

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

193

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Broken Bow Carnegie Library

other names/site number CU05-61

2. Location

street & number 255 S. 10th not for publication [NVA]

city or town Broken Bow vicinity [NVA]

state Nebraska code NE county Custer code 041 zip code 69357

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Wesley Summer
Signature of certifying official

1/26/98
Date

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

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall

3.5.98

Signature of 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 the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instruction)

EDUCATION\Library

Professional Offices

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Mixed

foundation Concrete block
walls Brick veneer

roof Tile and asphalt shingle
other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patters of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education

Period of Significance

1916-1948

Significant Dates

1916

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

M.N. Bair-Architect

Clyde Elder-Builder

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location for Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Custer County Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	446360	4583520			
2.						
3.						

[x]See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description
See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification
See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bill Callahan
organization Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office date 12/12/97
street & number 1500 R Street, Box 82554 telephone (402) 471-4788
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name/title William and Corinne Steffens
street & number 1310 Memorial Drive telephone (308) 872-3328
city or town Broken Bow state NE zip code 68822

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 listings. 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 the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Broken Bow Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Custer County, Nebraska

County and State

Description

Broken Bow, Nebraska (1990 pop. 3,778) is the Custer County seat. The town is situated virtually in the center of the county, which is located in the very center of Nebraska, approximately 175 miles northwest of Lincoln, the state capital. This area of the state is defined by grassy, hilly plains, sparsely scattered population and a primarily agricultural economy. Custer County has an area of approximately 2,571 square miles, and a 1990 population of 12,270. Broken Bow is laid out in a grid pattern, and much of the central business district retains its brick streets. The Broken Bow Carnegie Library is located one block west of the central business district, and one block north of the county courthouse (NRHP 1979). A small stream bounds the northern edge of the property.

The Broken Bow Carnegie Library was constructed in 1915-16. The Library is a one story light-brick structure with a raised basement. The primary facade of the building faces east. The structure is rectangular in form, approximately 40'x 60'. The east half of the building is topped by a side-gable roof, and the western half of the Library has a tarred flat roof. The north-south gable ends on the western half of the building have prominent parapets, which are bordered by ornamental variegated brick work. Strikingly, the gable roof is topped with clay tile. The cornice line of the western flat roof section is also bordered by ornamental brick work. The east and west sections are visually separated by a brick pilaster on both the north and south facades.

The primary (east) facade of the Library has a centrally located entrance, flanked by two relatively massive engaged brick columns. Three stone steps lead to the entrance. The columns are capped with a stone entablature, which is engraved with the words "Carnegie Public Library." Two small wood 1\1 double hung windows are located above the entablature. These, in turn, are flanked on either side by two 1\1 wood double hung windows. The entrance entablature is also flanked by two larger wooden 1\1 double hung windows. Four more wood 1\1 double-hung windows are located at the half basement, flanking the entrance two by two. The upper six windows and the four larger lower level windows are separated by a stone belt course, which also surrounds the four larger windows. This arrangement of windows, entrance, columns and belt course results in a notably symmetrical primary facade.

The stone belt course extends around the north and south facades of the Library. Four 1\1 wood double hung windows are located above the belt course at both gable ends, and four identical windows are located below the flat-roof section above the belt course. There are four more 1\1 double hung windows directly below the gable-end windows at the raised basement level. Two more windows are located at the basement level below the flat roofed section of the Library on the north side, four windows on the south. The rear (west facade) of the building has a small wooden (@ 6'x15') addition which was added sometime soon after the construction of the Library. In 1996, a chair lift and accessible entrance was added to the rear of the building. Neither of these minor additions detract from the historic integrity or significance of the building.

The primary entrance to the building opens into a small foyer. The foyer has staircases on the north side leading to the basement, and on the south leading to the main floor of the Library. The foyer is largely intact from the date of the Library's construction. Historically, the basement included a lecture hall, lavatories and a furnace room. In 1996, the basement was partially remodeled into offices, a common room and an updated HVAC system.

When the Carnegie Library opened, the main floor was primarily a large open space utilized for book stacks and reading areas. In 1996 this open space was adapted for office use. The historic openness of the main floor has been substantially retained. Upon entering the main floor westward from the foyer, the space opens up into a large "T" shaped room. The base of the "T" narrows to a double-loaded hallway which leads to a restroom, two offices and the rear entrance of the building. The original ceiling has been dropped several inches to accommodate mechanical systems. However the ceilings are still approximately twelve feet high; and have been coffered back from the windows, resulting in the retention of their historic configuration from both interior and exterior vantages.

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Section 7 Page 2

Broken Bow Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Custer County, Nebraska

County and State

The large "T" shaped space is a waiting area and office space for two receptionists. This space measures approximately 11'x24'x38'. These dimensions are in relation to a total interior dimension of approximately 38'x46'. Offices have been added to the north- and south-east corners of the building, flanking the entrance. The northeastern office reflects the original librarian's office, which was formed by a series of bookcases used as partitions.¹ Additionally, four offices have been added on the west half of the structure. Two of these offices flank the bottom of the "T" on the north and south sides. Adjacent to these, two offices were built in the north and south western corners of the structure off the hallway at the base of the "T". A restroom was added on the north side of the hallway, adjacent to the northwest corner office.

Although these changes have diminished the scale of the historic interior space of the building, the space retains sufficient integrity to convey the Carnegie Library's historic significance. Original windows have all been retained, and the overall openness of the interior space reflects the historic nature of the property. Additionally, historic woodwork was either retained in situ or reused where possible throughout the building during its rehabilitation.

According to the Multiple Property Document *Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922* "A high degree of historic architectural integrity will be required of all potentially eligible Carnegie Libraries under Criterion C. Of primary importance are the exterior plan and style, with secondary emphasis on the building materials and interior layout." (Sec. F, IV, P.1) The changes made to the interior of the Broken Bow Carnegie Library preclude its eligibility under Criterion C. However, the MPD goes on to state: "Under Criteria A and B, where significance is derived from associations with important persons or events, integrity must be sufficient to convey the original function and design of the building." (Sec. F, IV, p. 1) The exterior integrity of the Broken Bow Carnegie Library is truly striking. The overall integrity of the building is sufficiently strong to convey the historic nature and significance of the building. Indeed, it would be nearly impossible to mistake this former Carnegie for anything other than a former public library.

¹ Custer County Chief, March 21, 1916

National Register of Historic Places

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Section 8 Page 1

Broken Bow Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Custer County, Nebraska

County and State

Statement of Significance

The Broken Bow Carnegie Library meets the registration requirements of the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, *Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899-1922*. The Broken Bow Carnegie Library is significantly associated with the historic context *Educational Enrichment: Carnegie Libraries*. The Library is locally significant in the area of education as an important example of a Carnegie Library. The period of significance is derived from the year the Library was put into use, 1916, through 1948, fifty years before the date of this nomination.

In 1885, the Broken Bow Ladies Library Association was organized. The Association's book collection was created by the donation of a book by each member. Initially, the books that formed the library were rotated among the homes of the Association's members and various businesses in the area. Eventually, the Library Association purchased a building east of the courthouse to house their collection, and finally located the library in the City Hall.¹

In 1914, Mrs. C.L. Gutterson, president of the library board, announced an effort to seek funding from the Carnegie Foundation to build a new library. The Carnegie Foundation approved the Board's request, and granted \$10,000 for the construction of a new library. The building's cornerstone was laid June 23, 1915, and construction was complete by March, 1916. On March 25, 1916, the formal opening of the library was held.² At the time of the Broken Bow Carnegie Library's opening, it boasted over three-thousand volumes available for circulation, and commonly accommodated over one hundred people per day.³

The Broken Bow Carnegie Library functioned as a library until 1972, when a new facility opened. At that time, the building was taken over by the Custer County Historical Society. The former library then served as a museum, and functioned as such until approximately 1993, when it was converted to museum storage. In 1995, the current owner purchased the property, and adaptively rehabilitated the building for professional office use in 1996.

As in so many other communities around the country, Broken Bow did not have a sole-use public library until the Carnegie Foundation funded its construction. The largesse of the Carnegie Foundation helped create a critical mass of public libraries with implications that continue to echo. Many small communities are served by well-established public libraries whose existence, it may be argued, is founded upon an original gift by the Carnegie Foundation.

The Multiple Property Document *Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899-1922* states "The construction of library buildings in Nebraska communities had an impact beyond the provision of reading material to the public." (Sec. E, P.3) The MPD continues: "The buildings were designed to provide facilities for other education activities as well as the library." (Sec. E, P.3) Carnegie libraries served an educational function beyond their use as book repositories, a function that is maintained by most public libraries today. The gift of Carnegie libraries helped create our system of educationally-oriented, small town public library systems. The Broken Bow Carnegie library is one such building that, in many ways, became a foundation of community life.

¹ *Custer County Chief*, March 16, 1916; also taken from a contemporary broadsheet flier, located in Custer County Historical Society files.

² *Custer County Chief* Nov. 28, 1935

³ *Custer County Chief*, March 16, 1916

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Continuation Sheet

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Broken Bow Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Custer County, Nebraska

County and State

Bibliography

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

Custer County Chief, March 16, 1916

Custer County Chief, March 21, 1916

Custer County Chief, November 28, 1935

Files of the Custer County Historical Society, 445 S. 9th St., P.O. Box 334
Broken Bow, NE 68822-0334

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Broken Bow Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Custer County, Nebraska

County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 2, Lots 9-16, Original Town of Broken Bow, Custer County, NE.

Boundary Justification

Boundary includes parcel of land historically associated with the Broken Bow Carnegie Library.

FLOOR PLAN
Broken Bow CARNEGIE LIBRARY

