



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If 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 Burwell Carnegie Library

Other names/site number Garfield County Library / GF01-024

## 2. Location

Street & number 110 S 7<sup>th</sup> Ave

Not for publication

City or town Burwell

Vicinity

State Nebraska

Code NE

County Garfield

Code 071

Zip code 68823

## 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.)

Michael J. Ford  
Signature of certifying official

May 24, 2006  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

Sandra McClellan  
Signature of Keeper

7/11/06  
Date of Action

**Burwell Carnegie Library**

Name of Property

**Garfield County, Nebraska**

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
_____	_____	Sites
_____	_____	Structures
_____	_____	Objects
1	0	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.)

EDUCATION/library

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Concrete Block

Walls Brick

Roof Steel

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Burwell Carnegie Library

Name of Property

Garfield County, Nebraska

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The Burwell Carnegie Library meets registration requirements of the *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922*. The Burwell 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 building's period of significance is derived from the year the library was constructed, 1914, through 1956, fifty years before the date of this nomination.

In 1907, the Burwell Woman's Literary Club was organized with 11 charter members. By 1911, the Literary Club began to promote the idea of a community library for Burwell. Mrs. H.J. Coffin, president of the Literary Club established correspondence with the well-known philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie to determine whether he would be willing to fund construction of a library building in Burwell.<sup>3</sup> Carnegie's reply was favorable, providing the citizens of Burwell were willing to pass an ordinance providing for the levy of an annual tax for the maintenance and use of such a public library.<sup>4</sup> By January 1912, the Village Board passed the required ordinance and fundraising plans were initiated<sup>5</sup>.

The Burwell Tribune was an enthusiastic supporter of the plans to construct a library building and indicated that the Literary Club "will start the project off with a handsome little nest egg of something like two hundred and fifty dollars and it is up to the public to subscribe in a sum sufficient to make this amount large enough to make a credible showing."<sup>6</sup> The remainder of the article went on to explain that the Tribune had long been a supporter of the new library concept, but they wanted to ensure that the institution would be a credit to the community. The Tribune ended the article with these words: "No public donations have as yet been solicited, but when they are let's all let loose in a manner that will make that measly two hundred and fifty contributed by the women folks look like thirty cents."<sup>7</sup> Undoubtedly offered as encouragement, this statement also served to add peer pressure into the fundraising mix.

The following month, fundraising efforts were well underway. To thank school children that had already made a donation, the Burwell Woman's Literary Club held a book reception. At this reception, as each child passed into the room, they were pinned with a badge containing the phrase "I push for the Public Library."<sup>8</sup>

Progress toward the new library continued to move forward, and by March 1912, the library board held their first meeting and elected officers.<sup>9</sup> By the time the Library Board held their second meeting later that same month, a local businessman, H.J. Coffin had offered the Library Board the use of an upstairs room in his downtown building known as "the Hub" (under National Register consideration, May 2006) for use as a temporary library.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the next year, as required by terms of the grant, the Library Board began acquiring books and continued fundraising. On March 27, 1913, W.C. Johns, President of the Burwell Library Board wrote a letter James Bertram, Secretary of the Carnegie Foundation of New York and administrator of the library grants detailing their efforts to comply with the stipulations of the grant money. In this letter, Mr. Johns indicates that a library had been established by act of the city council; they had about 1000 books on their shelves; the library was free to the public; the library was supported by a tax levy; and finally, that an unencumbered site had been obtained.<sup>11</sup> In this letter, Mr. Johns estimated that the cost of

<sup>3</sup> Garfield County Roundup, *A History of the People, For the People, By the People of Garfield County, Nebraska*. 1967.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> *Burwell Tribune*, 18 January 1912.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> *Burwell Tribune*, 15 February 1912.

<sup>9</sup> *Burwell Tribune*, 14 March 1912.

<sup>10</sup> *Burwell Tribune*, 21 March 1912.

<sup>11</sup> Letter to Andrew Carnegie from W.C. Johns, 27 March 1913.

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the library to be about \$5,000, and the levy collected that year amounted to \$522. The city council pledged that this tax to support the library would be collected annually, and that \$522 would be the minimum amount collected.<sup>12</sup>

In a letter dated May 19, 1913, the Secretary of the Carnegie Corporation of New York agreed to donate \$5000 to cover the "cost of Library Building complete, redy [sic] for occupancy and for the purpose intended."<sup>13</sup> This letter ends by informing the Library Board, that prior to any expenditure of funds, the proposed plans for the new library must meet approval of the Carnegie Corporation of New York.<sup>14</sup> After 1908, communities wishing to construct public libraries with the assistance of the Carnegie Corporation were required to submit design plans to the Carnegie Corporation for approval. This design approval was to insure professional plans that encouraged simplicity in decorative elements.<sup>15</sup>

In the ensuing months, progress on the new library stalled when either correspondence between the Library Board and the Carnegie Corporation was lost, or there was a miscommunication regarding the next step. At any rate, in a December 1913 letter, Bertram indicates that he has gotten no indication from Burwell that the grant money would be accepted.<sup>16</sup> W.C. Johns replied that an acceptance letter had been sent by First Class mail. It is in this same letter that plans for the building are mentioned for the first time in that Mr. Johns indicates that with the aforementioned acknowledgement, plans for the proposed library were also sent.<sup>17</sup> The next letter from the Carnegie Corporation indicates that they do indeed have plans, but have no acknowledgement on file.<sup>18</sup> Correspondence between Johns and Bertram continues, but by February, it was clear that the Secretary was unhappy with the amount of progress made toward making the basement a useful space. Consequently, Bertram enclosed a diagram illustrating "advantageous layout for a basement for a building about the shape of yours."<sup>19</sup> Upon the next submittal, plans for the new library were finalized and accepted by the Carnegie Corporation.<sup>20</sup>

In May 1914, the contract to build the library was let to T.J. Pryor.<sup>21</sup> While it is unclear when construction of the new building began, it was certainly ready for occupancy on January 1, 1915 when the Library Board met and moved all of the library's possessions into the new building.<sup>22</sup> Upon completion of the building, T.J. Pryor published the following statement in the Burwell Tribune:

I wish to say to the public that you have in your midst an institution which is a builder of character for social, national and religious life. The board members have given their time, their thought, and their energy and Mr. Carnegie has given his money to place within your reach a free institution that will be an uplift to every individual. There are some debts that can not be paid by dollars and cents. One of them is gratitude. The public owes this debt. It can be paid by appreciation shown by your patronage and loyal support.<sup>23</sup>

The community of Burwell continued to show its support and gratitude well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Letter to W.C. Johns from Carnegie Corporation of New York, 19 May 1913.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Fimple, Kathleen, "Carnegie Libraries of Nebraska, 1899 to 1922" MPD. On file, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office.

<sup>16</sup> Letter to W.C. Johns from Carnegie Corporation of New York, 5 December 1913.

<sup>17</sup> Letter to Carnegie Corporation of New York from W.C. Johns, 8 December 1913.

<sup>18</sup> Letter to W.C. Johns from Carnegie Corporation of New York, 12 December 1913.

<sup>19</sup> Letter to W.C. Johns from Carnegie Corporation of New York, 27 February 1914.

<sup>20</sup> Letter to W.C. Johns from Carnegie Corporation of New York, 28 March 1914.

<sup>21</sup> Burwell Tribune, 14 May 1914.

<sup>22</sup> Burwell Tribune, 1 January 1962.

<sup>23</sup> Garfield County Roundup, A History of the People, For the People, By the People of Garfield County, Nebraska. 1967

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.)

- X 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 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

1914 - 1956

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

T. J. Pryor / 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:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local Government
University
Other
Name of repository:

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of property Less than one

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	488974	4625348	3.			
2.				4.			

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 Stacy Stupka-Burda / National Register Coordinatororganization Nebraska State Historical Societydate 03-10-06street & number 1500 R ST, PO Box 82554telephone 402-471-4770city or town Lincolnstate NEzip code 68501-2554**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 Christianna Reinhardtstreet & number PO Box 30014

telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town New Yorkstate NYzip code 10011

**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, (15 USC 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.

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Burwell Carnegie Library

Name of Property

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The Burwell Carnegie Library is located in Burwell, a community of 1,130 (U.S. Census, 2000) positioned in the southwestern corner of Garfield County, 194 miles northwest of Lincoln, the state capital. Burwell is situated near the North Loup River in an area of dissected plains just south of Nebraska's famous Sandhills region. The primary economy of Garfield County is agricultural in nature. Constructed in 1914, the Burwell Carnegie Library is located one block east of Burwell's downtown commercial square.

The Burwell Carnegie Library, constructed in 1914, was funded through a grant from Andrew Carnegie. Construction of this library was a cause first championed by the Burwell Woman's Literacy Club.

The Library is a simple one-story brick structure with a raised basement. In keeping with sentiments of James Bertram, Carnegie's personal secretary who ran the grant program, the ornamentation of this building was kept to a minimum, and consists primarily of different colors and patterns of bricks. The bricks used up to the first floor molded concrete beltcourse are slightly variegated in color, while the main body of the building is composed of yellow buff pressed brick. The corners of the Library are trimmed with dark, cherry red pressed brick<sup>1</sup>. The cherry red brick on each corner is suggestive of pilasters and each begins at the molded concrete beltcourse and continues up to the cornice. Cherry red brick is also used to form the most decorative feature of the building, the cornice.

Beginning at the bottom of the cornice, the design is comprised of differing rows of cherry red bricks beginning with evenly spaced diamonds, linear bands of bricks and bricks installed to mimic dentils. Each of these decorative features protrude from the yellow buff brick wall slightly more than the last, leading the eye upward to the cherry red brick corbelling which completes the cornice.

The structure is rectangular in form, and is roughly 50' x 27'. The primary facade of the building faces west, looking toward the business district. The main entry is centered along the primary facade and features a single door accompanied by wooden panels on either side. A divided glass transom designed to mimic the original entry is situated immediately above the door. The entire entry is covered by a gabled projection. The words "Garfield County Library" are present in the gable end of the entry. Six concrete steps lead into the library. This entry is not original and was likely added when the library began to serve the entire county.

This building contains 22 wood 1/1 double hung windows. Molded concrete lintels cap each window and each window features a molded concrete sill. Aluminum storm windows have been installed on each window. The primary facade is symmetrical and a pair of windows is present on each side of the entryway. Below each large window, smaller windows open into the raised basement. The north facade is also symmetrical, featuring two large windows on the first floor, and two smaller windows at the basement level. The rear facade departs from the symmetrical look of the main facade, as two large windows are placed next to one another centered on the facade. A brick chimney is adjacent to the north window. Four smaller windows are evenly spaced below the beltcourse. The southern facade features two evenly spaced large windows, but the basement windows on this facade are slightly off center to accommodate a second exterior entry, which enters into the basement boiler room. At some point in the history of this building, this entry was covered by a small frame addition.

The original roof of this building was flat and was covered by tar and gravel. A steel roof was added to this building in 1983. This steel roof is plainly visible and while it does serve to stop the recurrent leaks of the original roof, the steel roof also results in diminished physical integrity.

<sup>1</sup>Correspondence from Carnegie Corporation of New York to Burwell Library Board. "General Outline of Specifications for Carnegie Public Library, Burwell, Nebraska." Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, 1872 - 2000. Columbia University Libraries Rare Book and Manuscript Library, n.d.

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Burwell Carnegie Library

Name of Property

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The primary entrance to the building opens into a small wood paneled vestibule created when the gabled exterior entry was added. The original double wooden doors featuring full-length glass windows and a glass transom are present immediately behind the vestibule addition. After entering these double doors, the library patron could choose to continue up the main stairs into the main floor of the library, or they could turn to the right and proceed down the stairs to the basement. The foyer, interior doors, stairs and handrails are intact from the date of the Library's construction.

The main floor of the library has an open floor plan, with a narrow staircase at the back (east wall) of the room providing a second means to access the basement. The trim and the floors are intact and stained and varnished Yellow Pine. The original pressed tin ceiling is also intact.

The basement contains one large open room on the east elevation, while two smaller rooms, a boiler room and a single lavatory are located at the south elevation.

This building was in use as a city library until 2002 when the Garfield County Library moved to a new building located in Burwell. This property was vacant until 2004 an individual purchased the former library building for use as a private home. Historically sensitive rehabilitation is currently underway.

According to the Multiple Property Document *Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922* "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). While the overall physical integrity is somewhat diminished by the replacement roof and changes to the entry, the building easily passes the test for significance under Criterion A, as a building that conveys the historic nature and significance of Carnegie libraries.<sup>2</sup> The overall physical integrity of the Burwell Carnegie Library is intact, and despite no longer functioning as a public library, the building retains the ability to convey the historic nature and significance of Carnegie libraries.

<sup>2</sup> Fimple, Kathleen, "Carnegie Libraries of Nebraska, 1899 to 1922" MPD. On file, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office.



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**Burwell Carnegie Library**

Name of Property

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The Burwell Carnegie Library follows the recommendations put forth by the Carnegie Corporation of New York regarding library design, that is, a one-story rectangular brick building with a raised basement. This library is similar in plan to several libraries constructed with assistance from Andrew Carnegie.

Andrew Carnegie funded the construction of 1,679 public libraries across the United States, their value totaling over 40 million dollars. As in so many small communities across the country, Burwell did not have a sole-use public library until the Carnegie Corporation of New York funded its construction.

Andrew Carnegie's philosophy and his motivation for donating incredible amounts of money for the construction of libraries is well stated on the website for the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Others before him had made substantial charitable contributions, but Carnegie was the first to state publicly the bold notion that the rich have a moral obligation to give away their fortunes, a philosophy which he wrote about in his essay "The Gospel of Wealth." One of Carnegie's lifelong interests was the establishment of free public libraries as a way of making education available to everyone. There were only a few public libraries in the world when Carnegie began promising a library to almost any town that would provide a site and promise to maintain the building. He donated more than \$56 million to build 2,509 libraries throughout the world, many of which are still serving their communities. By the time Carnegie died in 1919, he had given away more than \$350 million, almost 90 percent of his entire wealth.<sup>24</sup>

Carnegie's generosity assisted in the creation of public library systems that continue to have profound community impacts today. Many small communities are served by well-established public libraries whose existence is founded upon an original gift by Andrew Carnegie.

The Multiple Property Document, Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922, states "the construction of library buildings in Nebraska communities had an impact beyond the provision of reading material to the public. The buildings were designed to provide facilities for other education activities as well as the library" (Sec. E, p.3).<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.carnegie.org/sub/kids/legacy.html>, visited April 25, 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Fimple, Kathleen, "Carnegie Libraries of Nebraska, 1899 to 1922" MPD. On file, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office.

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**Burwell Carnegie Library**

Name of Property

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**Bibliography**

Bertram, James. Letters to W.C. Johns, Burwell Library Board. 1913 May – 1914 March. From Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, 1872 – 2000. Columbia University Libraries Rare Book and Manuscript Library. New York, NY.

Burwell Tribune. 18 January; 15 February; 14, 31 March 1912. 14 May 1914. 1 January 1962.

Carnegie Corporation of New York website. <http://www.carnegie.org/sub/kids/legacy.html>, visited 25 April 2006.

Garfield County Roundup, A History of the People, For the People, By the People of Garfield County, Nebraska. 1967.

Fimple, Kathleen. Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922. On File, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office, Lincoln, Ne. 1990

W.C. Johns. Letters to Carnegie Corporation of New York, Burwell Library Board. 1913 May – 1913 December. From Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, 1872 – 2000. Columbia University Libraries Rare Book and Manuscript Library. New York, NY.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lots 22 and 23, Garfield Addition, Garfield County, Burwell, Nebraska.

**Boundary Justification**

Boundary includes parcel of land historically associated the Burwell Carnegie Library.

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**Burwell Carnegie Library**

Name of Property

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**Photographs**

The following information pertains to the first 5 photographs:

Burwell Carnegie Library  
Garfield County, Burwell Nebraska  
Photographer: Stacy Stupka-Burda, NeSHPO  
March 2004  
Negatives in the collection of the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office

Photograph	Description of Photograph	View
1 of 5	View of main façade, Burwell Carnegie Library.	E
2 of 5	View of Burwell Carnegie Library.	SE
3 of 5	View of Burwell Carnegie Library.	NE
4 of 5	View of Burwell Carnegie Library.	SW
5 of 5	View of interior, Burwell Carnegie Library. Original double door entry is visible at center of photo.	W

**Supplemental Photos**

Photograph	Description of Photograph	View
1 of 1	Historic view of Burwell Carnegie Library, 1914.	E-SE