

155

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Tekamah Carnegie Library

Other names/site number BT06-043

2. Location

Street & number 204 South 13th Street

Not for publication

City or town Tekamah

Vicinity

State Nebraska

Code NE

County Burt

Code 021

Zip code 68061

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Wanda E. Sammler
Signature of certifying official

1/26/05
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall

3/15/05

[Signature]
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Tekamah Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Burt County, Nebraska

County and State

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		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/Library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/Library

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/Prairie vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Concrete

Walls Brick

Roof Asphalt shingle

Other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

Property is:

- A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** Removed from its original location.
- C** A birthplace or a grave.
- D** A cemetery.
- E** A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** A commemorative property.
- G** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education

Period of Significance

1916-1955

Significant Dates

1916

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

R. W. Grant – Architect

L. G. Wood – Builder

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location for additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local Government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Tekamah Public Library

Tekamah Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Burt County, Nebraska

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

Table with 7 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Includes entries 1, 2, 3, 4 and a note to see continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jill M. Ebers/Historic Buildings Survey Coordinator
organization Nebraska State Historical Society date December 3, 2004
street & number 1420 P Street/Box 82554 telephone (402) 471-4773
city or town Lincoln state Nebraska zip code 68501-2554

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title City of Tekamah
street & number 1315 K Street telephone (402) 374-2521
city or town Tekamah state Nebraska zip code 68061

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined 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, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Tekamah Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Burt County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

The Tekamah Carnegie Library is located in Tekamah, Burt County, Nebraska, situated 43 miles north-northwest of Omaha. Tekamah had a population of 1,892 as of the 2000 Census. Tekamah is located in the southeast quarter of Burt County, which is characterized by the rolling hills and valleys of the Missouri River valley. The Library is located on Tekamah's main street, 13th Street, along side Tekamah's core business district and the county courthouse. The building is prominently sited on the corner of 13th and L Streets, near the Tekamah City Bridge (NRHP listed in 1992). The building is placed at an angle on the lot, facing the intersection.

The vernacular Prairie style Library is a rectangular, one and a half story, brick structure with a hipped roof with decorative brackets under the eaves. It has a concrete foundation and dark brick veneer with stone accents. The façade contains a central entrance with projecting vestibule entrance, and a modern glass door with sidelights. The entrance is flanked by torcheres with globe lights. Above the entrance, carved in stone, are the words "Carnegie Public Library."

The windows of the Library have been changed to large, fixed panels of glass. While the change from what were most likely double hung windows is significant, the openings themselves have not been altered or closed up, and the decorative crosshatched transoms remain in place. The windows are arranged in groups of three, with a stone sill that runs along the bottom of all three, and a stone belt course that serves as the lintel. This pattern of tripartite windows continues on all sides, with the exception of the back, where an additional two windows mirror the entrance on the front façade. There are also sizable windows on the ground floor level that allow light into the rooms in the basement. An additional door is located on the back of the building, which allows entrance to the basement furnace room. A large simple brick chimney is also located on the rear of the building.

Upon entering the Library, one is confronted by a set of stairs with a simple, yet decorative wood banister. The circulation desk is located at the top of the stairs, as well as the main reading room of the Library. The original bookshelves are still used. Downstairs, the room on the left is used for storage and processing new acquisitions, and the room on the right is the children's reading room. A bathroom and the furnace room are located just off the stairs. The stair well is used for a sitting area for story time or watching videos.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Tekamah Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Burt County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

Significance

The Tekamah Carnegie Library meets the registration requirements of the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, *Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922*. The Tekamah Carnegie Library is significantly associated with the historic context *Educational Enrichment: Carnegie Libraries*. The Library is locally significant in the area of education as an example of a Carnegie Library. The building's period of significance is derived from the year the Library was built, 1916, through 1955, fifty years before the date of this nomination.

Although the *Burt County Herald* was surprisingly sparing of details, Tekamah citizens' desires for a Library were mentioned in an article regarding the topics of discussion at a meeting of the Tekamah Commercial Club in May 1914. Though the Library was merely mentioned, it was clear that the Commercial Club intended to put the efforts of many of its members to the task of securing necessary funding.¹ The Library was mentioned again in September 1914, when the *Herald* stated, "the city Library is a sure go."² Unfortunately, the paper provided no details regarding applying for the grant or the individuals who were instrumental in acquiring it.

The city council passed an ordinance providing for the erection of a Library building for the use of the public later that month.³ The ordinance officially established the Library, announced the composition of the Library Board that would be comprised of nine members appointed to various terms of one to three years, and established that the Library would be supported through city taxes. Most interestingly, the ordinance established a standard of punishment for those who would mistreat or damage Library holdings. "Any person who shall willfully and maliciously write upon, injure, deface or destroy any book, newspaper, plate, engraving, or any property or thing of value belonging to the Public Library or Reading Room shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be fined in any sum not to exceed One Hundred Dollars for each offense, and shall pay the costs of prosecution, and shall stand committed to the City Jail until such fine and costs are paid."⁴

The Library Board was appointed by the mayor and announced in the *Herald* on 2 October 1914. Members included: Mrs. Hattie Hopewell, J. A. Clark, J. E. Cornish, A. H. Dixon, Dr. J. P. Merritt, Mrs. J. W. Tamplin, E. I. Ellis, Dr. A. D. Nesbit, and Mrs. Ed Latta.⁵ The Board announced the selection of a site for the Library the following spring. Although a number of sites had been considered, the board selected a lot just west of the Main Street Bridge (NRHP listed in 1992). Many citizens contributed generously toward the purchase of the lot. Committee members were instructed to begin collecting on the subscriptions, and to arrange for the architect, R. W. Grant of Beatrice, to come inspect the site.⁶ This article marks the first mention that the Carnegie Foundation funded the construction of the Library.

Bids were let for the construction of the building, but were all rejected as they were considered too expensive.⁷ After the bids were let a second time, a local contractor, L. G. Wood, was awarded the contract for \$7,500. I. N. Bramhall & Son, another Tekamah firm, won the contract for the brickwork. The plans called for the building to be constructed of the best pressed brick and cut stone. The building would be 27 by 60 feet, and 24 feet high. The *Herald* praised the selection of local contractors, saying "They are just as good as can be found anywhere, and should be given preference over the

¹ *The Burt County Herald*, 15 May 1914.

² *The Burt County Herald*, 11 September 1914.

³ *The Burt County Herald*, 18 September 1914.

⁴ *The Burt County Herald*, 18 September 1914.

⁵ *The Burt County Herald*, 2 October 1914.

⁶ *The Burt County Herald*, 14 May 1915.

⁷ *The Burt County Herald*, 13 August 1915.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Tekamah Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Burt County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

outside bidders.”⁸ Ground was broken for the Library within a week, but no further mention of the construction of the building would follow in the newspaper.

In June 1916, the Library Board announced that they would be accepting donations of books and magazines. Their first purchase of books would not provide as many as they would have liked to have seen lining their new shelves, so they asked the people of Tekamah to help supplement the Library with gifts of books of their own.⁹ The Library did not suffer a lack of books for long. By November 1916, the Library contained approximately 1200 volumes. The Library would continue to thrive. The Tekamah centennial history written in 1954 describes a vibrant Library with a circulation of one thousand per month. It had one thousand active borrowers, and supported the reading habits of more than two hundred borrowers from rural areas around Tekamah. The Library shelves held more than nine thousand volumes at that time.¹⁰

The Tekamah Carnegie Library was formally opened to the public on 25 October 1916. The Library was open to schoolchildren in the morning, and adults and high school students in the afternoon. A formal program followed, with the president of the Library Board presenting the Library to the city, with Mayor Wassum accepting it and turning it over to the citizenry of Tekamah. Those who had been active in securing the Library, and presumably acquiring the funding from the Carnegie Foundation, spoke of their efforts. A Victrola was borrowed and provided music throughout the affair.¹¹

The new rules for borrowing from the Library were printed in the *Herald* so there could be no confusion. Residents could apply for a borrowing book free of charge. Non-residents could pay twenty-five cents for the privilege, if they had an approved borrower who would provide them with a reference. The borrowing book had to be present whenever they borrowed or returned a book, and a lost borrowing book could be replaced for five cents. A tardy borrower would be charged two cents per day for each book, and was responsible for any damage or loss.¹² No mention was made of potential jail time, as set forth in the city ordinance.

As in so many other communities around the country, Tekamah did not have a public library until the Carnegie Foundation funded its construction. The generosity of the Carnegie Foundation assisted in the creation of public library systems that continue to have profound community impacts to this day. Many small communities are served by well-established public libraries whose existence, it may be argued, is founded upon an original gift by the Carnegie Foundation.

According to the Multiple Property Document *Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922* “the construction of library buildings in Nebraska communities had an impact beyond providing reading material to the public.” (Sec. E, p. 3) The MPD continues: “The buildings were designed to provide facilities for other education activities as well as the Library.” (Sec. E, p. 3) Carnegie libraries served an educational function beyond their use as book repositories, a function that is maintained by most public libraries today. The gift of Carnegie libraries helped create our system of educationally oriented, small town public Library systems. The Tekamah Carnegie Library is one such building that, in many ways, became a foundation of community life. The room that is currently used as a children’s reading room was originally set aside for the use of a reading club that met at regular intervals.

⁸ *The Burt County Herald*, 3 September 1915.

⁹ *The Burt County Herald*, 13 June 1916.

¹⁰ *Tekamah: 1854–1954*, Tekamah Chamber of Commerce, Inc. (Tekamah, Nebraska: 1954), 147.

¹¹ *The Burt County Herald*, 3 November 1916.

¹² *The Burt County Herald*, 27 October 1916.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Tekamah Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Burt County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

The MPD further states, "A high degree of historic architectural integrity will be required of all potentially eligible Carnegie Libraries under Criterion C. Of primary importance are the exterior plan and style, with secondary emphasis on the building materials and interior layout." (Sec F, IV, p. 1) The total replacement of the fenestration of the Tekamah Carnegie Library, along with the new glass entrance and sidelights, preclude its eligibility for listing under Criterion C for architectural significance, but is not so severe that they preclude listing the building under Criterion A for its historical significance for its association with the proliferation of small town libraries throughout the nation through the generosity of the Carnegie Foundation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Tekamah Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Burt County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 9-10 Page 1

Bibliography

The Burt County Herald, 15 May 1914 – 24 November 1916.

Fimple, Kathleen. *Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922*. National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. 1990, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office.

Valder, Dee, Elmer Olinger and Frederic Hemphill, eds. *Tekamah: 1854 – 1954*. Tekamah Chamber of Commerce, Inc. 1954.

Verbal Boundary Description

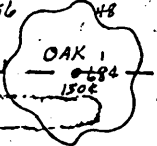
Parts of Lots 1 and 2, Block 119, Original City Plat, Tekamah, Burt County, Nebraska

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Tekamah Carnegie Library includes only the land that has historically been associated with the Library

DRAWN BY DON L. THOMAS 7-21-92

- Lot Line
- Trees
- X Light Pole
- ⊗ Flag Pole
- Shrubs



83' THIS LOT LINE

START HERE

