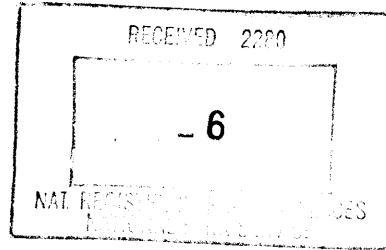


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 an 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: Etowah Carnegie Library
other names/site number Etowah Public Library, Etowah City Hall

2. Location

street & number 723-725 Ohio Avenue N/A not for publication
city or town Etowah N/A vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county McMinn code 107 zip code 37331

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for 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.)

Robert L. Hayer 2/4/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
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 the 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:

Elson H. Beall 3/23/03
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: Library

EDUCATION: School

GOVERNMENT: City Hall

RELIGION: Chapel

SOCIAL: Meeting Hall

EDUCATION: Library

GOVERNMENT: City Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other Marble (door arch)
Granite (lintels & sills)

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

N/A

(Mark "x" in all 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 grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 year 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.)

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): N/A

- 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

Government

Social History

Period of Significance

1915-1952

Significant Dates

1915-1916, 1922

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Southeast Tennessee Development District

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre **USGS Quadrangle:** Etowah, TN 125 SE

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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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 Annie McDonald, Historic Preservation Planner

organization Southeast Tennessee Development District date October 2002

street & number Post Office Box 4757/535 Chestnut Street telephone 423.266.5781

city or town Chattanooga state TN zip code 37405-0757

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Etowah c/o John Solsbee, City Manager

street & number 725 Ohio Avenue telephone 423.263.2202

city or town Etowah state TN zip code 37331

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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1Etowah Carnegie Library
McMinn County, Tennessee

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Etowah Carnegie Library, a Colonial Revival-style building constructed from 1915 to 1916, faces west at 723-725 Ohio Avenue in Etowah, McMinn County. The two-story masonry edifice is eighty feet wide by forty feet deep with a rectangular footprint. It features stretcher bond brick walls with a header/stretcher row alternating every sixth course. Four brick chimneys pierce the asphalt shingle-clad hipped roof. All window openings feature wood sash, square-edged wood surrounds and rock-faced granite lintels and sills. A two-course projecting water table and corbelled brick cornice below boxed eaves encircle the structure. The library sits back from the road on a level lot with an alley to the north, an asphalt parking lot to the east, and a mid-twentieth century police station to the south.

Exterior

The three-bay-wide west façade (**Photo 1**) features symmetrical fenestration flanking a glass-and-paneled double-leaf wood door, which is positioned half way between the ground level and second story. A four-light semicircular fanlight with a round-arched, smooth-dressed marble lintel and keystone surmounts the entry. The name "CARNEGIE" is carved in bas-relief in the marble arch. One-light fixed sash windows flank the door. The overall appearance of the entry (**Photo 2**) mimics a Palladian window, an element of classical design that is frequently incorporated into Colonial Revival-style buildings. Leading to the entrance is a flight of fourteen steps that taper to the half-story landing. Stretcher bond brick balustrades with smooth concrete coping border the steps. Shallow brick pilasters delineate the three bays with three window openings piercing each of the outer bays at both stories. The central window openings at each story contain paired window sash with shared surrounds and wood mullions (**Photo 3**), while the remaining eight openings feature single 1/1 double-hung windows.

The south elevation (**Photo 4**) is three bays wide with a central glass-and-paneled double-leaf door capped by a wide two-light fixed transom (**Photo 5**). A single 1/1 double-hung window pierces each of the outer two bays. Directly above the door are paired 1/1 double-hung windows between single 1/1 double-hung windows.

A syncopated series of window openings on the first story is repeated on the second story of the three-bay-wide east elevation (**Photo 6**). Eight 1/1 double-hung windows, two of which are paired with a shared surround, and a flush single-leaf wood door with a one-light fixed transom and wood surround pierce the first story. Nine 1/1 double-hung windows, two of which are paired, are located in the second story.

The three-bay-wide north elevation (**Photo 7**) is nearly identical to the south elevation yet displays a central plate glass replacement door with boarded transom at the ground level.¹ Two 1/1 double-

¹ Although the door has been replaced, presence of the extant transom light and historic documentation suggest that this opening has always been a door rather than a window that was later converted to a door. Bertram's "Plan A" from his "Notes on the Direction of Library Buildings" (in Abigail

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2Etowah Carnegie Library
McMinn County, Tennessee

hung windows flank the door. Paired 1/1 double-hung windows pierce the east and west bays of the second story on either side of a single 1/1 double-hung window in the central bay.

Interior

The primary floor of the Etowah Carnegie Library is the second story, which functions as the library reading room, circulation area and staff office. A central flight of five stairs with a rectilinear balustrade leads from the entry vestibule to the library (**Photo 8**). The balustrade terminates in a square newel post with recessed panels bordered by egg-and-dart molding (**Photo 9**). To the immediate north, a narrow, enclosed staircase descends to a glass-and-paneled single-leaf door (**Photo 15**) that leads to the offices on the ground level. The historic character of the library is retained in the building's conspicuous simplicity. The second floor is a wide, expansive room (**Photo 10**) with only one main division: a small room at the northwest corner is partitioned for use as a children's reading room (**Photos 13 & 14**). The entry into this original room is through an historic doorway with a five-paneled single-leaf wood door with a one-light transom and molded wood surround. A small restroom that dates to the initial construction is accessible in the southwest corner of the children's reading room through a five-paneled single-leaf wood door. Original built-in wood bookcases that rise to a height of approximately four feet surround the perimeter of the room. Original freestanding bookcases also occupy the center of the library (**Photos 9, 10, 11 & 12**). The library also features original plaster walls and a modern dropped ceiling.

The first floor serves as offices for the Etowah City Hall. Entries lead into the north and south sides of the ground floor, with the latter opening into a large lecture hall. This room, which served as an auditorium during the building's tenure as a high school from 1916 until 1922, is a meeting room with a circa 1965 raised dais along the west wall (**Photo 17**). Small offices have been created in the southeast (circa 1980), northeast (circa 1965), and northwest (circa 1965) corners of the room (**Photos 16 & 18**). The north entrance opens into a small vestibule that precedes a hallway extending to the lecture hall (**Photo 19**). A small office, restrooms, and stair to the second floor are located west of the hallway, while one large office is located to the east. The interior finishes of the ground level include historic window surrounds, non-historic single-leaf doors, non-historic acoustical tile on the ceilings, and non-historic wood paneling on the walls.

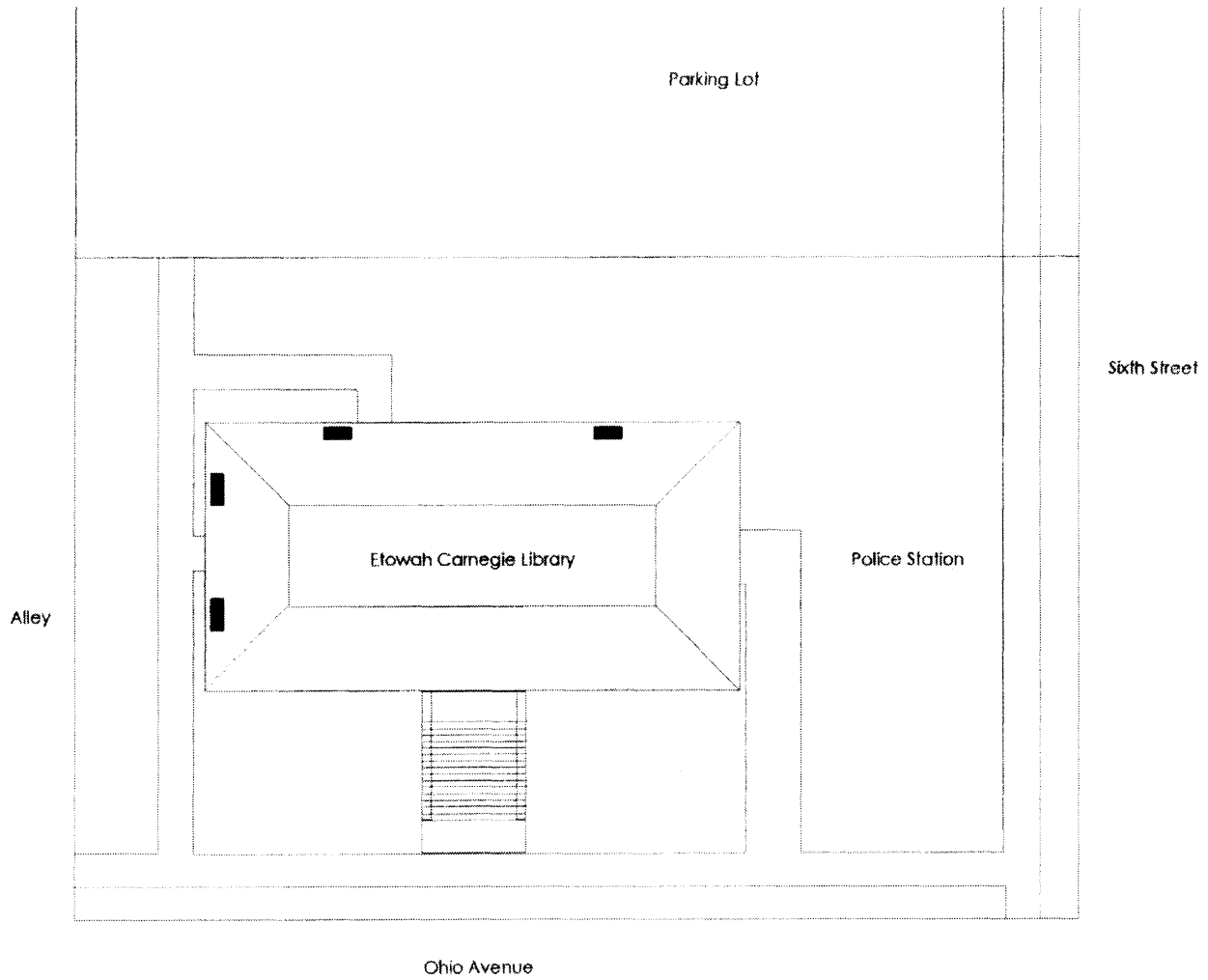
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Etowah Carnegie Library
McMinn County, Tennessee

Site Plan
(not to scale)



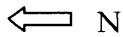
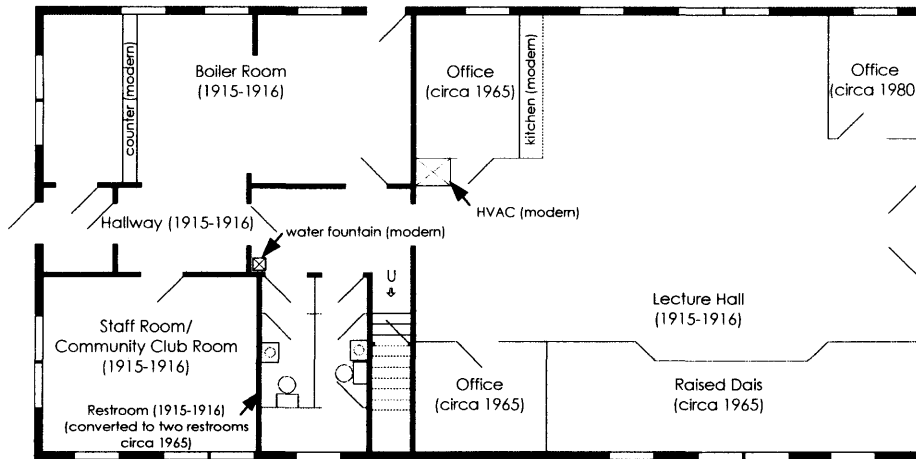
United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

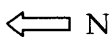
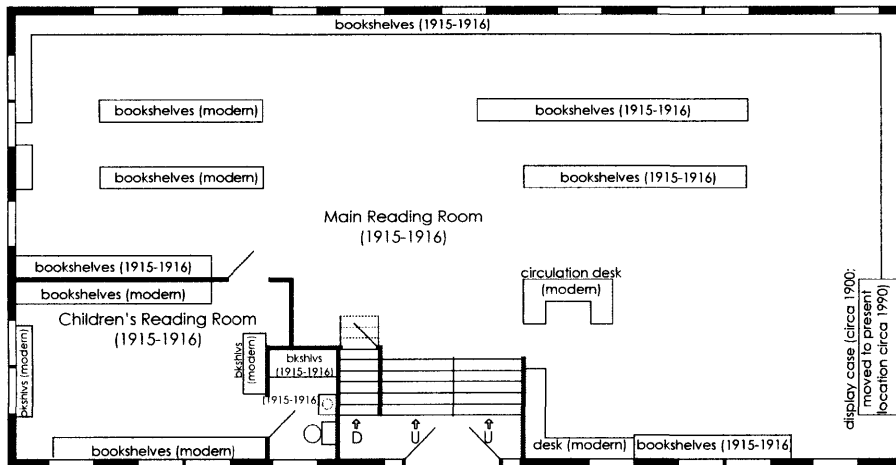
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Etowah Carnegie Library
McMinn County, Tennessee

First Floor Plan
(not to scale)



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
(not to scale)



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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5Etowah Carnegie Library
McMinn County, Tennessee**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Etowah Carnegie Library is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C for its local significance in the areas of architecture, education, government and social history. Constructed from 1915 to 1916 with an \$8,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation, the building has served not only as Etowah's only public library, but also as the city's first high school during the period from 1916 to 1922, and as local government offices from 1916 to present day. Exemplary of Andrew Carnegie's philanthropic spirit, its presence in the burgeoning railroad community served to better the quality of life for the city's many residents by offering a public forum through which they could broaden their knowledge by participating in reading programs, attending specialized classes in business and home economics, and listening to public lectures and discussions. Thus, the library qualifies for National Register listing in the area of social history. The intact and preserved building displays the more restrained classicism of the Colonial Revival style, making it a significant architectural landmark in the community. The building retains integrity of association, design, feeling, location, materials, setting, and workmanship. The period of significance extends from the commencement of construction in 1915 to 1952, a date justified by the building's continued use as a library and city hall.

From Rural Farmland to Railroad Town, 1905-1915

Etowah blossomed in the early twentieth century as the headquarters of the Louisville & Nashville (L & N) Railroad Company's Atlanta Division. Its birth took place in 1905, when the L & N settled on the land between rural Wetmore to the south and Tellico Junction (now Englewood) to the north as the place to establish the new community. Upon the rolling rural landscape the company established a town plat and erected an expansive two-story office building and passenger depot (Etowah Depot, NR 10/17/77) next to the railroad tracks and an industrial corridor.²

Incorporated in 1909, Etowah was typical of late nineteenth and early twentieth century town planning in that its residential neighborhoods surrounded the central business district, which stretched from north to south along Tennessee Avenue. Only the west side of Tennessee Avenue was developed commercially. The railroad company retained land on the east side of the road for construction of the railroad lines and associated industrial buildings such as the depot, machine shops, and storage sheds.

The community developed primarily between 1905 and 1930, when the economic turmoil of the Great Depression dealt a strong blow to the railroad, which had already experienced consolidation and lay-offs in the 1920s. Until the depression, however, Etowah exploded in a phase of growth that gave rise to single-family dwellings in the Queen Anne and Craftsman styles (Etowah Historic District, NR 7/25/96). But Etowah still needed to establish a sound program for education of the community's increasing number of children.

² McMinn County Office of the Recorder, "Louisville Property Company's Plat of Etowah, McMinn County, Tennessee," deed book 2P, pages 364-365, 1906.

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McMinn County, Tennessee

By 1910, Etowah was home to nearly 1,000 residents who were under the age of twenty-one. In that year, the city passed a bond issue to construct the first school. The two-story building, located along Fifth Street between Indiana and Louisiana avenues, was rather modest in size and served children only to the eighth grade. Nevertheless, it enabled Etowah to fill an educational void. The school even housed a small library. This elementary school was the first public building constructed in the city and remained the community's only public building for another five years.³

During this period, an international movement was taking place that would forever change public perception of libraries. Throughout the nineteenth century, the personal libraries of wealthy men were laying the foundation for private, members-only libraries in the largest cities in the United States. These libraries were not, however, constructed for the general populace. Beginning in the 1880s, steel magnate Andrew Carnegie provided monetary gifts to towns with which he had a personal connection. He later extended this program to any community that was willing and able to meet his requirements. Many of Carnegie's charitable grants were used for the construction of free public libraries that would be accessible to all residents.⁴

The culmination of his philanthropic career was the 1911 creation of the Carnegie Corporation, whose purpose was to administer the public library grant program. The Carnegie Corporation would provide grants to any applicant town with a population above 1,000 inhabitants, with the amount of the donation typically set at two dollars per capita. Recipient communities were required to provide a building site and tax their residents at the annual rate of ten percent of the total gift for maintenance, book purchases and staff salaries.⁵

Wrestling with the Carnegie Corporation, 1915-1922

In 1915, the Etowah government instructed community leaders to form a committee charged with pursuing a library grant from the Carnegie Corporation. Members of the committee included local businessmen C. D. Bevan, editor of the *Etowah Enterprise*, and Joseph P. Dunn, an automobile dealer. Men involved in the construction trades, including building contractor Haywood York and lumber dealer John M. Johnson were also on the committee. T. A. Aber, a civil engineer for the L & N Railroad, and A. B. Bayless, the railroad superintendent, established the railroad's presence on the committee. City recorder N. Z. Dewees represented the local government.⁶ This mixture of public and private interests ensured that the committee would represent nearly all sectors of the community.

³ Etowah Carnegie Public Library, "About the Library," *Etowah Carnegie Public Library Home Page*, n.d., <www.etowahlibrary.com/about.html> (7 August 2002). Although the portion of the school constructed in 1910 has since been demolished, a 1922 freestanding expansion of the facility, located immediately south of the original building, remains extant. While the rapidly deteriorating building has been decommissioned as a school, a portion of it is still being used as a community center.

⁴ Abigail A. Van Slyck, "The Utmost Amount of Effectiv Accommodation; Andrew Carnegie and the Reform of the American Library," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 1. (December 1991): 365.

⁵ Van Slyck, "The Utmost Amount of Effectiv Accommodation," 369-370.

⁶ Etowah Carnegie Public Library.

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McMinn County, Tennessee

There were, however, groups with no representation. No women served on the committee, even though roughly half of the Carnegie Libraries in Tennessee were funded by grants initiated by women's clubs.⁷ Furthermore, there were no African Americans on the committee. This characteristic, however, was typical of committees across Tennessee and the southern United States, and was due to segregationist policies that permeated the southern United States.⁸

Shortly after its formation, the committee commenced the grant application. In July of 1915, N. Z. Dewees approached James Bertram, the Secretary-Treasurer for the Carnegie Corporation, and inquired about the grant program. In a letter that painted the city's residents as energetic and characterized by a strong work ethic, he elaborated on the community's high percentage of home ownership and the residents' desire to promote the worthy cause of a local library. Yet Dewees also indicated that the local government, in its rapid progression from farmland to city, had passed as many bonds for public improvements as were possible. In 1915, the city had streets and sidewalks, but no municipal buildings other than the school. By depicting a community that was public-spirited yet financially strained, Dewees was successful in his appeal to the Carnegie Corporation.⁹

On 6 October 1915, the city passed a resolution accepting the corporation's \$8,000 grant for the construction of a free public library. Carnegie's offer hinged however, on the ability of the city to provide a suitable building location and to allocate the yearly sum of \$800—ten percent of the total award—to offset maintenance costs and a librarian's salary. During that same meeting, the local government resolved to levy a property tax increase to comply with the Carnegie Corporation's requirements.¹⁰ Six days later, the city agreed to erect the proposed library on Lots 10 and 11 in Block 8 of the Louisville Property Company's plat of Etowah, Tennessee.¹¹

The Louisville Property Company—the real estate branch of the L & N Railroad—had sold Lots 10 and 11 to the local government in 1911 with the stipulation that Etowah would use the land only for the “extending of municipal buildings....”¹² This central location also proved suitable for the construction of the proposed library. In October 1915, the Louisville Property Company granted the local government permission to construct a library on the property provided that the “...said Library Building shall be and remain a municipal building and a public library....”¹³ This agreement between the Louisville Property Company and the local authorities would later cause a rift between Etowah and the Carnegie Corporation.

⁷ Robbie D. Jones, “Etowah Carnegie Library,” 2 August 2002, personal e-mail (2 August 2002).

⁸ Martha Ann Boyd, telephone interview by author, 16 October 2002, Chattanooga, handwritten manuscript, Southeast Tennessee Development District, Chattanooga, Tennessee; see also Claudia Hitchcock, telephone interview by author, 16 October 2002, Chattanooga, handwritten manuscript, Southeast Tennessee Development District, Chattanooga, Tennessee; and Robbie D. Jones, Nashville, to Annie McDonald, Chattanooga, 5 August 2002, handwritten manuscript. The oral interview indicate that while African-American families did live in the surrounding communities of Parkstown, Stumptown, East Etowah, and “Stink Hollow,” there were only one or two families living within the city limits through the 1940s.

⁹ N. Z. Dewees, Etowah, to James Bertram, New York, 28 July 1915, typed transcript, Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, 1872-2000, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York.

¹⁰ Etowah, McMinn County, Board of Commissioners, Minutes, 6 October 1915.

¹¹ Etowah, McMinn County, Board of Commissioners, Minutes, 12 October 1915.

¹² McMinn County Office of the Recorder, “Louisville Property Company to Town of Etowah, Tennessee,” deed book 2W, page 424, 9 February 1911.

¹³ McMinn County Office of the Recorder, “Louisville Property Company to Town of Etowah, Tennessee,” deed book 3B, page 121, 30 October 1915.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8Etowah Carnegie Library
McMinn County, Tennessee

Once the project was deemed eligible for funding and the city carried out its responsibilities, Dewees coordinated with the Carnegie Corporation to settle on an appropriate building design. Unfortunately, this process did not progress as smoothly as the initial application. Instead, Dewees and Bertram spent October and November struggling to reach consensus on the library's layout. Bertram had already emphasized that he wished to correspond only with the city authority rather than with architects or contractors. After Dewees initially submitted the blueprints on 14 October 1915, the Carnegie Corporation requested design revisions four times before finally approving the plans.¹⁴

One of the earliest obstacles in the design was the overall height of the building, including the grade-level position of the ground floor. The original plans called for a flight of twenty-one steps ascending to the level of the main floor above a fully exposed ground story. Bertram indicated that this trait was atypical of Carnegie-funded libraries and recommended that the architect lower the ground story by four feet with a five-foot reveal rising above grade.¹⁵ In response, Etowah retained the grade-level ground story and merely shifted the position of the stairs inward and the door downward to a position between the ground and main stories. Only fifteen steps were exposed on the exterior, while an additional six steps rose to the main floor from an interior landing. This change gave the building the appearance of a lower height than the previous design.¹⁶

The greatest challenge was the lower level floor plan. The space was initially divided into five main rooms: an auditorium, staff office, janitor's room, workroom, and storage room.¹⁷ The Carnegie Corporation indicated that the combination of the staff office with the workroom and the janitor's room with the storage area would provide a larger room to be used as an auditorium.¹⁸ The city complied, only to be met with Bertram's suggested relocation of the restrooms.¹⁹ Etowah's frustration was apparent in a letter from Dewees to Bertram dated 10 November 1915. In it, he

¹⁴ Exhaustive research failed to produce an architect for the Etowah Carnegie Library. This information is not on file in the records of the Carnegie Corporation at Columbia University. Neither has the name of an architect or builder survived in the records of the City of Etowah. Although the *Etowah Enterprise* was published as early as 1907, issues are available on microfilm only as far back as 1924, precluding discovery of this information through contemporary accounts. Nevertheless, the architect was most likely employed by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company. This company had the greatest engineering resources available in the small community, and the presence of three L & N employees on the library committee suggests that the railroad had great interest in seeing the project completed. Furthermore, this involvement of the L & N would ensure that the building was appropriately designed to incorporate municipal and library functions as stipulated in the deeds.

¹⁵ James Bertram, New York, to N. Z. Dewees, Etowah, 18 October 1915, typed manuscript, Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, 1872-2000, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York.

¹⁶ Although the motivation behind this illusion is presently unknown, it is very likely that Etowah desired a fully revealed ground story for its intended use as city government offices to fulfill the earlier agreement with the Louisville Property Company. By shifting the entrance steps inward, the local authorities would be directly addressing Bertram's complaint about the lengthy flight of steps without compromising any part of their intended plan for the building to serve mixed uses. It is also likely that environmental issues played a role in the library's design. The lot on which it was constructed was adjacent to a canal that ran along Eighth Street. The canal, which was prone to seasonal overflowing, made the surrounding ground spongy and would have caused below-grade rooms to have moisture problems. There is no written documentation, however, that supports this notion.

¹⁷ Again, proof of Etowah's reasoning behind this seemingly inefficient use of space is presently unknown. There is great possibility, however, that the city government intended to use the lower floor as offices and classrooms without the knowledge of the Carnegie Corporation. The size and number of rooms on the lower level, combined with Etowah's conflict resolution for the entry steps, at least suggests that the city had an ulterior motive behind these design irregularities.

¹⁸ James Bertram, New York, to N. Z. Dewees, Etowah, 29 October 1915, typewritten letter, files on microfilm, ca. 1886-1977, Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, 1872-2000, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York.

¹⁹ James Bertram, New York, to N. Z. Dewees, Etowah, 4 November 1915, typewritten letter, files on microfilm, ca. 1886-1977, Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, 1872-2000, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York.

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indicated that the city was ready to build and tired of arguing over the location of the restrooms.²⁰ Despite these setbacks, Dewees finally submitted revised plans on 27 November.

It is no surprise that these final plans bore great resemblance to “Plan A” (Figures 1 & 2) espoused by Bertram in the third version of his “Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings,” a pamphlet he distributed to all communities that applied to the Carnegie Corporation for financial assistance. Years of dealing with architects’ monumental designs that typically exceeded their modest budgets left Bertram reluctant to deal directly with architects (hence his correspondence with city recorder Dewees) and driven toward conformity in library design. The six plans in Bertram’s “Notes” varied greatly and allowed for consideration of

building lots that were narrow, located on a corner or unusually small. Each of the six schematic drawings incorporated a basement over half devoted to a large lecture room. In addition, the lower level typically housed men’s and ladies’ restrooms; a modestly sized “staff room” that could double as a trustee’s meeting room, club room or work room; and a janitor’s room that also housed the boiler and fuel systems. The main floors depicted in “Notes” were, for the most part, undivided and separated into reading rooms for adults and children. By adhering to the most appropriate of the six plans, the community requesting funds could cut down on their architect’s fees and expedite the planning process.²¹

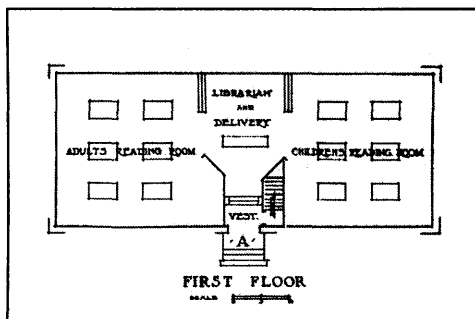


Figure 2: Plan A's layout of the reading rooms was open, with space dedicated to children's and adults' sections.

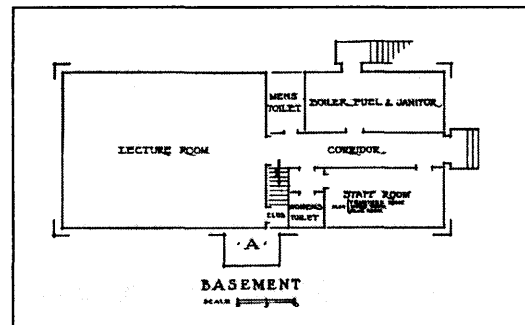


Figure 1: The basement layout of Bertram's Plan A incorporated staff rooms, restrooms, and a lecture room along the axis of a corridor.

Although the original drawings were lost, the plans for the Etowah Carnegie Library reflected the influence of James Bertram without copying the exact layout of “Plan A.” Differences between the recommended layout and Etowah’s

design were evident not only in the overall dimensions—which adhered more to those of Bertram’s “Plan B”—but also on the first floor and in the library. The lower floor of the Etowah building, which reversed the position of the lecture and staff rooms, featured entries on both ends of the structure. While a single-leaf door opened into the corridor between the janitor’s room and the staff room (as suggested by Bertram’s plan), a wide double-leaf door opened directly into the lecture room. The restrooms, which had been a point of contention, also diverged from their suggested positions. The layout of the main floor caused little or no controversy between Bertram and Dewees. Atypically incorporating a separate room for either reference or children’s books, this floor

²⁰ Jones, handwritten manuscript.

²¹ Abigail A. VanSlyck, *Fire to All*, 35-40.

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still retained the airy, open plan favored by the Carnegie Corporation. The organization finally approved Etowah's plans in early December 1915.²²

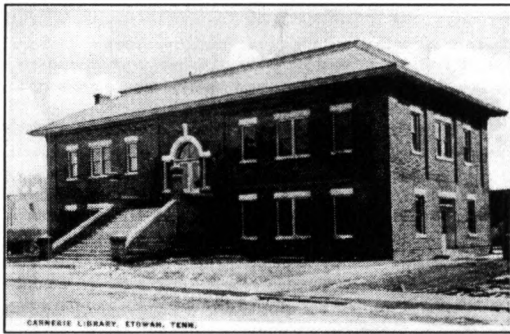


Figure 3: Circa 1916 image of the Etowah Carnegie Library after construction. The imposing edifice dominated the landscape.

The product of these machinations was a uniquely executed building unlike most other libraries funded by the Carnegie Corporation. As opposed to many Carnegie libraries throughout the United States, which were often high-style Neoclassical buildings with extensive interior and exterior ornament, Etowah's library (**Figure 3**) was considerably restrained. The double-hung windows had only rock-faced granite lintels and sills that contrasted with the dark red brick of the exterior. The greatest

detail was reserved for the entrance, which consisted of a glass-and-paneled double-leaf door and semicircular fanlight flanked by abbreviated sidelights. This design creatively interpreted the widely popular Palladian profile. A continuous limestone lintel with an exaggerated keystone highlighted the entry. These details, combined with shallow pilasters that delineated each of the elevations' three bays and the minimalist brick and concrete stairs, created a Colonial Revival-style building that was more in keeping with domestic forms and ornament that would rise to popularity during the 1930s and 1940s.

The Etowah Carnegie Library was also one of the most stylistically unique and modern buildings in the city. Constructed during Etowah's period of greatest development, the library contrasted greatly with every other building in the community. Etowah was home to a great number of Craftsman-style foursquares and bungalows with a few Queen Anne-style dwellings interspersed throughout the residential area. These domestic forms established a comfortable and informal neighborhood environment enhanced by tree-lined avenues that were bordered by sidewalks. The library even stood out among Etowah's non-domestic buildings. The wood framed L & N Railroad Depot was a paragon of Queen Anne massing and ornament. The commercial buildings constructed in the first ten years of the city's development had little to no stylistic detailing. They were primarily one- and two-part commercial blocks never surpassing three stories in height. While the earliest frame examples have not survived, the

brick commercial buildings from the early twentieth century feature minimal ornament in the treatment of windows and storefronts. Perhaps taking their cue from the widely

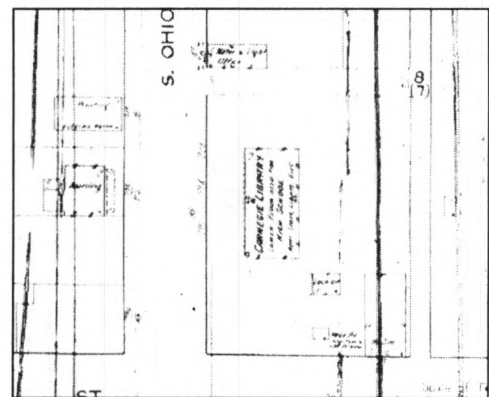


Figure 4: The 1916 Sanborn Map shows the Etowah Carnegie Library as an imposing structure that dominated the few surrounding buildings.

²² Jones, handwritten manuscript.

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popular City Beautiful Movement, designers of the library bestowed upon the community a formal, classically inspired edifice of unprecedented style and proportions.

The earliest *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* reveals that the Library stood majestically on an open lot in a part of town that was yet only minimally developed (**Figure 4**). Located near the southeast corner of the library was a small jail. An even smaller hose house for the local fire department was sited at the extreme southern end of the property. A blacksmith's shop was sited to the far southeast of the library. Positioned on the boundary between the commercial district and the residential neighborhood, this part of Ohio Avenue was not greatly developed with dwellings, businesses, or institutional buildings. Indeed, many of the lots along Ohio Avenue were still vacant in the 1910s.²³ The minimal development of the landscape enabled the Carnegie Library to dominate the few surrounding structures.

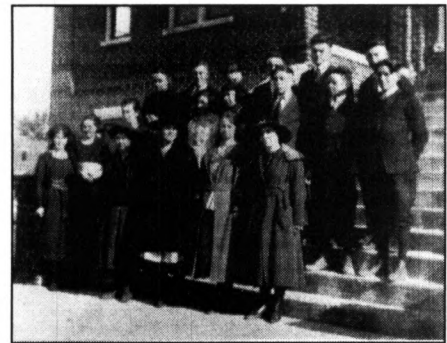


Figure 5: Circa 1917 image of the first high school graduating class on the steps of the Etowah Carnegie Library.

Although some written information suggests that the building served as a high school between 1918 and 1922, the 1916 map and a *Chattanooga Daily Times* article indicated that the lower floor was used as a high school immediately after construction (**Figure 5**).²⁴ While the first-floor rooms were modestly sized, they were nevertheless sufficient to hold classes. The presence of high school-level educational opportunities was significant for this young town. Education and personal advancement were of great importance to the community leaders and residents of Etowah, as evinced by a full-page newspaper announcement:

Every boy and girl in Etowah is a potential asset to us all. Right development of this asset implies better schools, wholesome amusement, promising industrial and professional opportunity—environment that recognizes the developing power of youth and gives it a real chance.²⁵

By providing children a solid public education through the twelfth grade, Etowah gave its future generations a foundation of knowledge that would ideally benefit the entire community.

The *Chattanooga Daily Times* article about the new library further revealed that one ground level room served as the office of the City Recorder. Until that time, the recorder's office was located in a rented office in the dilapidated wood-framed post office near the railroad tracks.²⁶ By moving the recorder's office to the Etowah Carnegie Library, the local government eliminated the need to pay

²³ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Etowah, McMinn County, Tennessee* (Philadelphia: Sanborn Map Company, 1916).

²⁴ *Ibid.*; see also "New Library for Etowah," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, 16 December 1916.

²⁵ "Let's Keep Him in Etowah," *Etowah Enterprise*, 7 May 1927.

²⁶ Linda Caldwell, et al, eds. *Growing Up with the I. & N.: Life and Times in a Railroad Town* (Etowah, Tennessee: Etowah Arts Commission, 1989), 22; see also *McMinn County, Tennessee and Its People, 1819-1997* (Waynesville, North Carolina: County Heritage, Incorporated, 1997), 17.

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rent while offering at least one city employee prime office space. The remaining city offices would not relocate to the new library for another eight years.

This alternative use of the lower floor contradicted Andrew Carnegie's intentions for the libraries constructed with his grants. Carnegie intended these libraries to serve as non-sectarian public spaces open to the entire community. Acceptable uses beyond the function of a library included meeting rooms, clubrooms, museum space, art galleries, and auditoria.²⁷ Although its service as a high school promoted many of the same ideals as museums, galleries, and public meeting halls, this function ensured that a portion of the building would be available only on a very limited basis and would not have the broad accessibility intended by Carnegie.

As a result, Bertram repeatedly reprimanded Etowah for its "breach of faith."²⁸ Upon publication of the 1916 newspaper article proclaiming the completion of the library, Bertram forwarded a copy of the article to city mayor W. E. Hunter and demanded an explanation for the city's inappropriate actions. The mayor justified the city's discordant use of the lower floor by indicating that the city recorder was acting as the building custodian and that high school classes were being held in the lower level rooms because the existing grammar school was too small to house the advanced grades. Hunter even admitted to using the auditorium as a chapel. Bertram responded by scolding the mayor for the city's decisions. He did not, however, require Etowah to repay the grant or pay another form of restitution to the Carnegie Corporation. Even upon the request of the L & N Railroad Company to permit the continued use of the building as a high school, Bertram only responded in the negative.²⁹ Ultimately, the Carnegie Corporation had no way to punish the local government for its actions.

Freedom of Use and Social Enterprise, 1922-1952

In 1922, when the Etowah High School was finally constructed,³⁰ James Bertram wrote a letter to Etowah librarian Pearl Burnham indicating that the town had violated the trust of the Carnegie Corporation by permitting the lower floor to serve as a school and city offices.³¹ This letter effectively released the library from complying with Carnegie's regulations regarding building use and enabled the city to move all its government offices to the lower floor (**Figure 6**). The conversion of the classrooms to city offices required few structural alterations to the interior space. The use of the auditorium as an assembly hall for commission meetings and public hearings continued without change to the room.

²⁷ Jones, personal e-mail.

²⁸ Jones, handwritten manuscript.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ The school, which was located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Fifth Street and North Washington Avenue, was demolished in the late twentieth century.

³¹ Jones, handwritten manuscript.

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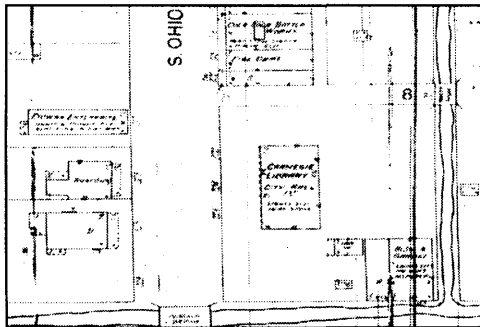


Figure 6: The 1925 *Sanborn Map* reveals that all of the city hall offices moved to the library after the High School was constructed in 1922.

Another change that occurred at this transitional time was the institution of a membership fee. Andrew Carnegie emphasized that libraries constructed with grants from the Carnegie Corporation must be open to the public free of charge. The rift that developed between the Carnegie Corporation and the library in Etowah enabled the latter institution to begin charging a fee of one dollar per year to all residents who wished to obtain a membership card during the normal part-time operating hours on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons.³² Although the library assured that the nominal charge was considerably less than any of the new books cost to purchase, the membership fee was enough to price out residents who had only poverty-level incomes.³³

The library nevertheless continued to grow as an educational institution despite its ideological divergence from Carnegie's ideals. In the mid-1920s, the library became a member of the American Library Association (ALA). Membership in the national organization enabled the library to expand its horizons as an institution for learning. The public announcement of its pending application detailed the goal of the ALA and its member libraries:

Its purpose is to attract promising young men and women, who have the necessary personal and education qualification to do library work as a profession. To hold annual conferences for the discussion of library topics. To assist in making books a vital, work, educational force in American life. To raise the professional standards, dignify library service, and improve library salaries.³⁴

The article further elaborated on the direct benefit to the Etowah library that ALA membership would have. The librarian stated, "It will also entitle our library to free copies of many magazines, papers and pamphlets, which will be a great benefit to the schools in reference work."³⁵

Library membership was maintained through fund drives and incentives. When necessary, local organizations would aid the library by selling memberships throughout the community. In September of 1927, the local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union held one such drive. Women in the group canvassed Etowah's neighborhoods by going door-to-door and

³² The library is presently open five days a week. No library records exist to suggest a date or time period when the library changed its hours of operation from part-time to full-time. Furthermore, none of the present staff or board members knows when this change took place. It is possible that the shift from part-time to full-time hours of operation occurred in the 1950s or 1960s when the library came under the jurisdiction of the Fort Loudoun Regional Library.

³³ "Library Notes," *Etowah Enterprise*, 3 December 1925. The library has returned to a free membership system. While the time period during which the fee-based program was discontinued is presently unknown, it was most likely during the mid-twentieth century shift to the regional library system.

³⁴ "Library Notes," *Etowah Enterprise*, 28 December 1924.

³⁵ "Library Notes," *Etowah Enterprise*, 28 December 1924.

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soliciting the one-dollar memberships.³⁶ Other activities that promoted library membership included story hour on Saturdays. Sponsored by the Mothers' Club of the Child Conservation League, this weekly activity promoted regular membership by expanding the library's clientele.³⁷ The library could, through such reading advocacy activities, reach an even wider audience.

Through the 1920s, the building took on a significant role in the lives of local residents. Its multi-disciplinary uses enabled the building to become the foremost civic space. More than the Gem Theater, any of the city's churches, or the grounds of the L & N Railroad depot, the library was the ultimate extension of the school system, private homes and local non-profit organizations. In addition to serving as a library and city offices, it was the locus of special classes, lectures, and group meetings. For residents of Etowah, the Carnegie Library was an icon of learning and social integration.

Although the high school classes had transferred out of the library in 1922, the building continued to function as a school, if even unconventionally. In February of 1927, the Presbyterian Women's Auxiliary sponsored a one-week cooking school in the library that featured lectures, demonstrations, and show booths. The array of goods and technological advancements that were touted brought Etowah to the forefront of the local effort to modernize domestic science. Local residents saw displays of Crisco, White Lily flour, Monarch electric ranges, and Frigidaire refrigerators.³⁸ Later that year, the Georgia-Carolina School of Commerce announced the opening of a commercial school in the library. Beginning in September, the school offered day and evening classes for a five-month period. This post-secondary educational opportunity furthered the prospects of Etowah's graduates for obtaining professional jobs locally.³⁹

The Great Depression brought an end to these more extravagant activities at the Etowah Carnegie Library. The ultimate loss of over 20,000 jobs on the L & N Railroad in the 1930s meant that residents in this single-industry community would suffer an overwhelming loss. No longer were they able to fund and partake in conferences and attend specialized classes. Instead, they formed many social groups that met regularly without the burden of membership fees. The Women's Benefit Association, Missionary Society, Junior Music Club, Thursday Music Club, Business and Professional Women's Club, Hi-Y, Wednesday Evening Club, Rainbow Club, Bridge Club, and So-Sew Club all met weekly in churches, school auditoria, private homes, and the "clubroom" of the Etowah Carnegie Library.⁴⁰

Naturally, the group that met most frequently at the library was the Monday Book Club. The club even sponsored the annual activities of National Education Week. Una Campbell, the librarian and charter member of the club emphasized use of the library in a 1932 education week lecture entitled

³⁶ "Library Drive for Sept. 28th-29th," *Etowah Enterprise*, 23 September 1927.

³⁷ "Story Hour for Children," *Etowah Enterprise*, 3 March 1927.

³⁸ "Cooking School is Going Well," *Etowah Enterprise*, 17 February 1927; see also "Cooking School and Food Show Success," *Etowah Enterprise*, 24 February 1927.

³⁹ "Etowah Commercial School to Begin Soon," *Etowah Enterprise*, 26 August 1927.

⁴⁰ "Society and Club Meetings," *Etowah Enterprise*, 9 January 1931; see also "Society," *Etowah Enterprise*, 3 July 1931.

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“Promoting Good Reading.” During another discussion, Campbell revealed the effects of the Great Depression on the library and its holdings:

I regret very much that the library will be unable to have a large number of new books to put on display for Book week. As it is impossible for the Library to buy books, I know of no other way to secure them than to ask that the people in town give us books. Our reference books are in fairly good condition, but the fiction and children's books are so badly worn that they are almost past reading.⁴¹

Campbell went on to plead for book donations from local residents who maintained personal libraries: “Haven't you a new novel, or a story book...that you will give? Perhaps your family read and enjoyed the book—why not pass it on...?”⁴²

Despite its shriveling budget and deteriorating collections, the Etowah Carnegie Library maintained a progressive social profile during a period of great socio-economic reform through the 1930s and 1940s. In one example, the Monday Book Club partnered with the University of Tennessee to offer lectures on Child Welfare in Etowah. Taking place in the library's community clubroom, these lectures emphasized the important role of parents and the community in raising children.⁴³ During World War II, the library was the local headquarters of the American Red Cross (**Figure 7**). After the war, the smaller of the two reading rooms housed a temporary museum exhibit of war-related artifacts collected from local soldiers.



Figure 7: (1941-1945) The library's use by the Red Cross during WW II was indicated by cross on the entry.

As the Etowah City Hall, the building was a public space where the city's future was directed on a daily basis. Residents were routinely admonished to attend public hearings at the library's assembly hall to take part in discussions about the state of the community. One announcement implored citizens to take a stand:

At this meeting propositions of vital importance and plans for the immediate future of Etowah and the surrounding territory will be taken up.... If you own any property or business or are interested the least bit in the future welfare of our town and community, it will pay you big dividends to attend this meeting....⁴⁴

⁴¹ “Book Week to Be Observed,” *Etowah Enterprise*, 13 November 1931.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ “Free Lectures on Child Welfare in Etowah,” *Etowah Enterprise*, 29 September 1932.

⁴⁴ “Etowah Citizens to Meet Thurs. Night,” *Etowah Enterprise*, 28 August 1931.

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Unfortunately, this type of private enterprise was not sufficient to boost Etowah's Depression-era economy. It took national reform under the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to resurrect the community with the promise of jobs in road construction across the countryside of McMinn County. When local contractors handed out nearly five hundred jobs in February 1933, a "great crowd swarmed the Carnegie library building...as the men were notified to be present..."⁴⁵ The \$2,700 in federal aid for the community meant jobs for innumerable men who had been unemployed for over three years. Thus, the property was a rallying ground for those whose lives depended on public relief. Through the 1930s, the library transcended its existence as an institution for learning as outlined by Andrew Carnegie. Indeed, its presence as a city hall enabled the building to stand out as a governmental as well as a social and academic landmark.

Post-War Programs and Preservation, 1952-2002

After World War II, Etowah's economic profile was bleak. The L & N Railroad, which had experienced a resurgence transporting "unprecedented numbers passengers and amounts of freight"⁴⁶ during the war, was losing business. Increasing post-war production of automobiles rendered obsolete nearly all passenger rail transportation. Although the railroad was still used to haul freight, its service continued to decline. Without a solid employment base that could support its nearly 3,500 residents, the community looked to industrial diversification. The third quarter of the twentieth century saw Etowah and its citizens redirect their focus from expanding social programs to recruiting new industries.⁴⁷ Announcing that the number of unemployed laborers had reached nearly 10,000, promotional pamphlets touted the city's amenities, including concrete and asphalt streets; hotels, motels, and restaurants; health facilities; and existing utility infrastructure. In many cases, discussion of the library was reduced to one sentence that merely established its presence.⁴⁸

Although libraries statewide responded to this general post-war change in community focus by shifting more toward academic integration with the public educational system, the Etowah Carnegie Library nevertheless still played an important role in the progress of the community: A library consultant for the University of Tennessee stated in 1956, "Modern libraries have changed from the havens of recreation and culture devoted almost exclusively to fiction, poetry, and history.... Today's institutions...use aggressive reference services to keep in the town's mainstream of activity."⁴⁹ In an effort to streamline library service across Tennessee in the 1950s, the state created a regional system of public libraries. Eleven library centers comprised the regional library system and provided assistance to local libraries within each region.

⁴⁵ "Crowds Swarm Library as R.F.C. Jobs Are Given Out," *Etowah Enterprise*, 23 February 1933, 1.

⁴⁶ Charles B. Castner, "A Brief History of the L & N Railroad," The Louisville and Nashville Railroad Historical Society Home Page, n.d., <<http://rhistorical-2.com/lrhs/history.html>> (19 August 2002).

⁴⁷ "Etowah, Tennessee: General Information," TMs (photocopy), vertical files, reference division, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

⁴⁸ W. Thomas Upshaw, "Community Industrial Inventory: City of Etowah, McMinn County, Tennessee, January 29, 1954," vertical files, reference division, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

⁴⁹ "Libraries Play Vital Role in Community Development," *Murfreesboro Courier*, 13 May 1956.

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The Etowah library greatly benefited from this arrangement. As part of the Fort Loudoun Region, it was eligible to receive technical assistance from the regional library in acquiring better financial support, publicizing the library and its services, and selecting, ordering, and processing books.⁵⁰ This partnership with the regional library strengthened the presence of the Etowah Carnegie Library and enabled it to retain a social and academic standing within the community.

Other than partnering with the newly established regional library system, the most significant programmatic change that occurred at the library during the second half of the twentieth century was its racial integration. The 1964 Civil Rights Act by the United States Congress outlawed racial discrimination in public places and by employers. Prior to the passage of this landmark legislation, public venues in Etowah, including the Gem Theater and L & N Railroad Depot were segregated. African Americans were not permitted to even enter the library. Obtaining a library card was impossible. A few individuals were able to clandestinely circumvent the race-based protocol. In the 1950s, a few African-American girls benefited from the generosity of a white neighbor when she checked out paper bags full of books for the children to read. According to oral interviews, integration of the library caused little social backlash in the small community. Shortly after the Civil Rights Act passed, black residents began obtaining library cards and using the library on a regular basis.⁵¹

Few physical changes have occurred to the Etowah Carnegie Library since 1952. The city has made cosmetic alterations to the first and second floors, including the superficial application of wood paneling on the lower story and carpet and wallpaper in the library. Otherwise, the primary historic treatments, including the perimeter shelving, windows and doors, and stair ornament, remain intact. The building retains its association not only with the free public library system, but also with the local government, which continues to maintain its offices in the ground level. It is in this area that the greatest changes, albeit largely cosmetic, have occurred to the interior. The assembly hall has seen the partitioning of small offices in the southeast, northeast, and northwest corners, and the application of wood paneling to the walls has taken place. Historic wood doors were replaced with modern wood doors. Most of these changes occurred in the 1960s and 1970s and have only minimal impact on the overall interior integrity. Ultimately, the Etowah Carnegie Library is an historically and architecturally significant and intact public building that continues to serve its original purposes as a free public library and city hall.

⁵⁰ Public Libraries Division, *Tennessee Regional Library System: How It Operates* (Nashville: Tennessee State Libraries and Archives, 1959); see also "Senate Group Hears Local Librarian" *Johnson City Press-Chronicle*, 30 May 1956.

⁵¹ Hitchcock; see also Boyd.

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Etowah Carnegie Library
McMinn County, Tennessee

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary surrounding the Etowah Carnegie Library is depicted on the accompanying Tax Map 115-E as Block 8, Lots 10 and 11 in the City of Etowah.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

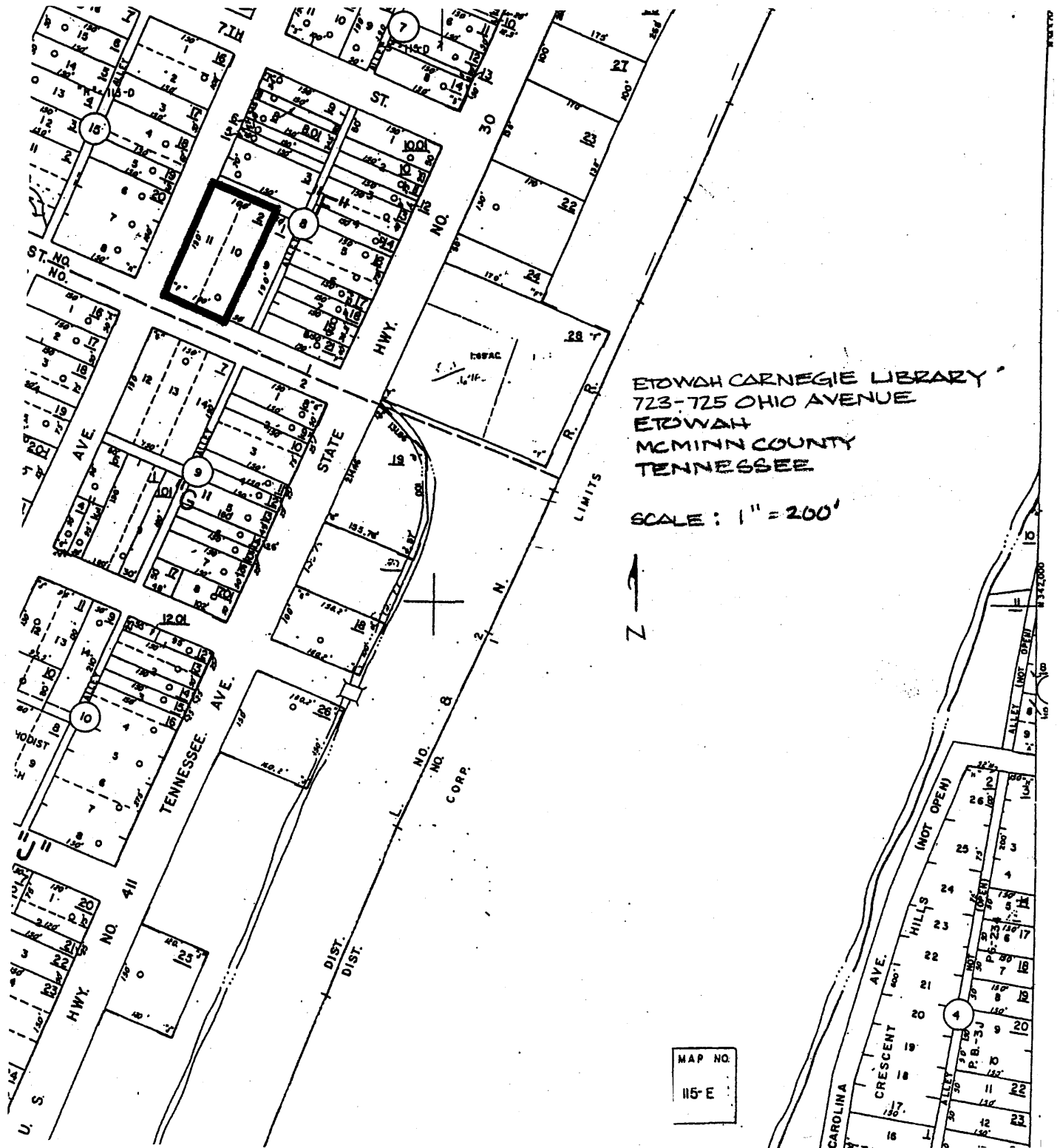
The boundaries of the Etowah Carnegie Library encompass the land donated by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company in 1911 for the 1915-1916 construction of the library.

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Etowah Carnegie Library
McMinn County, Tennessee



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Etowah Carnegie Library
McMinn County, Tennessee

Photos by: Annie McDonald
Date: August 2002
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
Nashville, Tennessee

	Photo #	Description
Exterior	1 of 19	Facing east, view of west elevation (façade)
	2 of 19	Facing east, detail of façade entry
	3 of 19	Facing east, detail of paired windows on the façade
	4 of 19	Facing northeast, view of façade and south elevations
	5 of 19	Facing north, detail of south elevation entry
	6 of 19	Facing west, view of east elevation
	7 of 19	Facing southwest, view of east and north elevations
Interior	8 of 19	Facing west, view of main entry
	9 of 19	Facing southeast, detail of newel post at main entry
	10 of 19	Facing northwest, view of library reading room, showing historic shelving at center of photo
	11 of 19	Facing northwest, view of historic shelving along west wall
	12 of 19	Facing east, view of historic shelving around perimeter of reading room
	13 of 19	Facing northwest, view from main reading room toward children's reading room
	14 of 19	Facing southeast, view from children's reading room toward main reading room
	15 of 19	Facing east, view of door from library to the ground floor
	16 of 19	Facing southeast, view of modern partition in the lecture room
	17 of 19	Facing southwest, view entry and raised dais on east side of the lecture room
	18 of 19	Facing northwest, view of modern partition in the lecture room.
	19 of 19	Facing north, view along corridor into City Hall offices

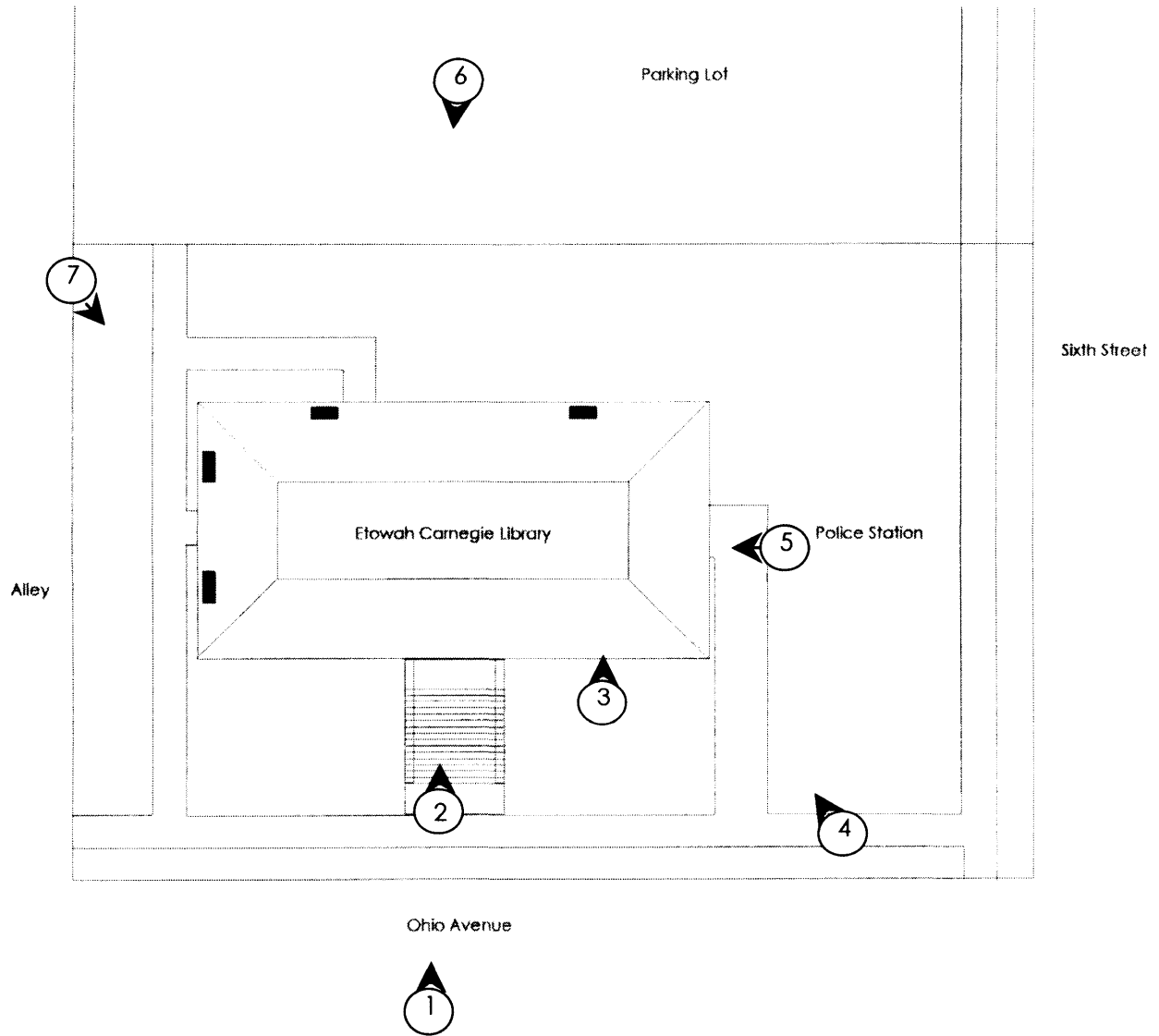
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Etowah Carnegie Library
McMinn County, Tennessee

EXTERIOR PHOTOS



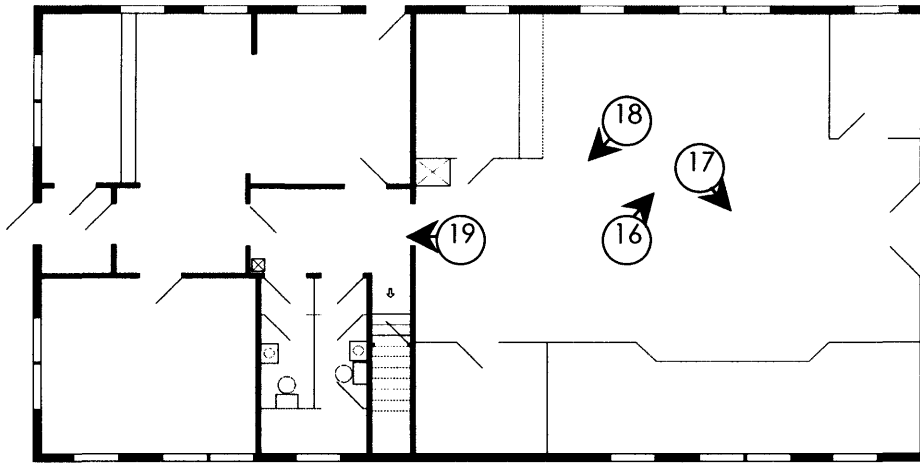
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Etowah Carnegie Library
McMinn County, Tennessee

INTERIOR PHOTOS First Floor



Second Floor

