

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 Rensselaer Carnegie Library

other names/site number Rensselaer Public Library

2. Location

street & number 301 North Van Rensselaer Street N/A not for publication

city or town Rensselaer N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Jasper code 073 zip code 47978

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 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.)

Patrick R. Robler 2-2-94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State of 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:)

for
Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper 3/17/94 Date of Action
Entered in the National Register

Name of Property

County and 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 include previously listed resources in the count.)

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)

EDUCATION: library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Neo-Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

STONE: limestone

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

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

Name of Property

County and 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1905-1943

Significant Dates

1905

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Weatherhogg, Charles

Rush and Warren

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):

- 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: National Register files

Rensselaer Carnegie Library
Name of Property

Jasper Co., IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	6
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4	8	7	1	0	0
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4	5	3	1	6	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

4

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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 Linda Reiners, Executive Director

organization The Jasper Foundation, Inc. date February 3, 1993

street & number P.O. Box 295 telephone 219-866-5899

city or town Rensselaer state IN zip code 47978

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 _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 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 20503.

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Rensselaer Carnegie Library occupies a corner lot on North Van Rensselaer Street only two blocks from the courthouse square of this northwest Indiana town. The surrounding neighborhood is residential, the building is roughly centered in a large lot and is set back from the street. Constructed in 1904-5, the library is a one story masonry building with a raised basement. The raised basement, which extends about five feet above grade and five feet below, and the tall proportions of the main story give the impression of a two or three story structure.

The building is roughly square in plan with a projecting entry bay centered in the main facade. The cubical massing is emphasized by the monopitch roof which slopes to the rear (northeast). The roof is masked by a balustrade.

All exterior elevations are of "Hobart" buff face brick laid in common bond with dressed limestone detailing. The main facade faces west. The central projecting entry bay is flanked by large windows on either side of the main section of the building. A short flight of stairs leads to main entry in the projecting bay. Entry level is halfway between the primary floor level and grade level. Replacement metal doors and transom infill the tall opening. The entry opening is defined by a broken pediment supported by fluted console scroll brackets, all of limestone. A cartouche and floral ornament infill the tympanum. Flanking the entry is a stone water table on which rest small, narrow windows (one each side) with limestone lintels. The windows have classical criss-cross fretwork muntins for upper sash and plain lower sash. Above the pediment, which rises to mid level of the primary floor, are three square one over one windows. Unlike the rest of the building, the entablature on the center bay is all limestone. The frieze has raised Roman lettering stating "MDCCC PUBLIC LIBRARY 01111". Above this is a full pediment with stone raking cornices. An oculus with stone garland surround is centered in the brick tympanum. Acroteria mark the corners of the pediment roofline.

The bays flanking the entry projection have paired double hung three over one sash (vertical upper panes-Craftsman type) with heavy stone lintels at the basement level. These, as well as most windows on the structure, have aluminum storm windows for

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**Rensselaer Carnegie Library
Jasper County, Indiana**

protection. Above this runs a plain water table. Large paired one over one windows with stone tablets below each window mark the primary level. Each tablet has square panels with scalloped (cut out) corners. Above each window pair are continuous transoms having classical criss-cross fretwork muntins. Each paired window opening is surmounted by a limestone flat arch with radiating voussoirs. The entablature consists of a stone architrave, plain brick frieze, and limestone cornice. A brick parapet with stone coping masks the roofline. Set into the parapet and centered over the double windows below are stone panels repeating the fretwork of the transoms. The cornerstone of the building is located at the southwest corner. It reads "LAID/July 13.A.L.5904 A.D.1904./BY GRAND MASTER OF/INDIANA./WITH THE AID OF/PRAIRIE LODGE No. 125/F.& A.M./C.R. WEATHERHOGG/ARCHITECT."

The side elevations of the library both have three bays of fenestration detailed identically to the flanking bays of the main facade. The basement windows at the northeast corner of the side elevation have been infilled with brick. The rear elevation is similar to the side elevations, however, the rear roofline lacks the parapet and has a single chimney stack. The basement window located toward the northeast corner has been bricked off as well. Near the center of the basement level, a small wood frame vestibule has been added to shelter a basement level entry.

Upon entering the building, a foyer with stairs is encountered. This tall space leads down to the basement on the left, and up to the main level on the right. Oak (?) woodwork in the foyer remains intact, including wainscoting, paneling, and a purely decorative stair rail. The stair rail has paneled newels and turned balusters. Door and window surrounds have beaded vertical boards and entablature headers.

The basement level housed a children's reading room, two offices, a conference room, two storage areas, and a furnace room. Masonite type paneling has been added, and acoustical tiles line the ceilings, but window moldings have been maintained.

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**Rensselaer Carnegie Library
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The main level had the reference and reading room areas, circulation desk, and an office. Most of the original built-in bookcases remain intact, as do window and door surrounds. Suspended fluorescent lighting and acoustical ceiling tiles have been added to this level. A stained glass skylight once lit the interior, but it was removed and roofed shut.

Both inside and out, the Rensselaer Carnegie Library building has high integrity. Those alterations which it has seen are few in number and relatively minor in affect. More than enough integrity remains to convey the building's architectural significance and its role as a public library.

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**Rensselaer Carnegie Library
Jasper County, Indiana**

Rensselaer Public Library, 1905, is significant under Criteria A and C. Historically, the library represents an important step in the evolution of the public library system in Rensselaer from a room in the county courthouse to a separate public library building. It is the only Carnegie funded public library in Jasper County, Indiana. It served the community as the only free public library from 1905-1992. Architecturally, Rensselaer Library is a good example of a Carnegie library building. Prominent Fort Wayne architect Charles Weatherhogg designed the building, which is among the best examples of Neo-Classical Revival architecture in Rensselaer.

Entrepreneur and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie was born in Dunfermling, Scotland in 1835. Having earned \$333 million dollars in the steel industry, Carnegie was determined to benefit others with his wealth. He established a program to fund the construction of libraries throughout English-speaking nations in 1886. Carnegie believed his libraries should be free, public institutions for communities which expressed an interest by offering a building site and public funds to maintain the property. Indiana received more Carnegie libraries than any other state with a total of 164. Many are still in use as libraries, while others have been adaptively reused. Except for buildings already promised but not completed due to the cost of building materials during World War I, no libraries were funded after 1917.

Earlier buildings donated by Carnegie tended to be imposing monuments, however, by 1908, he recognized this problem and requested that plans of proposed libraries be submitted for approval. This process was formalized in 1911 when James Bertram, Carnegie's personal assistant, issued "Notes on Library Buildings." (sic) Carnegie believed libraries should be plain and dignified, and this is reflected in Bertram's leaflet. "Notes" outlined basic requirements and included some suggested floor plans. Even though Rensselaer Public Library was built four years before Carnegie and Bertram began to supervise plans carefully, and six years before "Notes" was issued, the building has many characteristics of post 1908/1911 Carnegie libraries. The floor plan and raised

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**Rensselaer Carnegie Library
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basement arrangement is very similar. Carnegie seems to have favored a simple classical style for later libraries, and the Rensselaer Library reflects this to some extent, but the elaborately carved pediment and greater amount of exterior ornament (compared to later libraries) would possibly have been considered "extras". Most later Carnegie libraries have hipped or gable roofs of slate or tile, but the Rensselaer example has a flat roof, making the exterior more imposing and monumental.

Adding to the architectural significance of the building is its association with the career of its designer, Charles Weatherhogg of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Born in England in 1872, Weatherhogg came to America in 1893, reportedly to visit the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. He settled in Fort Wayne, working briefly with the firm of Wing and Mahurin, before he opened an office with Alfred Grindle, himself a fellow Wing and Mahurin employee. Grindle and Weatherhogg maintained a partnership from about 1893-1897. They had a branch office in Muncie and designed a number of large homes in that city. Their most important project together was the Jasper County Courthouse, 1897, also in Rensselaer. According to documentation submitted with the National Register nomination for the courthouse, Grindle first received the commission, then brought on Weatherhogg, then Grindle left the project entirely to Weatherhogg, who then completed most of the design work. The courthouse is an imposing three story limestone building with tower executed in the Chateausque/Tudor Revival style. Weatherhogg went on to design a number of buildings in Fort Wayne, including several schools, the Masonic Temple, Fairfield Apartments, and the People's Trust and Savings Bank. Although adept at many styles, Weatherhogg often used a variant of classicism in his works.

Surely through the courthouse building, citizens of Rensselaer would have known of Weatherhogg, making him a prime candidate for the library project. The significance of library within the body of Weatherhogg's works is several fold. First, Weatherhogg was an important architect in northern Indiana, and the Rensselaer

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**Rensselaer Carnegie Library
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Library is a good example of his work. Secondly, the library demonstrates Weatherhogg's efforts to obtain commissions on a regional rather than strictly local basis.

Locally, there are few buildings in Rensselaer representing the Neo-Classical Revival style. A windshield survey by the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology located only one other comparable Neo-Classical building in Rensselaer, a c.1900 tan brick commercial block at 112 Washington Street.

Coincidentally, it was in the Weatherhogg and Grindle designed courthouse that the public library system began in Rensselaer. In 1899, a library room was established on the third floor of the courthouse. There was also a School Library (Dickens) in town. By 1902, this was inadequate, and C.D. Royce wrote Carnegie on behalf of the city requesting a donation for a new structure. Carnegie's secretary replied on January 13, 1903, stating that if the city council would pass a resolution promising to maintain a free public library at a cost of not less than \$1,000 per year and provide a suitable site, the cost of the structure would be donated. Many people in Rensselaer realized the advantages of acquiring a building and having a city tax sufficient to maintain the library. In 1903, \$10,000 was given by Mr. Carnegie with an additional request of \$2,000 for furnishings.

On August 11, 1903, a \$1,200 payment was received for the Moss lots that had been approved for the site. Weatherhogg was paid \$275 to furnish plans and specifications. The construction contract was awarded to Rush and Warren of Rensselaer for \$10,450. On July 13, 1904, ceremonies were held for the placement of the cornerstone. The building was completed in August, 1905 and on September 4, 1905, the library officially opened. Bessie King was the new librarian. Both the School and Jasper Libraries voted to merge with the new Rensselaer Public Library, allowing about 3,000 volumes to begin circulation. Until 1992, the creation and operation of the Carnegie library remained the most important step in the growth of the local library system. It was the only free public library in the community. A new library for Rensselaer was

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**Rensselaer Carnegie Library
Jasper County, Indiana**

completed in 1992 and opened in December of that year.

The old Rensselaer Carnegie library is now closed, but plans are underway for the preservation and operation of this historic building. Current plans are for the building to continue to be a public asset for Jasper County. The Jasper Foundation and Rensselaer/Remington Area Chamber of Commerce plan to open offices in the old library. In addition, it is anticipated that the building will house a community arts and cultural center, as well as providing meeting space for community organizations and group presentations. A newly formed group, The Prairie Arts Council, is expected to work with the Jasper Foundation to establish a broad scale regional arts and cultural program for the building. This effort is attracting much interest among the arts education professionals in area schools, including nearby St. Joseph's College.

Section 9-Bibliography

Bobinski, George S. Carnegie Libraries. Chicago: American Library Association, 1969.

"Building File," Notes and Documents on the Rensselaer Public Library Building, on file at the Rensselaer Public Library.

History of Jasper County, Indiana. Jasper-Newton Counties, Genealogical Society, 1985.

Hubbard, Kin, ed. A Book of Indiana. Indianapolis: Indiana Biographical Association, 1929. (p. 630, biography of Weatherhogg)

Morrison, George. National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, Fairfield Manor, Allen County, Indiana. Listed 6-16-83.

Wells, John. "Architecture of Carnegie Libraries in Indiana." Muncie, IN: Ball State University, 1981.

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Section number 10 Page 8

**Rensselaer Carnegie Library
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Section 10-Geographical Data-Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 11 and 12 in block 7 of the original plat of the City of Rensselaer, Indiana.

Boundary Justification

This is the historic property boundary.

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Rensselaer Public Library

3. Photographer - Mr. Edson Murray
4. Date of photographs - December, 1992
5. Location of original negatives - Mr. Edson Murray
525 South Park
Rensselaer, IN 47978
6. Description of view:
 1. Building front facing West. Camera looking East.
 2. North side of building to the right. East side of building to the left. Camera facing Southwest.
 3. East side of building to the right. South side of building to the left. Camera facing North.
 4. Cornerstone on the Southwest corner of building. Camera facing North.
 5. North side of the main reference/reading area. Camera facing North.
 6. Southeast corner of the childrens reading room. Camera facing Southeast.

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Section number 11 Page 2 Rensselaer Public Library

3. Photographer - Mr. Robert Lewis
4. Date of Photographs - March, 1993
5. Location of original negatives - The Jasper Foundation Office
301 North Van Rensselaer
Rensselaer, IN 47978
6. Description of view:
 7. North side of central stairway going upstairs. Camera facing Northeast.
 8. North side of central stairway going downstairs. Camera facing Northwest.
 9. Central stairway looking towards front door. Camera facing West.
 10. Example of the windows and woodwork. Camera facing West.