

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **MAR 14 1984**

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Ottumwa Public Library

and or common

2. Location

street & number 129 North Court not for publication

city, town Ottumwa vicinity of

state Iowa code 019 county Wapello code 179

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Ottumwa

street & number City Hall

city, town Ottumwa vicinity of state Iowa 52501

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office

street & number Wapello County Courthouse

city, town Ottumwa state Iowa 52501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Public Libraries In Iowa has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records Iowa SHPO

city, town Des Moines, state Iowa 50319

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Ottumwa Public Library (1901) is a fine example of the Classical Revival style. Resting on a high foundation, the gray limestone structure (87' x 61") has the monumental quality favored for public buildings of the period with its symmetrical facade, projecting entrance, colossal Ionic columns, massive stone staircase, and central dome. Major decorative elements include the Gibbs-surrounds on the main level openings, the quoined corners, and simple denticulated cornice.

The site of the library is impressive, a gently sloping grassy lot facing Central Park. It is one of four large stone buildings surrounding the Park: The Wapello County Courthouse (NRHP) from 1892-94 is Richardsonian Romanesque; St. Mary's Catholic Church (1930 is 20th Century Gothic; and the Municipal Building (NRHP) is a 1910-12 Renaissance Revival structure. Central Park divides the business district (along the Des Moines River) from the residential areas on the hills to the north.

The plan by Des Moines architects Smith and Gutterson was selected from a field of fourteen entries in competition for the design of this Carnegie Library. Smith and Gutterson are best known for their designs of the State Historical Building and the Des Moines Public Library, but did a number of other important buildings as well.

The focal point of the interior is the main level rotunda with its eight Doric columns on polished stone bases. The dome is lit by the original stained glass skylight. Panels on the four corners of the rotunda feature allegorical figures of Poesia, Historia, Scientia, and Artes. These frescoes were executed in 1909 by German-born artist Johannes Scheiwe. A dome fresco by Scheiwe was destroyed by roof leaks in the 1940's. Just as classical architecture was deemed the most appropriate for public buildings, so classical subjects were appropriate for their decoration.

Surprisingly few alterations have been made to this structure. Following World War II the tile roof was replaced by shingles, and the diagonal pattern was removed from many windows. The entrance doors were replaced in 1962. Interior alterations have been limited to the unobtrusive installation of an elevator in 1979.

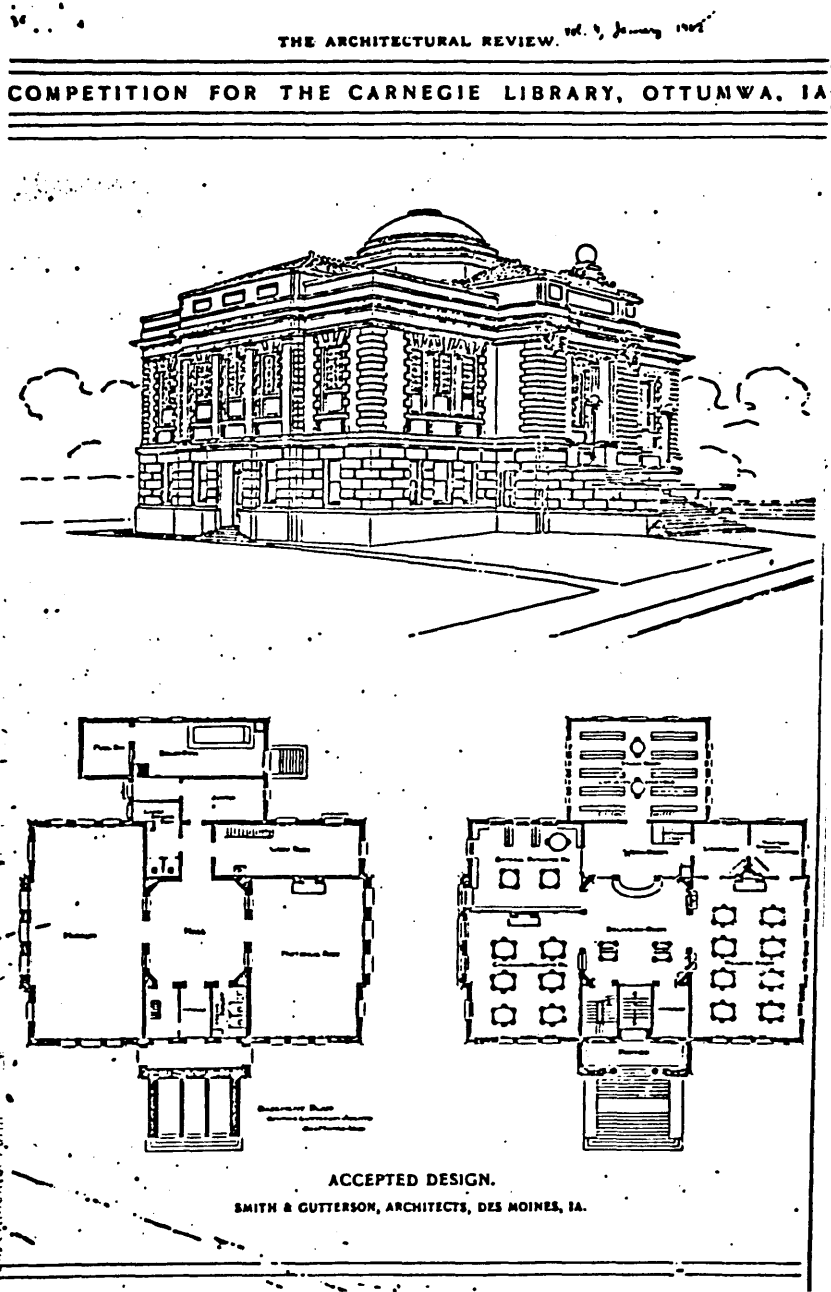
An architectural firm has recently submitted to the Board of Trustees a building analysis with recommendations for stabilization and preservation.

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Continuation sheet Physical Description Item number 7 Page 2



The Architectural Review, Vol. 4, January 1902.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	xxx architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ humanitarian
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
xxx 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1901 **Builder/Architect** Smith & Gutterson, Des Moines

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ottumwa Public Library (1901) is a fine example of the Classical Revival style. One of 101 Carnegie libraries constructed in Iowa, the relatively unaltered condition of the building speaks to its place of importance within the community and the support it has received over the years. The frescoes of Johannes Scheiwe represent the same classical taste in art that the building displays architecturally.

The Classical Revival style gained great popularity with the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. This Ottumwa structure exhibits most of the major characteristics of the style, though in somewhat simplified form. The two-story gray limestone block has a monumental quality with its symmetrical facade, projecting entrance, colossal Ionic columns, massive stone staircase, and central dome. Exterior detailing includes Gibbs-surrounds, quoined corners and a simple denticulated cornice. The interior continues the classical treatment with monumental Doric columns in the rotunda.

In 1900 Andrew Carnegie agreed to contribute the sum of \$50,000 for the construction of a public library in Ottumwa with his customary stipulation that the community provide the land, and that the City would provide \$5,000 per year (10% of the Carnegie amount) for the library. This created a problem. Due to a technicality in state law, first class cities of under 25,000 population had not been given the right to levy taxes for library purposes. Special bills were introduced and passed by both houses of the State Legislature in early 1900 giving Ottumwa the right to levy such taxes.

The Ottumwa Library Association had been formed in 1872 and had become an important part of the community. Two prominent businessmen made substantial financial commitments to the library. Peter G. Ballingall, local philanthropist and major force behind the famed Ottumwa Coal Palace, left a portion of his estate to the perpetuation of the library in 1891. In 1921, J.T. Hackworth provided that his estate should establish a trust for the library. The library budget, even today, is dependent upon the Hackworth Trust for approximately one-third of its funds.

Johannes Scheiwe (1849-1915) holds an unusual position in Ottumwa's history. Born in Germany, he met and married an Ottumwa artist, Ellen Blake, while she was studying in Europe. They both served on the art faculty at Iowa Wesleyan College in Mt. Pleasant before moving to Ottumwa in 1879. At the Columbian Exposition Scheiwe won second place in the art competition for a figure personifying Chicago. Mrs. Potter Palmer was one of the judges and preferred Scheiwe's composition to the winning one, but she was over-ruled by Thomas Nast, the famous cartoonist. Nast felt he could not reproduce the figure in the comic for illustration purposes. He later wrote Scheiwe a personal letter regretting the necessity of this decision. Scheiwe painted the frescoes in the library as his contribution to the cultural climate of the community.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Refer to Continuation Sheet 9-2

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Ottumwa North

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A

1	5
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5	4	8	5	5	0
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4	5	4	0	8	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The east one half of Block 11, original plat of the City of Ottumwa, bounded on the north by 4th Street, the south by 3rd Street, the east by Court Street and on the west by an alley. Includes only the library itself.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state		code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

Research & text by Ms. Molly Myers Naumann, Architectural Historian, SIEDA
 name/title James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator (form only)

organization Iowa SHPO date 6 March 1984

street & number Historical Building E. 12th & Grand Ave. telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines state Iowa 50319

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Adrian S. Anderson*

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Department date 3/6/84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

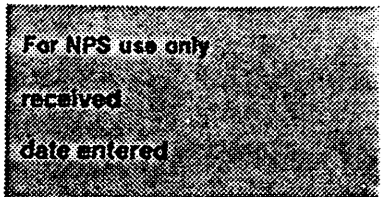
Beth Carson date 4/27/84
 for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet Bibliography Item number 9 Page 2

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Bobinski, George S. Carnegie Libraries. Chicago: American Library Association, 1969, pp 19, 165, 172.
- "Competition for the Carnegie Library, Ottumwa, Iowa" Architectural Review, Vol 4, January 1902, pp 30-32.
- Evans, S.B. History of Wapello County, Iowa. Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1901, pp 76-77, 153-155.
- Iowa Library Commission Report 1900-03. "Free Public Libraries of Iowa - Historical Sketches 1903", pp 119-120.
- Meagher, Glenn B. and Munsell, Harry B. Ottumwa, Yesterday and Today. Ottumwa, IA: Ottumwa Stamp Works, 1923, pp 52-53.
- Ottumwa Public Library. Dedication Exercises and First Annual Report. Ottumwa, IA: Ottumwa Stamp Works, 1904.
- Ottumwa Public Library. Seventh Annual Report for the Year 1909. Ottumwa, IA: Ottumwa Stamp Works, 1910.
- Taylor, James C. Ottumwa: One Hundred Years A City. In cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce. Chicago: Manz Corporation, 1948, p 18.
- Waterman, Harrison L. History of Wapello County, Iowa. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1914, Vol.I, pp 241-242.

Newspaper Articles

- Ottumwa Daily Courier. 25 March 1901, p 1 "New Library Building"
30 Sept 1915, p 6 Scheiwe obituary
- Ottumwa Democrat. 25 March 1901, p 1 "Ottumwa's Library"
- Ottumwa Public Library Scrapbooks, 1900-03, 1901-03, 1906-13, 1941-48, 1948-55.
These contain literally dozens of newspaper articles, most dated but unidentified as to paper.

Interviews

- D.A. Davis, Director, Ottumwa Public Library, many, 1979-83.
- Hilda Wilson, Keeper of the Iowa Collection, Ottumwa Public Library, many, 1979-84.

Photographs

- Ten 5" x 7" glass plates of the Library from 1902-03. Ottumwa Public Library Collection.
- Photos and postcards of the Library and of Central Park between 1902 and 1912. Iowa Collection, Ottumwa Public Library.