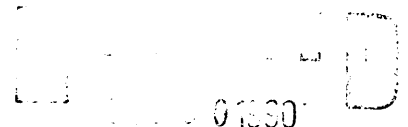


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Nevada City Free Public Library  
other names/site number Nevada City Library; Carnegie Library

### 2. Location

street & number ~~211 N. Pine St.~~ 211 N. Pine St. n/a not for publication  
city, town Nevada City n/a vicinity  
state California code CA county Nevada code 057 zip code 95959

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: California Carnegie Libraries  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Anthony Guattari Signature of certifying official 10/23/90 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Alvina Byers Signature of the Keeper 12/10/90 Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

---

EDUCATION/library

---

---

---

EDUCATION/library

---

---

---

**7. Description**

---

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

---

Romanesque

---

---

foundation 

---

Concrete

---

walls 

---

Concrete

---

roof 

---

Asbestos

---

other 

---

Brick

---

---

---

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

---

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Continuation Sheet

CALIFORNIA CARNEGIE LIBRARIES: NEVADA CITY LIBRARY

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JAN 24 1990

OHF

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The Nevada City Carnegie Library building is one of three remaining California Carnegies in the Romanesque style. Located on a corner lot which slopes steeply away in both directions, at the street entrance it is a one story building over a slightly raised basement, but at the far rear corner there are three stories over a very high foundation. Essentially rectangular in shape under a steep hipped roof, the rectangle is broken by one gable end projecting to the front and another to the side; at their junction is a small square entrance vestibule under a flat roof. The building is constructed of dark gray man-made brick, and rough and smooth concrete blocks. Except for the substitution of composition shingles for the original slate roof in the early 1940's, there has been little change since its 1907 construction, and the integrity of the building has been carefully maintained. The interior wood trim, columns, stained glass, and much of the furniture are original. Tall trees on the site were planted soon after the library opened. The building is located a block away from the historic downtown, and across from the Nevada County Court House.

From their intersection at the top of a hill, both Pine and York streets slope steeply downhill. Located at the corner of Pine and York, the Nevada City Carnegie faces Pine Street and is set back only slightly from it. Viewed from the front, the small square entrance portico is flanked on the right by the forward facing gable, and on the left by the side of the other gable, each under a steep roof. The gable end on the right is one story over a recessed basement, which emerges to become a taller raised basement as Pine Street slopes steeply from the right to left. The one story entrance portico is at grade level, so appears to be nestled into the foundation. The gable side to the left of the portico is again high above a full basement supported by an increasingly taller foundation as Pine Street continues to drop. Viewed from the sides and rear, the foundation becomes taller yet until it is virtually a two story retaining wall at the rear.

Throughout, the varieties of man-made stone, smooth, rough, and shaped and formed, create patterns and define areas. Smooth blocks are used for the first floor facade, with rough blocks of varying lengths framing the windows and serving as quoins at the corners. A stone course line surrounds the building to define the division between first floor and basement; the basement facade is rough, and below the basement windows the foundation is of smooth blocks.

Two low stairs lead from the sidewalk to door, wide and oak framed with glass panel in the top half, between pairs of pilasters simulating simplified Ionic columns. Separating each pair of columns is a narrow panel, wood below and beveled glass above. Above the door, a narrow stepped band like a cornice surrounds the portico and gives the appearance of supporting the stone arch which frames a half round stained glass transom depicting a laurel wreath and lamp of learning. On the side of the portico, a smaller half round stained glass window is similarly framed. A low horizontal rail, just above stair height, flanks the stairs and leads to a low stone wall, with notched keys, which is adjacent to the sidewalk along two sides of the building.

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CALIFORNIA CARNEGIE LIBRARIES: NEVADA CITY LIBRARY

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The bases of the windows in the gables are at the height set by the portico cornice. Gable end windows are three, the center window wider than those on either side. All are tall, single paned below a narrow transom, recessed, wood framed, and over a narrow stone sill. Near the gable peak is a single round window; it and the gable peak above it are decorated in a leafy pattern. The edge of the gable roof is framed in a carved wood bargeboard which is shaped at the eaves; along the side of the gable may be seen short shaped exposed rafters. Windows in the side gable, left of the portico, are similarly treated, and there the side exposed rafters may be clearly seen. Below each of the first floor windows, a small square basement window, double hung, is recessed within the basement facade, framed below the courseline and the foundation.

Viewed from York Street are the side of the front gable and the mass of the building. Facade and window treatment are similar except that the windows are in pairs, separated by the rougher stone. Also, a chimney is seen above the roof where the gable joins the main building. Also, on that side there is a side door to the basement. The building is here not as close to the sidewalk, and small trees are planted. On the other side of the building there is an extensive grassy area, the steep slope terraced with rock walls, where large oak, linden, and elm are planted. Here the foundation is perhaps 16' tall. In other respects -- gable end, rafters, windows -- the treatment is similar except that a chimney rises behind the gable end.

Within, wooden columns, wood trim, rafters, and some shelving and furniture remain. The old 1907 circulation desk, in deteriorating condition, was replaced by the antique counter which had been used in the City Hall of Nevada City. A brass chandelier of the period was donated by Friends of the Library. Interior changes include the 1978 painting of appropriate parts of the upstairs public areas, using a color scheme designed by specialists in the colors of the period. In 1980, the basement was remodelled, and excavating done to create a third level down for storage and to house the computer for the county library computerized circulation system. In 1987 the library was entirely re-wired by Nevada County, and in 1988 a new composition shingle roof was installed. Exterior and interior, the building has been well cared for and is in very good condition, with attention given to the retention of its integrity.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Social History  
Architecture

1906-1921

1907

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

Weeks, William H.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

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CALIFORNIA CARNEGIE LIBRARIES: NEVADA CITY LIBRARY

Section number 8 Page 1

The Nevada City Carnegie, the last of the six Romanesque Carnegies constructed in California, was completed in 1907. It is one of two remaining Romanesque buildings designed by noted Carnegie architect William H. Weeks, and is constructed of man-made brick and concrete blocks, fabricated on the site. Nevada City was an 1849 mining camp, one of the few to survive as a prosperous settlement. Its first library dates from 1850. The Odd Fellows were prominent in several of the successive libraries and it was their library that was transferred to the city in 1902. That same year, trustees purchased a building to house the library, making Nevada City one of the few communities to have its own library building. Nevertheless, Carnegie funding was sought and \$10,000 was granted in March, 1904. The building was completed in October 1907, having been delayed by the diversion of workmen to other projects in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake. Except for replacement of the slate roof with asbestos shingles, there have been no significant changes in the building. The interior has been refurbished and the lower basements made into functional rooms. The building is located within an historic district and its own significance was recognized in 1976 by the Native Daughters of the Golden West. It is anticipated that a new library will soon be constructed in Nevada City and that the Carnegie building will become an historical research library and repository for Nevada City, Grass Valley, and Nevada County historical archives.

In Nevada County, only two towns were incorporated by 1910. The first, Nevada City, incorporated in 1856, had a 1900 population of 3250 on which to base its request for Carnegie funding. Grass Valley, settled later, incorporated in 1861. It had grown faster, however, with a 1900 population of 4719. Grass Valley did not receive Carnegie funding until 1915, and then was granted \$15,000. Weeks hoped to design the Grass Valley building too, and there was a testy exchange of letters when his design was not accepted. Both libraries are standing and continue to serve as libraries.

The 1849 mining camp on Deer Creek, known both as Caldwell's Upper Story and as Deer Creek Dry Diggins, rapidly grew to a population of 1000 by 1850. The name "Nevada" was then selected, with "City" added fourteen years later to distinguish itself from the new state. In spite of many fires, the town rebuilt and grew, and incorporated in 1856. Prosperity based on mining, commerce, and manufacturing is evidenced by the showcase homes built on the slopes of the seven steep hills of the town. The Pelton wheel, which more effectively than the water wheel converted moving water into power for stamp mills, was invented and manufactured in Nevada City. It is said that the town once had a population of 10,000 and was the third largest city in California. Its 1900 population of just over 3000 was reported to Carnegie as 6000, probably including outlying areas. In later years James Bertram was much more specific about relying on the official census figures. Today the population is about 2500 but growing as people discover that they can commute from as far away as Sacramento.

Nevada City's early library history is extensive and overlapping, with libraries oriented both toward the betterment of others and for self-benefit. Held reports an 1850 reading room, but

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CALIFORNIA CARNEGIE LIBRARIES: NEVADA CITY LIBRARY

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provides no details. There was an 1857 library association started by Judge Searls to meet the need for reference books, histories, biographies, classics and "good modern books," and magazines. According to one account, this library may have been housed in the Odd Fellows building, and was perhaps the nucleus of the 1874 Odd Fellows library. Meanwhile, there was also an 1869 YMCA reading room and library. In 1902 the Odd Fellows Library was transferred to the city. In that same year, following a benefit program, an appeal for library building funds brought in \$1250. With \$250 already contributed by the Native Sons of Hydraulic Parlor, and a \$600 mortgage, the city trustees then purchased the Corcoran building and the library opened October 1, 1902.

The ladies of Nevada City, not yet formally organized, had also been considering the need for a library building and they decided to request funds from Carnegie. They enlisted the aid of city officials but the first two letters of inquiry went unanswered. Then a minister new to the town volunteered to take a third letter to then Governor Pardee for his endorsement. That letter went out under the State Seal and Carnegie's March 20, 1904, offer of \$10,000 came "by return mail."

In July 1904 the trustees purchased for \$500 a county-owned lot west of the County Court House. The newspaper reported that "The site and the peculiar shape of the lot will give an architect an opportunity to exercise his ingenuity in planning a building that will make the most of the shape and situation of the lot, in combination with the room required." The shape of the lot was roughly triangular but it was large enough to pose no particular problem. The problems, or opportunity, of "site" and "situation" may have been the fact that both York and Pine Streets are very steep downhill from the corner. Its history of several devastating fires may have influenced the city's selection of this generous sized lot, somewhat away from downtown, as well as influencing the choice of building material.

The trustees specified a concrete and brick building and a competition was held. In April 1905 the trustees announced they were considering five sets of plans, two from J.H. Rogers of Nevada City, two from a San Francisco firm not named in the news story, and one from William H. Weeks of Watsonville. All were deemed "neat and modern in every detail" and Weeks' plan was selected. However the lowest bid received was \$9500, not counting grading. Trustees requested of Carnegie an additional \$3000, without success, so in October 1905 it was decided to invite Weeks back to discuss modifications. An agreement was apparently reached and on April 6, 1906, W.J. Wilkinson, of the Granite Rock Company of Watsonville, arrived in Nevada City with his wife and two workman. Work had scarcely begun when the earthquake struck San Francisco; the subsequent rebuilding diverted workers and increased the price of materials. Nevada City experienced an especially severe winter in 1906-07, halting work for long periods, and late spring storms revealed moisture seepage in the almost complete building; also

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CALIFORNIA CARNEGIE LIBRARIES: NEVADA CITY LIBRARY

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some stonework had to be redone. Granite Rock was praised for being "square and conscientious" and the building was accepted July 29, 1907. As it turned out, Granite Rock lost \$800 on its contract.

Now the ladies of Nevada City, who had urged Carnegie funding, met to plan the opening ceremonies and, later, to plan landscaping. At the latter meeting, a Civic Improvement Club was formed, with all the ladies present being made charter members. In the case of Nevada City, it appears that the library was instrumental in the initiation of a women's club, instead of the reverse as was more usual.

The library opening reception and shower took place on October 4, 1907, from 2 til 5 pm, followed by a party and program from 8 til 11 pm. Among the gifts to the library were cash from the Elks, Eagles, and Tribe of Redmen; twelve antique chairs from the Knights Templar; painting of the Old Crawford Sawmill and twelve volumes of Picturesque California from W.H. Crawford. The landscaping took place the following Arbor Day when trees, including oak, linden, laurel, and elm, and vines and shrubs, were planted. A "Library Beautification Program" in 1975 resulted in additional planting; that may be when the liquid amber and red maple were added.

In 1972 the library was incorporated into the new county system. In 1976 the Native Daughters' Laurel Parlor placed a large bronze plaque on the building, outlining the library's history, and in 1985 historic Nevada City was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Nevada City Carnegie continues to serve the community as a library. However, future plans call for a new library building, and on October 5, 1988, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors approved making the Nevada City Library the local history branch of the Nevada County library and repository for Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Nevada County historical records.



**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

California Carnegie Survey

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 

1	0
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6	7	1	1	4	0
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4	3	4	7	7	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

AP# 05-390-16 at the southwest corner of Pine and York, City of Nevada City.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Lucy Kortum  
organization (Sonoma State University) date 11/89 (rev. 4/90)  
street & number 180 Ely Rd. telephone 707/762-6219  
city or town Petaluma state CA zip code 94954

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CALIFORNIA CARNEGIE LIBRARIES: NEVADA CITY LIBRARY

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Bobinski, George S. Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development. Chicago: American Library Association, 1969.

Held, Ray E. Public Libraries in California, 1849-1878. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963.

Held, Ray E. The Rise of the Public Library in California. Chicago: American Library Association, 1973.

Van Slyck, Abigail A. "Free to All: California Libraries and the Transformation of American Culture, 1886-1917." Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1989.

California Carnegie Library survey form: Madelyn Helling, Nevada County Librarian, Nevada City Library, 211 N. Pine St., Nevada City 95959

Provided by Madelyn Helling:

Local newspaper clippings 1902-1907, 1910-11, 1976

Notes on renovation and restoration, 1972-1988

Betty Lewis collection: Correspondence of W.H. Weeks to Grass Valley Library Trustees

**Attachments:**

Color enlargement of 1908 postcard of Nevada City Carnegie Library

Photographs of interior

Blueprint of floor plan, 1989

Also: large color xerox of Weeks' watercolor depicting proposed library building.

Hwy 49

Nevada City  
Library

Hwy 20

N. Pine St.

Commercial

#5

#2

Washington

Court House

Broad

York

Church

#1,3,

#6,4

Nevada City Free Public Library  
211 N. Pine St.  
Nevada City, CA  
Nevada County

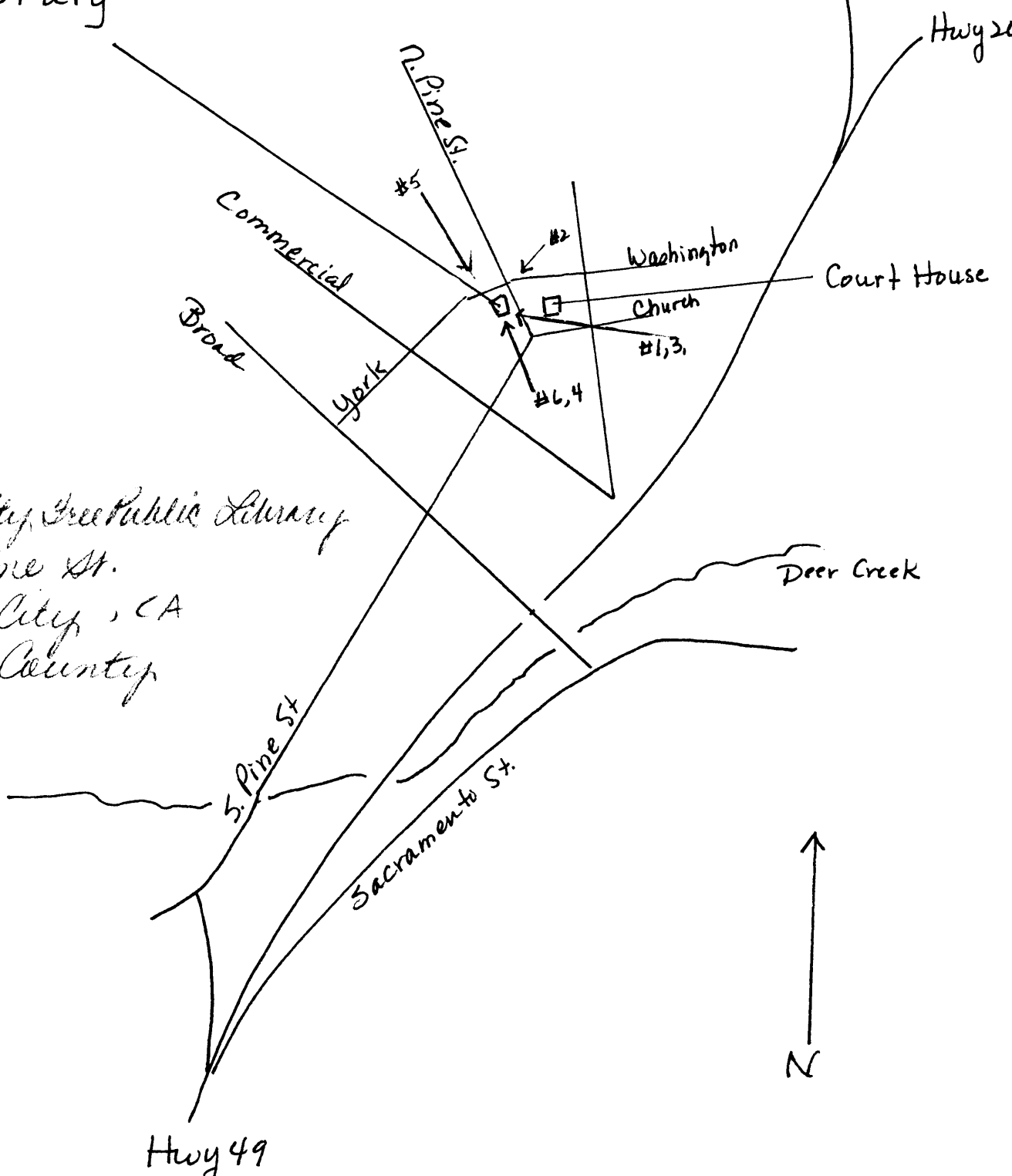
Deer Creek

S. Pine St.

Sacramento St.



Hwy 49



NEVADA CITY LIBRARY: PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Nevada City Library  
211 N. Pint St.
2. Nevada City CA 95959
  
3. Unknown
4. c. 1908
5. XC of postcard, collection of Nevada City Library
6. View to northwest
7. Photo #1
  
3. Lucy Kortum
4. June 1989
5. California Carnegie Survey
6. Entrance, view to southwest
7. Photo #2
  
6. Entrance , view to northwest
7. Photo #3
  
6. Entrance detail, view to northwest
7. Photo #4
  
6. Gable end, view to northwest
7. Photo #5
  
6. Right side, view to southeast
7. Photo #6
  
6. Left side, view to north northwest
7. Photo #7