WERE OMITTED FROM THE ABOVE LIST



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library

Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State & County: INDIANA, Sullivan

Date Received: 2/1/2019      Date of Pending List: 2/12/2019      Date of 16th Day: 2/27/2019      Date of 45th Day: 3/18/2019      Date of Weekly List: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: SG100003512

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review: \_\_\_\_\_

X Accept       Return       Reject      3/11/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: Good example of a Carnegie library, with minimal alteration. Merom is the smallest city in Indiana to have a Carnegie Library, and may be the smallest in the country.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / A & C

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.



Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology • 402 W. Washington Street, W274 • Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739  
Phone 317-232-1646 • Fax 317-232-0693 • [dhpa@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:dhpa@dnr.IN.gov) • [www.IN.gov/dnr/historic](http://www.IN.gov/dnr/historic)



January 30, 2019

Ms. Joy Beasley  
Keeper of the National Register  
National Register of Historic Places  
Mail Stop 7228  
1849 C St, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library, Sullivan County, Indiana

Dear Ms. Beasley,

Enclosed is a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library, Sullivan County, Indiana. The Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board reviewed the application and voted to recommend its approval to the National Register of Historic Places.

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Merom-Gill Township Carnegie Library, Sullivan County, Indiana to the National Register of Historic Places.

Please address any questions you or your staff may have about this nomination to my National Register staff members, Paul Diebold or Holly Tate.

Sincerely,

Cameron F. Clark  
State Historic Preservation Officer

CFC:PCD:pcd

enclosure: nomination package