United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Sterling Free Public (Carnegie) Library

street & number

city, town

state

2. Location

and or common Same

132 N. Broadway not for publication Sterling vicinity of Kansas 20 Rice **code** 159 code county

3. Classification

Category	Qwnership	Status	Present Use	
district	X public	<u>X</u> occupied	agriculture	museum
Xbuilding(s)	private	unoccupied	commercial	park
structure	both	work in progress	X educational	private residence
site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	entertainment	religious
object	N/A_ in process	<u>X</u> yes: restricted	government	scientific
	N/A_ being considered	yes: unrestricted	industrial	transportation
		no	military	other:

Owner of Property 4.

name Cit	y of Sterlin	g				
street & numbe	er City Ha	11				
city, town Ste	rling		_ vicinity of	state	Kansas	67579
5. Loc	ation o	f Legal De	escription			
courthouse, re	egistry of deeds, o	etc. Rice County	Clerk			
street & numb	e r Rice Cou	nty Courthouse				
city, town ^{Lyo}	ons			state	Kansas	67554
6. Rep	present	ation in E	kisting Su	rveys		
title N/A	L		has this property	been determined e	ligible?	yesX_ no
date N/A	L			federal st	ate c	ounty local
depository for	survey records	N/A			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
city, town	N/A			state	N/A	

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7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<u>_X</u> excellent	deteriorated	unaltered	$_X_$ original s	ite
good	ruins	_X_ altered	moved	date
fair	unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Sterling Free Public (Carnegie) Library (c. 1917) is located at 132 N. Broadway in Sterling, Rice County, Kansas (pop. 2,312). The one-story, brick, Jacobethan building stands on a corner lot one block north of Sterling's central business district. Its facade orientation is west. The original building measures approximately fifty-six feet from north to south and thirty-three feet from east to west. The 1982 rear addition measures fifty feet from east to west and thirty-four feet from north to south. The building retains its original function as a library.

The one-story, red brick building sits on a raised foundation with a limestone base. It is a rectangular structure with a cross gabled roof. Three bays comprise the facade, the original building is one bay deep, two bays comprise the building's rear, the addition is one bay deep. A gabled entry pavilion projects from the facade's center bay. A gabled roof addition projects from the building's rear, creating an ell-shaped structure. A small, pent roofed unit projects from the ell's center junction. A brick chimney rises from the addition's south roof slope.

A limestone belt course delineates the first floor level of the original building, this feature continues as a stylistic link on the addition. The original building retains its roof pantiles, compatible pantiles were used for the addition. The building's two original stepped gable ends and one new stepped gable end are capped with limestone or cast stone and incorporate limestone or cast stone corner blocks. This treatment is also evident on the building's projecting gable entry pavilion.

The projecting gable entry pavilion contains a large doorway with a quoined limestone surround. The original door treatment was replaced with a tinted glass and metal frame arrangement in 1979. A limestone frieze bearing the inscription "Public Library" surmounts the doorway. A diamond shaped limestone date tablet bearing the carving "1917" stands in the pavilion's gable. The tablet is delineated with a brick and limestone surround. Limestone capping and corner blocks conclude the pavilion's gable treatment. Stone steps lead up to the doorway, flanked by limestone capped brick abutments.

Identical window bays flank the pavilion. Three, 1/1 double hung windows surmounted by a narrow limestone entablature and underscored by a continuous sill form the first level fenestration. The windows appear to be new replacements.

The addition exhibits compatible fenestration. Three pairs of 1/1 double hung windows with limestone sills and lintels fenestrate the first level of the addition's northern elevation. Two pairs of the same window type fenestrate the addition's southern elevation. A door with steps pierces the eastern end of the southern elevation.

The interior of the original building maintains its overall floor plan and vestibule entrance with basement stair. The first floor ceiling in the original building was covered with dropped acoustic tiles in 1979. The original building's interior woodwork, such as the door and window surrounds, the staircase, and the vestibule door, is retained.

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nominated libraries maintain a high to moderate degree of architectural and structural integrity.

Industrialist Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) and the Carnegie Corporation significantly influenced the development and expansion of public library systems worldwide. Between 1886 and 1921 Carnegie funds assisted in the construction of 1,681 city and 108 college libraries in the United States. As a region, the Mid-West, Kansas included, did not have a well established public library system until the Carnegie Program and ranks highest in the number of communities which obtained Carnegie Libraries nationwide. Out of the forty-six states to participate in the library building program, Kansas ranks approximately eleventh in the number of Carnegie Libraries built. For many Kansas communities, the Carnegie Library represented its first library building, providing an environment that all members of the community could share for the purposes of reading, learning, and education.

Eligibility for Carnegie Library funds rested on several factors. Firstly, the population of the community had to exceed 1,000; in Kansas this indicated at least a second class city status. This population requirement generally resulted in county seat communities applying for and receiving Carnegie Libraries. Some communities with populations less than 1,000 banded together with neighboring communities to achieve the 1,000 mark and applied for township libraries, as in the case of the Peabody and Canton Township libraries. In the case of college libraries this constraint may not have applied, although the four Kansas colleges to receive Carnegie libraries were located in cities which had populations in excess of 1,000 by 1900. Secondly, the applicant had to provide a site for the library. The sites tended to be one or two blocks outside of the community's main business district. Thirdly, the applicant had to provide an annual endowment for the maintenance and improvement of the library which amounted to at least ten percent of the initial grant from the Carnegie Corporation.

This last factor contributed to the ending of the Carnegie Library Building Program in 1917, although grants for books and other improvements continued for several more decades. An inherent problem for second class cities in Kansas was the .4 mill levy restriction for libraries, making it difficult for some communities to meet the annual ten percent maintenance appropriation solely through public dollars. In 1917 the Kansas State legislature increased the library levy to .5 mill for second and third class cities, an amendment which affected most of the communities in the State that had Carnegie Libraries. In 1916, large communities such as Topeka, Wichita, Hutchinson, and Leavenworth had library mill levies of 1.06, 1.2, 1.8, and 3.5 respectively. In Kansas, the average public library grant was \$12,000 and the average college library grant was \$37,000. These monies covered the cost of the building, the necessary furniture and fixtures, and the architects' fees.

Prior to 1910, the Carnegie Corporation did not provide design guidelines for the libraries that it funded and because the library was a relatively new building type, few architects and/or builders had experience with its design. Many of the early libraries were expensive examples of the Beaux Arts style with little focus on floor plan and space

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efficiency. In 1910, Carnegie's personal secretary James Bertram developed model specifications and floorplans for proposed libraries, entitling his work <u>Notes on Library Buildings</u>. The <u>Notes on Library Buildings</u> provided the first widely circulated guidelines for library design in this country.

Bertram wrote:

Small libraries should be pland (sic) so that one librarian can oversee the entire library from a central position.... The bilding (sic) should be devoted exclusively to: (main floor) housing of books and their issue for home use; comfortable accomodations for reading them by adults and children; (basement) lecture room; necessary accommodation for heating plant; also all conveniences for the library patrons and staff. Experience seems to sho (sic) that the best results for a small general library are obtained by adopting the one-story and basement rectangular type of bilding (sic), with a small vestibule entering into one large room sub-divided as required by means of bookcases.... The rear and side windows may be kept about six feet from the floor, to giv (sic) continuous wall space for shelving. A rear wing can be added for stack-room (when future need demands it) at a minimum expense, and without seriously interfering with the library servis (sic) during its construction. The site chosen should be such as to admit lite (sic) on all sides, and be large enuf (sic) to allow extension, if ever such should become necessary.

The thirty-six Carnegie Libraries built in Kansas after 1910 reflect Bertram's precedents, exhibiting high space utilization, and often including full basements, although the raised basement is a design element employed in the earlier libraries as well. Most of these one-story libraries exhibit a three bay, Neo-Classical facade with a projecting central pedimented entry pavilion and are one bay deep. The use of native limestone is evident in some of the libraries but the most common material combination is brick with a limestone foundation. While there is some tendency toward a vernacular interpretation to the design ornamentation of these libraries, the general approach verges on high style.

Correspondence between the Carnegie Corporation and the library boards from the Kansas communities that received Carnegie Libraries indicates that the designs for these libraries were carefully scrutinized by Bertram and in many cases, were resubmitted several times before meeting his requirements. Upon the completion of a library, the library board was instructed to send a full set of blueprints and elevations of the building to the Corporation. However, recent correspondence between the Kansas State Historical Society and the Carnegie Corporation reveals that the Corporation does not have blueprints of the Kansas libraries. The Corporation does have some library photographs but the collection is not inclusive. Continuation sheet

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Three architects were particularly active in the design of Kansas Carnegie Libraries: George P. Washburn of Ottawa, Kansas designed nine, A. T. Simmons of Bloomington, Illinois designed six, and William Warren Rose of Kansas City, Kansas designed four. Washburn's libraries are primarily of the standard three-bay, Neo-Classical variety. His firm is credited with the Carnegie libraries in Burlington, Canton, Cherryvale, Columbus, Eureka, Halstead, Osawatomie, Ottawa, and Sterling. Simmons engaged in a more eclectic approach, designing libraries in Abilene, Chanute, Council Grove, Downs, Hays and Yates Center. Rose is credited with the classically inspired libraries in Argentine, Kansas City, Manhattan, and Newton. In Kansas, many Kansas based architects were commissioned to design Carnegie Libraries as well as architects from Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, and Texas.

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Today, many of the state's Carnegie Libraries are facing serious space shortages. The alternatives of adding on or vacating both present preservation problems. Additions to these libraries must be such that the building's original character is not altered. Vacating the library for a larger facility leaves the problem of an empty building, in some communities county historical societies have inherited the empty Carnegie Library. In any event, when these buildings are no longer recognized from a design standpoint as Carnegie Libraries, their architectural significance ceases.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric		landscape architectur	e religion
1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899	archeology-prenistoric archeology-historic agriculture X. architecture art commerce	conservation economics	law literature military music	e religion science sculpture X social/ humanitarian theater
_ <u>X</u> 1900–	communications	industry invention	politics/government	<pre> transportation other (specify)</pre>

Specific dates

Builder/Architect R.W. Stookey of George P. Washburn and Son Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

c. 1917

Mr. Stausbury - Builder

(Mann and Co. - 1982 Addition) The Sterling Free Public (Carnegie) Library (c. 1917) is being nominated to the National Register as part of the Carnegie Libraries of Kansas thematic resources nomination (c. 1902-1921) at the local level of significance under criteria A and C for its historical association with the Carnegie Corporation Library Building Program and for its architectural significance as a new building type. A library association was organized in Sterling in 1902. The community received their \$10,000.00 Carnegie Library grant in 1916, library construction was completed in 1917. The Sterling Free Public (Carnegie) Library is an example of the Jacobethan style.

Sixty-three Carnegie funded libraries were built in Kansas during the first three decades of the Twentieth Century; four of these libraries were built on college campuses. In most cases, the Carnegie funded library represented the community's first library building although many Kansas communities had book clubs and library organizations well before the Carnegie Corporation Library Building Program was founded. In the case of the four college libraries, the building represented the first structure which was solely devoted to housing the institution's books and providing study space. Carnegie did not solicit interest in the program, with the exception of the Anderson (Carnegie) Memorial Library which was built by Carnegie as a memorial to his friend John Anderson and was the first college library nationally to receive Carnegie funding. Communities initiated contact with the corporation by letter, indicating their desire for a Carnegie funded library. If the Corporation responded favorably to the request, a firm local commitment to the program's requirements, which generally resulted in a public election in support of the library, followed. Obviously these actions represented a perceived need within the community for a library building and the Carnegie Corporation Library Building Program represented an excellent way to secure the funds to build one. Many of the Carnegie Libraries built in Kansas reflect the high space utilization design guidelines promoted by the Carnegie Corporation after 1910, underscoring the point that before the Carnegie Corporation Library Building Program, few architects and/or builders had experience designing this building type.

Twenty-eight Carnegie Libraries are included in this nomination (see inventory). Twelve Carnegie Libraries have been listed individually on the National Register: Argentine, Case Library (Baker University, Baldwin City), Caldwell, Dodge City, Emporia, Goodland, Lawrence, Leavenworth, Newton, Ottawa, Parsons, and Pittsburg. The Carnegie Library at Arkansas City is included in a downtown historic district. Thirteen Carnegie Libraries have been demolished: Great Bend, Halstead, Hays, Iola, Kansas City, McPherson, Morrison Library (Fairmont College, Wichita), Olathe, Osawatomie, Plainville, Russell, Salina, and Washington. Five Carnegie Libraries have been altered enough to make them ineligible for the National Register: Abilene, Garden City, Hiawatha, Lyons, and Stockton. (The nominations for the Concordia, Eureka, Independence, and Winfield libraries were deferred.) Twenty-two of the nominated libraries retain their original function. All of the buildings are in use or have an active use planned for them. The

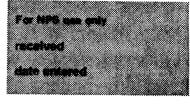
9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheet.

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