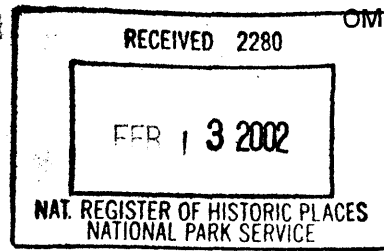


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

IRRADIATED



262

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

IRRADIATED

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction 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 Dickinson Branch Library

other names/site number Dickinson, Charles E., Branch Library; Carnegie Dickinson Library; West Denver Branch Library; 5DV8164

2. Location

street & number 1545 Hooker Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Denver [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Denver code 031 zip code 80212

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Christiana Cortezuela
Signature of certifying official/Title

State Historic Preservation Officer November 27, 2001
Date

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado 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 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
[] See continuation sheet.

Ruth Boland
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action
3/28/02

Dickinson Branch Library
Name of Property

Denver County, Colorado
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	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 Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Italian Renaissance

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Stucco

roof Terra cotta
other _____

Narrative Description

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

Dickinson Branch Library
Name of Property

Denver County, Colorado
County/State

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

(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 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)

Social History

Community Planning and Development

Architecture

Periods of Significance

1914

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Biscoe, Maurice

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 of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

Dickinson Branch Library
Name of Property

Denver County, Colorado
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 497600 4398830
Zone Easting Northing

2. _____
Zone Easting Northing

3. _____
Zone Easting Northing

4. _____
Zone Easting Northing

[] 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 Drew Massey and Tracy Lee Hartmann (additional material by OAHP staff)

organization _____ date August 29, 2001

street & number 2127 Irving Street telephone 917-213-5032

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80211

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 Drew Massey

street & number 2127 Irving Street telephone 917-312-5032

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80211

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Dickinson Branch Library
Denver County, Colorado

DESCRIPTION

The 1914 Dickinson Branch Library building is located at the southwest corner of Hooker Street and Conejos Place in west Denver. The building is located a block north of West Colfax Avenue and two blocks west of Federal Boulevard, two well traveled arterial streets and is visible from both. The former library is in close proximity to the Cheltenham Elementary School. The property fronts east on to Hooker Street and is raised above the sidewalks on an elevated landscape. The building is set back on the lot and is surrounded on all sides by lawn. A paved alley passes on the west side of the building to a small parking area on the southwest edge of the lot. A set of concrete steps cuts into the raised site mid-block providing entry to the property with a wide sidewalk leading to the main library entrance. A small concrete stair cuts diagonally across the northwest corner of the site to a sidewalk that wraps around the north side of the building. The property currently contains no landscaping except for a small, crowded group of trees on the southeast corner. The building sits in a residential neighborhood with single-family housing to the west and multi-family housing units to the north, east and south.

The building is a single-story structure with a raised concrete basement. The building is of Italian Renaissance style constructed of brick covered by a white concrete stucco finish. Originally the building had been light ivory with a sage green base. The roof is a gently pitched hip covered by red Spanish tile with broad overhanging eaves supported by wood brackets. A broad cornice below is richly ornamented with ceramic tiles of heraldic designs, originally in brilliant colors. The tiles, now painted over, were blue-green squares attached to circular tiles set into the stucco finish. The tiles are of an alternating square and diamond pattern.



Current view of the Dickinson Branch Library

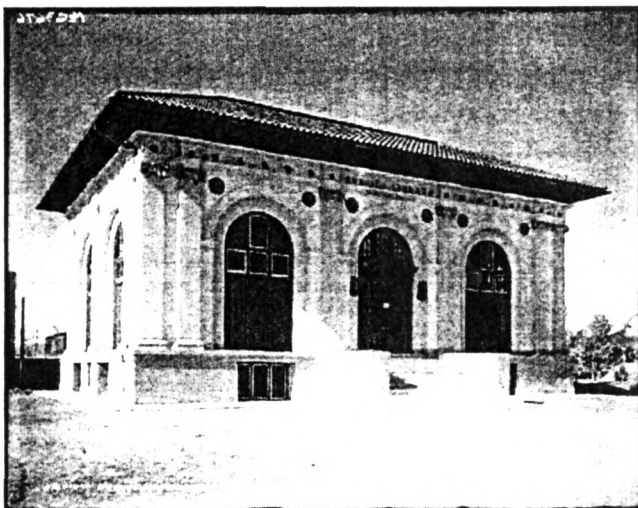
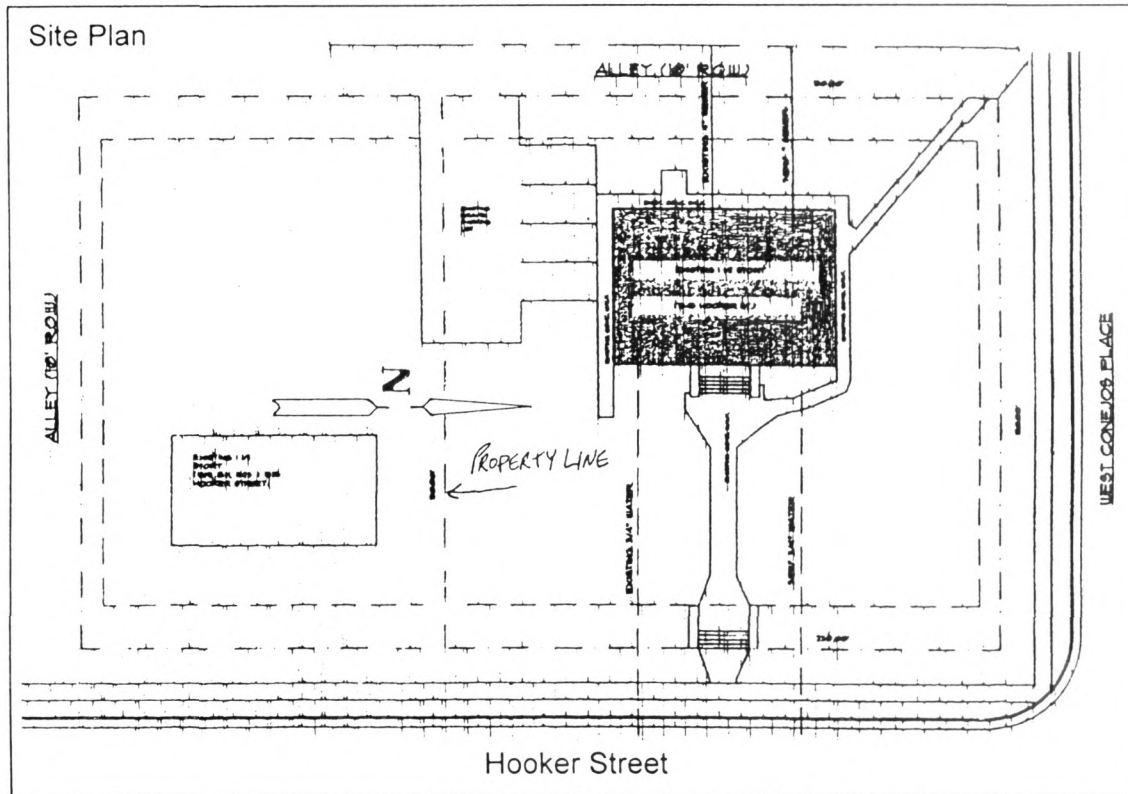
The facade (east elevation) is symmetrical in design. Wide concrete podia flank the concrete steps and landing lead to the centrally located entrance. Pilasters with Ionic capitals divide the elevation into three bays and corner pilasters of identical design frame the elevation. The basement water table serves as the plinth. In addition to the volutes, the pilaster capitals each contain an open book motif with side banners and a rosette. Each bay is further defined by a semicircular arch. The keystone archivolts spring from corbeled imposts on tall piers. Each spandrel contains a circular tile plaque which originally held a relief profile of one of six American authors.

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

Section number 7 Page 2

Dickinson Branch Library
Denver County, Colorado



Dickinson Branch Library in 1914
Source: Denver Public Library,
Western History/Genealogy Department

The central bay contains the main library entry. A carved oak pediment with scrolled brackets shelters the door. The wood door contains two tall narrow glazed panels. Two replacement light fixtures flank the entry. The semicircular transom is divided into three vertical sections which each contain a multi-light window. Originally the frieze contained the words "Public Library" and the area above the keystone contained a "Dickinson Branch" nameplate.

The window openings in the end bays are each divided into nine sections with six operable multi-light windows on the top and three oak panels, stained brown, below. Centered below each end bay, the raised basement contains a tri-partite window.

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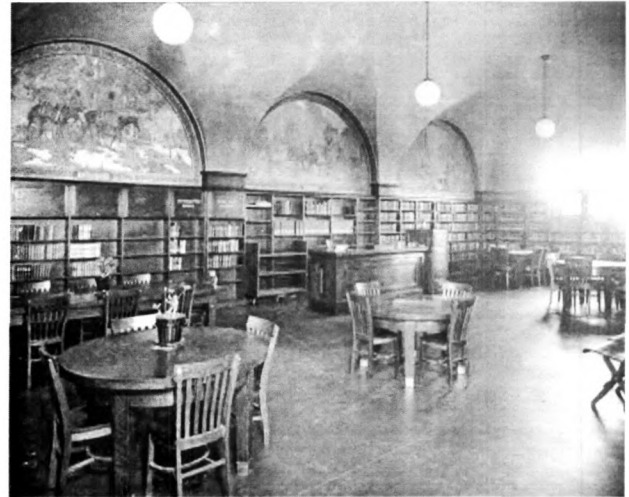
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Dickinson Branch Library
Denver County, Colorado

The north and south elevations are nearly identical. The two bay elevations repeat the window fenestration and overall design of the facade, including the basement tri-partite windows. The south elevation also contains a small basement window directly below the central pilaster.

The west elevation repeats the overall design of the facade but in a much simplified form. A blind arcade replaces the facade fenestration. Gone are the pilaster capitals (except for the corner pilasters) as well as the decorative tiles in the spandrels and along the frieze. Tripartite windows occupy basement space below the north and central bays while the area below the south bay contains a secondary entrance to the lower level.



Dickinson Branch Library interior in 1914
Source: Denver Public Library,
Western History/Genealogy Department

The interior floor plan consists of a large reading room on the main level with a groin-vaulted, lath and plaster ceiling. The main level is raised a few steps above the entry vestibule. On the wall opposite the entry are three lunettes which originally contained a mural series by Allen Tupper True. Brown oak bookcases once surrounded the perimeter walls -- one set remains. The reading room retains the original hardwood flooring, although at some point the floor had been covered with carpet. An original, wood staircase flanks the building's vestibule. The stained oak staircase leads down to a lower level lobby and auditorium space. The auditorium is entered through a set of original wooden French doors.

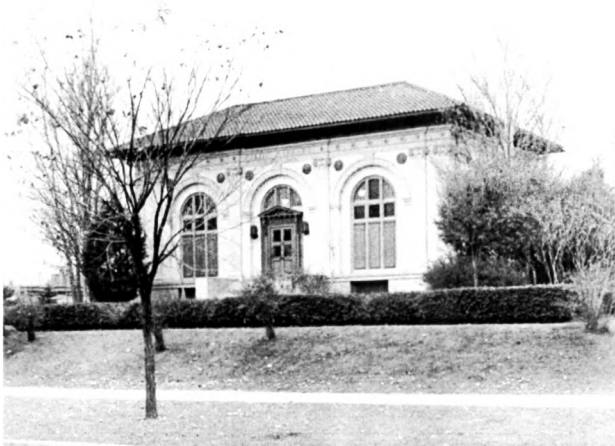
The exterior of the library shows a few small alterations for new vents. The building exhibits signs of heavy deterioration due to water drainage problems. Losses to original materials include the sculpted relief plaques, the building signage, and the wrought iron entry light fixtures. Interior alterations include wall partitions to divide the reading room into two separate spaces and to support a loft. The ceiling and walls have only minor alterations at the connections to the wall and loft partitions. The original reading room entry doors and partition have been removed, but some original casework still remains within the building. No alterations have been made to the original staircase. The south half of the lower level has been somewhat altered to allow for updated bathrooms, new gas forced air furnaces and a gas hot water heater. The auditorium remains a single large room.

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Dickinson Branch Library
Denver County, Colorado



Dickinson Branch Library in 1920
Source: Denver Public Library,
Western History/Genealogy Department



Dickinson Branch Library in 1930
Source: Denver Public Library,
Western History/Genealogy Department

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Dickinson Branch Library
Denver County, Colorado

SIGNIFICANCE

The 1914 Dickinson Branch Library building meets Criterion A in the area of social history for its association with the nationwide public library movement sponsored and funded by grants from Andrew Carnegie's philanthropic foundation. The building is eligible in the area of community planning and development for its association with the City of Denver's efforts to create a system of branch public libraries. Finally, the Dickinson Branch Library meets Criterion C as an important example of the work of Denver architect Maurice Biscoe.

DENVER'S CARNEGIE-FUNDED BRANCH LIBRARIES

In addition to the important role he played in the history of this country's railroad and steel industries, Andrew Carnegie became known in his later years as the "patron saint of libraries." Born November 25, 1835, in Dunfermline, Scotland, Andrew Carnegie made his fortune in the iron and steel industries before selling his firm, Carnegie Steel, to J.P. Morgan for \$480 million in 1900. Fond of saying "he who dies rich dies disgraced," Carnegie gave away more than \$300 million of his fortune before his death in 1919. His most visible and widely recognized philanthropic activity was the gift of library buildings.

Between 1886 and 1919, Carnegie funds of over 41 million dollars constructed 1,679 public library buildings in 1,412 United States communities. In 1911, Carnegie set up a trust fund called the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The corporation promoted the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding among the people of the United States by aiding technical schools, institutions of higher learning, libraries, scientific research, and useful publications.

Andrew Carnegie divided his gifts of libraries into two periods. The first, what he called the "retail" period, lasted from 1886 to 1896. During this period he gave over \$1.8 million for fourteen buildings in six communities. These early libraries tended to be large structures containing not only libraries but general community centers with exhibition halls, lecture and recital rooms, gymnasiums and even swimming pools. All these first grants came with endowments for continuing building maintenance.

Carnegie's self proclaimed "wholesale" period of library philanthropy lasted from 1898 to 1919. During this later period, grants totaling just over \$39 million went to 1,406 communities across the nation. Carnegie changed his philosophy on library construction during this period. While he recognized the value of multi-functional facilities and of the large number of patrons which could be served by a main, big city library, after 1898, Carnegie funded primarily branch and small town libraries.

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Dickinson Branch Library
Denver County, Colorado

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All of the Colorado Carnegie libraries received their grants during the "wholesale period." From the \$8,000 award to Grand Junction in 1899 to the last Colorado grant of \$10,000 to Florence in 1917, a total of nearly three-quarters of a million dollars went to construct 35 library buildings in 27 communities. Denver, along with Colorado Springs and Pueblo, received funds to construct a large main library. Carnegie was aware of some architectural abuses being rendered with his funds, particularly in the case of the larger libraries. On a clipping from a Denver newspaper showing a drawing of the projected main library promised in 1902, he wrote, "I am sorry to have my money wasted in this way – This is no practical library plan. Too many pillars."

Despite Carnegie's expressed disappointment with Denver's main library building, the city successfully obtained two \$80,000 grants to construct eight branch libraries. The first four of these branches, including the Dickinson, opened prior to World War I. The last four opened during a period from 1918 to 1920.

Denver Public Library				
Carnegie-Funded Branch Library Program				
Branch	Date	Architect	Cost	Status
Warren	1913	Fisher & Fisher	\$20,000	Closed
Woodbury	1913	J.J.B. Benedict	\$22,000	Library
Decker	1913	Marean & Norton	\$22,000	Library
Dickinson	1914	Maurice Biscoe	\$16,000	Vacant
Smiley	1918	Mountjoy, French & Frewen	\$20,000	Library
Byers	1918	Varian & Varian	\$20,000	Library
Park Hill	1920	Burnham Hoyt	\$27,000	Library
Elyria	1920	Harry J. Manning	\$16,000	Closed

In a 1918 article in the city administration's mouthpiece publication, *Municipal Facts*, City Librarian Chalmers Hadley noted that by the early twentieth century, Denver spread out over 59 square miles. This put an imposition on library patrons who had to travel considerable distance to access the city's downtown public library building. The branch library program promised to increase community access to a free public library.

Hadley spelled out the criteria used in the establishment of the Denver branch library system. "The first requisite in designing Denver's branch libraries was to provide for economical, successful libraries. The next desire was to provide as attractive and artistic buildings as the money made possible." All the branch library buildings had a capacity for approximately 7,000 volumes. Each facility also contained a librarian's room with built-in tables and drawers for book repair work and built-in cupboards "with running water, electric plate, and dishes for the use of the library workers who have dinner in the branch buildings in order to keep them open to the public."

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Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Branch Library
Denver County, Colorado

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Hadley noted that in addition to functioning as libraries, the buildings also served as community centers. Their meeting rooms were the scene of lectures, club meetings, garden exhibits, and classes, all free and open to the public. The branches were active during W.W.I both as educational and training centers and as the location for collecting books for distribution to soldiers overseas and in hospitals. After the war the library auditoriums were the location of various "Americanization" programs, designed to instill patriotism in first generation immigrants during a period of growing concern over the spread of communism.

ARCHITECTURE

City Librarian Hadley pointed out that all of Denver's Carnegie branch libraries were designed by local architects. Eight architectural firms received the design commissions. Maurice B. Biscoe, architect for the Dickinson branch, moved to Denver from New York to supervise the construction of the St. John's Episcopal Cathedral for the New York architectural firm of Gordon, Tracy & Swarthwout. Biscoe enjoyed immediate acceptance within the artistic and social circles of Denver. He helped organized the Denver Cactus Club, a society of congenial men with literary and artistic interests and served as its president for the first three years. Biscoe also became the second president of the Colorado Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. He worked alone and in partnership with Henry Harwood Hewitt during his decade-and-a-half in Denver.

Rutherford Witthus described Biscoe's work as exemplifying "some of the best elements of the design philosophy propounded by the Beaux-Arts Institute. His attention to detail, his thorough knowledge of historical styles, his awareness of the special needs of his clients, and his sense of beauty in architecture were the special aptitudes which brought him clients who demanded exacting architectural services."

While working in solo practice, Biscoe designed many Denver residences for fellow members of the Cactus Club. He designed only a few public buildings, making the Dickinson a rare example of his public work during the time of his independent practice in Colorado. Biscoe was also responsible for the Myron Stratton Home for children and the elderly in Colorado Springs and then, in partnership with Hewitt, designed the Clayton School for Boys in Denver. These three commissions are considered Biscoe's most noteworthy institutional designs.

Biscoe collaborated on the Carnegie library with Allen Tupper True, Colorado's most prolific mural painter, and with Denver artist and sculptor Dudley Carpenter. Allen Tupper True would come to be known by his murals in Colorado's State Capital rotunda, the Greek Theater at Civic Center, the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraphic Buildings and other buildings around Denver's downtown. True was a Colorado native who won fame originally as a young magazine illustrator in the East. His mute-toned, realistic murals earned him numerous honors and recognition throughout the country. Biscoe also recruited sculptor Dudley Carpenter to create a

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Dickinson Branch Library
Denver County, Colorado

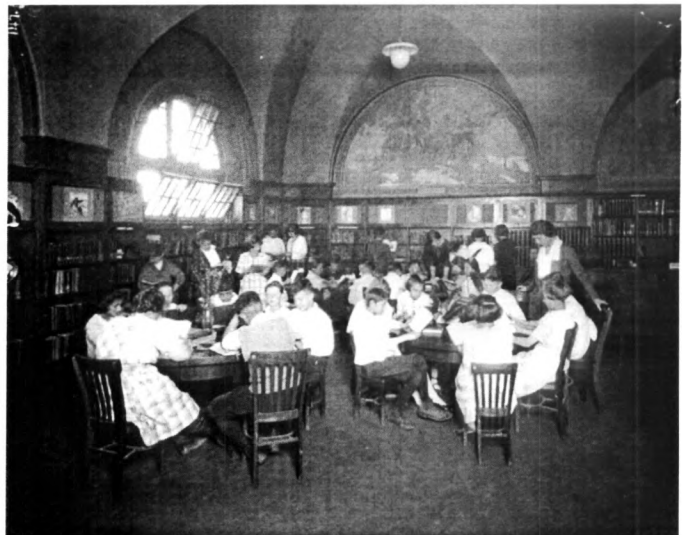
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series of reliefs featuring famous American artists to be used as exterior ornamentation. Unfortunately, the closing of the library also resulted in the removal of the artistic works of both True and Carpenter. The current location of the art work is unknown.

OPERATION OF THE DICKINSON BRANCH LIBRARY

The Dickinson Branch was also the smallest of the eight Carnegie branch libraries. The library was completed at a price of \$16,000 which included construction, decoration and furnishings. Each of the libraries was named for a pioneer in Denver's history. Charles E. Dickinson gained prominence as an investment banker in the late 1880s through the 1910s and he was also one of the initial members of the Denver Library Commission.

The Dickinson opened in 1914 with approximately 7,000 books in its adult and children's collection. The initial collection also included books in Hebrew and Yiddish, reflecting the surrounding neighborhood's large Jewish population. Like all the city's branch libraries, the Dickinson offered a variety of services and programs for its neighborhood patrons. Children's reading hours were one of the popular offerings. Allen True's paintings also served as a means of conveying Colorado's history. The murals, entitled "Trappers", "Miners" and "Pioneers," presented True's interpretation of Colorado's transformation from wilderness to civilization.



Children's reading hour in the
Dickinson Branch Library, 1914
Source: Denver Public Library,
Western History/Genealogy Department

The city closed the Dickinson Branch Library on March 1, 1954, due to its high operating costs. Growing industrialization and demographic changes in the neighborhood resulted in a drastic reduction in the use of the neighborhood library. During its last year of operation only 1,340 registrants were recorded as having used the facility. The city determined that a branch should service a minimum of 3,500 patrons annually to justify its cost of operation.

Following the closing, the city sold the building to the Star of Denver organization Odd Fellows Lodge No. 112. The Odd Fellows used the building as a meeting hall and rental facility. out for parties. The building was sold to Michael Lombardi of Michael Lombardi Architect in the late 1960's. He owned the building for about 30 years and used it to house his architectural office. In

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Dickinson Branch Library
Denver County, Colorado

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1999 the building was then sold to a developer who planned to split the property into a six- to eight-unit residential condominium complex. The building was purchased in May 2001 by Drew Massey and it is currently vacant.

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Dickinson Branch Library
Denver County, Colorado

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1 through 5, Block 34 in the Resubdivision of Cheltenham Heights, City and County of Denver, Colorado.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the entire parcel of land historically associated with the building.

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-10 except as noted:

Name of Property: Dickinson Branch Library
Location: 1545 Hooker Street, Denver, Colorado
Photographer: Drew Massey
Date of Photographs: August 2001
Negatives: Drew Massey

<u>No.</u>	<u>Photographic Information</u>
1	East elevation; view to the west.
2	East and north elevations; view to the southwest.
3	North and west elevations, view to the southwest.
4	South and west elevations; view to the northeast.
5	Window detail, south elevation; view to the north.
6	Interior, basement staircase.
7	Interior, auditorium doors.
8	Interior; window detail.
9	Interior; lunette that original held one of the A.T. True murals.
10	Interior, oak casework.

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Dickinson Branch Library
Denver County, Colorado

USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Fort Logan Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series

