

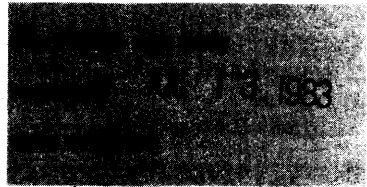
**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

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JAN 26 1983



Final

1. Name

historic Oakland Public Library

and/or common Charles S. Greene Library Building, Oakland Carnegie Free Library

2. Location

street & number 659 ^{14th St.} Fourteenth Street N/A not for publication

city, town Oakland N/A vicinity of congressional district 8

state California code 06 county Alameda code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Oakland, City Hall

street & number 1421 Washington Street

city, town Oakland N/A vicinity of state California 94612

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Alameda County Recorder's Office

street & number Alameda County Courthouse, 1225 Fallon Street

city, town Oakland state California 94612

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Architectural & Historical Survey, Route 980 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 3/1/77 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks & Recreation

city, town P. O. Box 2390 Sacramento state California 95811

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Charles S. Greene Library Building (renamed Administrative Annex c. 1980), located within a preservation district at the southwestern corner of 14th and Grove Streets in downtown Oakland, two blocks from Oakland City Hall and one block from the Grove-Shafter Freeway, is a two-story structure (with partial cellar and a central three-story book stack area) in the form of a modified "T", the stem of which is short and broad and the base of which, forms the front facade; the main block is approximately 111 feet wide, 56 feet deep and 40 feet high; the attached smaller block is approximately 78 feet wide and 21 feet deep. The American Beaux-Arts facades are finished with a tan-colored face brick and terra cotta in patterns of rusticated masonry. A belt course separates a lower first floor (with segmentally arched windows) from a tall upper one (with round arched windows), capped by a classical entablature and a panel and pier parapet wall (the enclosed pre-1906 earthquake photo indicates the presence of a colonnade in the parapet which was replaced by the present panels during post-earthquake repairs). The interior contains an oak-paneled stairhall and a coffered segmental barrel vault, running the full length of the second story ceiling. Despite damage suffered during the 1906 earthquake and the addition of an exterior second-floor stairway (northwestern corner of the main block), the building retains its integrity.

The structure is symmetrical throughout; its fenestration consists of central entrances at both the front and the two sides, flanked by a series of three segmentally arched windows across the front facade and two at each side (each opening contains two casements with transoms). All three entrances are approached by granite steps. Early photos indicate an absence of railings, but metal rails have since been installed. The main entrance and the principal second-story windows are round-arched. The second story facade has seven openings within recessed arches, (each vertically segmented into three narrow glass panels) across the front (one above each first-story window and one above the main entrance), single matching openings flanked by narrow rectangular windows (each vertically segmented into two narrow panels) at each side (directly above the side entrances) and single openings at the rear (at right angles to the base of the "T"). Within the recessed arches (below each large window), a small narrow opening is framed by an ornamental spandrel, except for the arch above the main entrance containing a relief panel in terra cotta but no opening. The main entrance and the round-arched windows are headed by consoled keystones; first-story windows are accented by low-relief keystones. The main entrance, the belt course and the frieze are decorated with incised lettering, bearing the names of scholars at the belt course level and various disciplines at the frieze. The name of Shakespeare appears above the main entrance; of Franklin and Froebel above the side entrances; of Homer, Virgil, Dante, Bacon, Milton and Lowell across the front facade (belt course level); the words "Oakland Public Library" above the main entrances (frieze level); the disciplines of Oratory, Discourse, History, Science, Philosophy and Ethics across the front facade, flanking the library designation; Poetry, Literature and Prose at the east end of the building facing Grove Street; Sculpture, Architecture and Painting at the west end of the building (frieze).

The vestibule and the stairhall are paneled with oak, articulated by fluted pilasters of the Ionic order. A bronze plaque in the vestibule identifies the building as a gift of Andrew Carnegie. This octagonal room has a marble floor; the lower stair hall has a wooden floor now covered over with a vinyl-type material. The oak staircase is enriched with three large murals (see Statement of Significance). Free-standing columns of the Etruscan order are employed in the downstairs reading room. The Reference Room and the Delivery Room (see floor plan) on the upper level are flanked by a series of free-standing

(Continued)

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columns of the Composite order, which support the long barrel-vaulted ceiling. Flanking the large windows, on the eastern wall (Delivery Room, see floor plan) are two large murals (see Statement of Significance). Fluorescent lighting has replaced the original lighting (see photo). Along the cornice, gilt lettering lists names of the great; Whittier, Longfellow, Prescott, Hawthorne, Irving, Poe, Emerson, Elliot, Dickens, Thackeray, Scott, Mills, Byron, Darwin, Wordsworth, Addison, Spencer, Chaucer and Bede across the front wall; on the back wall, Hugo, Balzac, Ebers, Lessing, Ibsen, Turgenief, Cervantes, Goethe, Racine, Tasso, Spinoza, Petrarch, Boccacio, Moliere, Rousseau, Heine, Schiller and Kane; at the east end, Wagner, Beethoven, Bach and Mozart; and at the west end, Praxitiles, Raphael, Murillo and Rembrandt.

To form offices, the interior of the building has been subdivided by temporary partitions. City building permits indicate that an accoustical ceiling was installed in the Children's Room (first story) in 1962; the exterior second-story staircase was added in 1971 and the temporary partitions, converting the structure into offices were added in 1972. Despite these changes, the recent photos indicate that the integrity of the facility has been maintained, and the general appearance remains basically unchanged.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Library

Specific dates 1900-1902 **Builder/Architect** Bliss and Faville

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Charles S. Greene Library Building is a distinguished work in the American Beaux-Arts style, designed by the San Francisco firm of Bliss and Faville (best known in Oakland as architects of the Hotel Oakland, 1912) and constructed in 1902. In a free use of classic forms, it achieves a richness that was later lost in more academically correct designs. Although the main rooms have been adapted to other uses, the major interior designs remain unaltered and feature wall murals by San Francisco artist Marion Holden (later Mrs. Pope) on the main staircase and by the prominent California artist, Arthur Mathews, on the east wall of the upstairs delivery room (Art). After serving as Oakland's main library from 1902 to 1951 (replaced by a new main library located in a civic buildings center on Lake Merritt) and continuing as a branch library until 1971 (when declining use because of changing population patterns resulted in decision to close the branch), it has been converted to city offices. It will soon play a new contributory role within a three-block preservation area that includes the Pardee Mansion (National Register, 1976) and the First Unitarian Church (National Register, 1977).

The building (now named after Charles S. Greene, Oakland Library Director, 1902-1926) was constructed to replace a two-story wood-frame building at 14th and Washington Streets (the site of Oakland's present City Hall), constructed in 1878. Attempts to replace the inadequate older structure were futile until Charles S. Greene and the Trustees went to meetings of the Merchants' Exchange and the Board of Trade, requesting assistance with a new library bond issue. Although \$100,000 was originally asked for, the Exchange believed \$50,000 would be sufficient. An Oakland Tribune writer, Henry A. Chittendon, sent clippings (covering the meetings) to Andrew Carnegie, who had recently embarked upon the endowment of library buildings. In September of 1899, Carnegie offered a \$50,000 gift, provided the City supply a site and promise \$4,000 a year to maintain the new library. In the search for an appropriate site, numerous proposals were made. A Citizen's committee was unable to raise the necessary funds until the proposal was salvaged by an enthusiastic women's organization, the Ebell Society, which launched a vigorous, highly publicized subscription drive, securing \$20,000 for a vacant lot at 14th and Grove Streets, next to the Unitarian Church.

A competition was held to select the architect. A jury, consisting of George Percy and Albert Pissis, Architects, and Joseph Rowell, Librarian, selected the San Francisco firm of Bliss and Faville to design the structure. The Ebell Society had requested that it be permitted to engage its own architects, Coxhead and Coxhead, to design the interior of the space to be occupied by the Children's Room of the library. Among the society's prime movers were Mrs. R.P. Gleason, President, and Mrs. F.B. Ginn, wife of the well known publisher. A Shakespeare chair and settee (presently in the Oakland History Room of the Main Library at 14th and Oak Streets) were purchased from the Church of the Holy Trinity, Stratford on Avon, where Shakespeare is buried. The chair was authenticated by Tiffany and Company of New York.

(Continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Greene, Charles S., Oakland Free Library Staff Bulletin, Volume 14, Issues 3 & 4, 1924, Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library
City of Oakland, Oakland Free Library, Reference Department: The Arthur Mathews Murals in the Oakland Free Library, 1931, Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .34

Quadrangle name Oakland, West, California

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

10	563820	4184350
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

Zone	Easting	Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification Commencing at the point of intersection of the westerly line of Grove Street and the southerly line of Fourteenth Street; thence southerly along said westerly line of Grove Street 100 feet, thence at right angle westerly 150 feet, thence at right angle northerly 100 feet, thence at right angle easterly along

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Katharine Olson

organization City Planning Department

date January 5, 1983

street & number City Hall, Fourteenth and Washington Streets telephone (415) 273-3941

city or town Oakland

state California 94612

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *K. M. Olson*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 6/20/83

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

J. Allred
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 8/11/83

Attest:

Chief of Registration

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Librarian Greene was insistent that good art be incorporated into the interior design, and in 1904, well-known San Francisco artist, Marion Holden (later Mrs. Pope) completed and donated three large murals for the main staircase (intended to portray a distinctive-ly California landscape). Arthur Mathews, (prominent California artist originally trained as an architect and a brother of prominent Oakland architect, Walter Mathews) was invited to plan a series of mural decorations. Recognized by Eugen Neuhaus, Profes-sor of Art, University of California, (in his book, The History and Ideals of American Art, Stanford University press, 1931) for his work as a decorative painter, Mathews also painted mural decorations in the rotunda of the State Capitol, Sacramento, and in the Lane Medical Library and the Children's Hospital in San Francisco. He completed a series of four circular-topped murals, two of which were hung in the Delivery Room (May, 1905) and another two in the Reference Room (the latter replacing in 1907 two murals destroyed during the San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906, while still in Mathew's studio at the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art). Although the four murals are presently stored at the Oakland Museum, they could possibly be returned to their original place at the library building. Mathews then began work on a "Wheat Series" in 1907. Although there were to be four (titled "The Soil", "The Grain", "The Mart" and "The Loaf"), "The Soil" (1907) and "The Grain" (1908) were placed on the east wall of the Delivery Room at op-posite corners (resulting from the bequest of Mrs. Caroline C.E. Ver Huell), but the other murals were never completed due to the absence of funds during subsequent years. The two completed murals are California landscapes, nine by eleven feet in size, in blue-greens and yellow-greens, one representing plowing and the other, the growing of grain. These murals remain in their original place at the library building.

During the 1906 earthquake, the library suffered about \$5,000 worth of damage. The balustrade was thrown down, the firewall of the stack was toppled over onto its roof and plastering throughout the main rooms was shaken down. The old style Library Bureau stack in the west end of the Reference Room was bent over to an angle of nearly forty-five degrees, and all the books were shaken off. The building was closed for eight days. During this period, Arthur Mathews worked with and advised the decorator on redecorating the interior. While repairing the damage, it was decided to raise the stack roof to allow a new three-story steel stack to be inserted. This project was completed in 1909.

The building outlived its usefulness during subsequent years (between 1900-1910, the population rose from 66,960 to 150,174), and there were complaints about its inadequacy by the 1930's. A civic center plan indicated a site for a new main library at 14th and Oak Streets near Lake Merritt, but the Great Depression and World War II delayed construc-tion. A post war public bond issue enabled the project to achieve realization in 1951. Although the Greene Library continued to function as a branch library until 1971 and re-tained a newspaper room until 1973, the shift of the City's population from the central area resulted in diminishing use of the facility, and a decision to terminate its use as a library. It is presently used for miscellaneous City of Oakland governmental offices. Today the building is within a three-block preservation district and will be a part of the projected Preservation Park project (see Schematic Plan). Its function within the project is presently unclear. Many would like to see the building become a City Archives, a place where the historical records of Oakland could be housed and made available to

(Continued)

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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the public. Another possibility is a Black History Museum. This would be appropriate because of Oakland's present proportionally very large Black population. Whatever its ultimate precise use, the Charles S. Greene Library building is certain to perform a new and useful function in the Preservation Park project.

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(11/78)

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Major Bibliographical

CONTINUATION SHEET References ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

State Historic Resources Inventory: State form prepared by K.H. Cardwell,
1977, Sacramento, California
Conmy, Peter Thomas, The Beginnings of Oakland, California, a.u.c.,
Oakland, 1961

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(11/78)

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Verbal Boundary Description &
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said southerly line of Fourteenth Street 150 feet to the point of commencement.

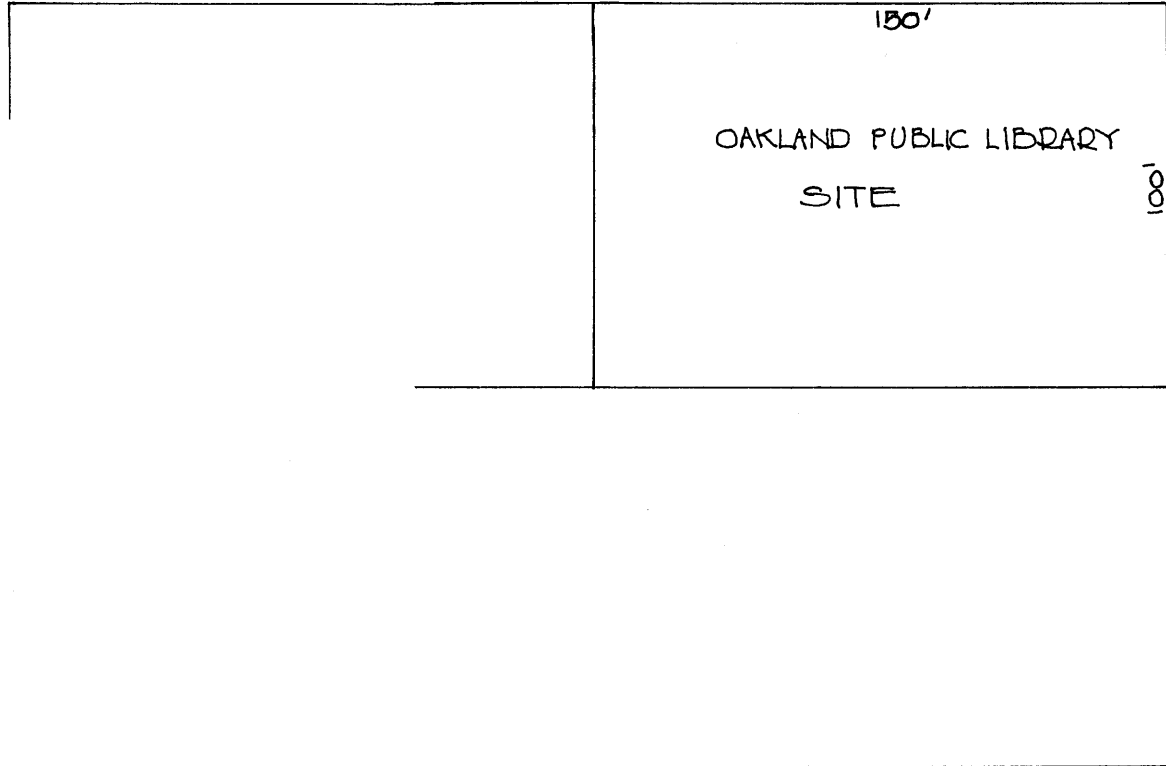
Assessor's Parcel No. 2-19-2. Building occupies its original parcel.

CASTRO STREET

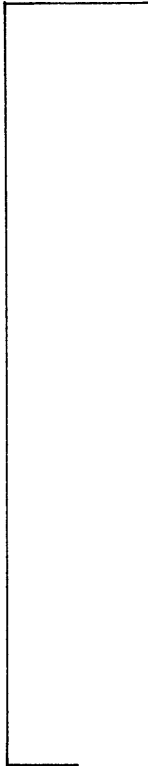


14TH STREET

659



GROVE STREET

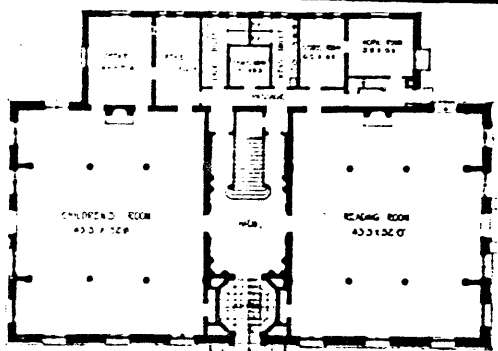
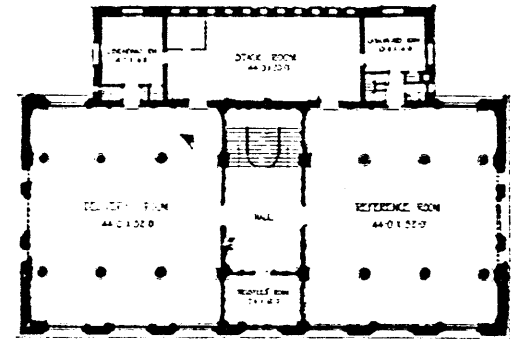
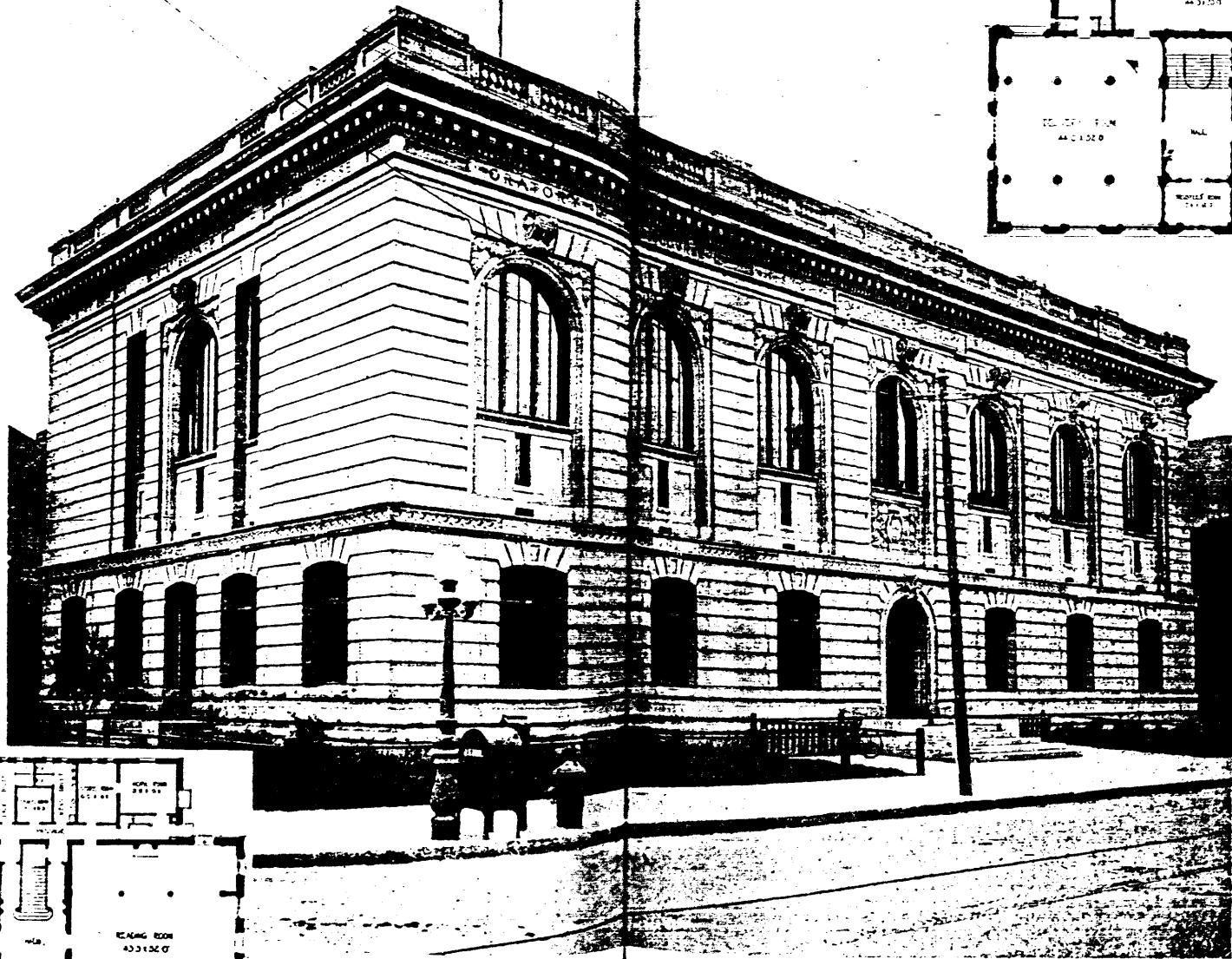


13TH STREET

ITEM 10 : SKETCH MAP
SCALE: 1" = 50'



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