

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 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 Chariton Free Public Library

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 803 Braden [N/A] not for publication

city or town Chariton [N/A] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Lucas code 117 zip code 50049

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).

Ronald J. Sorke July 13, 2005  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

**STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**

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:)

John A. Beall 6-24-05  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**Chariton Free Public Library**  
Name of Property

**Lucas County, IA**  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
0		sites
0		structures
0		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/Library  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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EDUCATION/Library  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> & EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:  
Classical Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_

foundation STONE/Limestone  
walls BRICK  
STONE/Limestone  
roof CERAMIC TILE  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**Chariton Free Public Library**  
Name of Property

**Lucas County, IA**  
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.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**EDUCATION**

**ARCHITECTURE**

**Period of Significance**

**1904-1955**

**Significant Dates**

**1904**

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**N/A**

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

**Patton & Miller**

**Johnson & Best**

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa

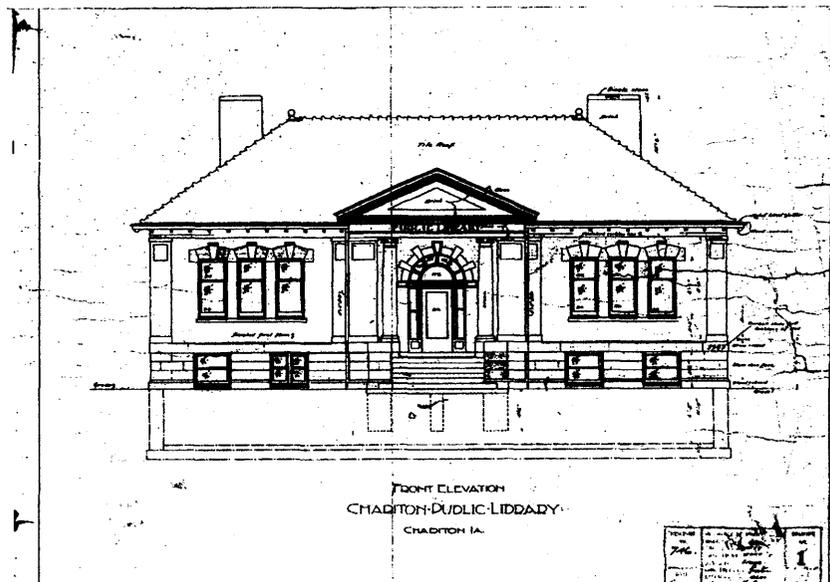
Section number 7 Page 1

## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The Chariton Free Public Library (1904) is located one block east of the NE corner of the Courthouse Square at 803 Braden. The library lot is approximately two feet higher than Braden, so the building is raised above street level with the primary façade on the south elevation. In 1993 an addition was made to the rear of the building, attaching along the full length of the north wall of the original rear wing.

### Exterior

The Chicago architectural firm of Patton and Miller designed the library in the Classical Revival style. The single story brick building on a high stone foundation is basically rectangular in shape measuring 60'8" x 43'3," with a hip roof of red tile. There are two brick chimneys. The exterior walls are of warm dark brown rock-faced brick with Bedford stone trim. The high foundation is constructed of rusticated limestone blocks with a water table of dressed stone. The building has a symmetrical façade featuring a slightly projecting portico with stone Doric columns, brick pilasters, stone cornice, and a triangular stone and brick pediment. The entrance has a large round arch with a brick and stone surround. An arched transom and sidelights surround the door and provide ample light for the entry hall. Windows throughout the main floor are rectangular in shape with segmental brick arches with limestone keystones and corner blocks. Stone sills link the windows in groups of three. The six windows on the façade measure 28" wide and 6'6" tall with double hung sash.



Patton & Miller drawing of façade (south elevation), August 1903  
(Courtesy of Chariton Free Public Library)

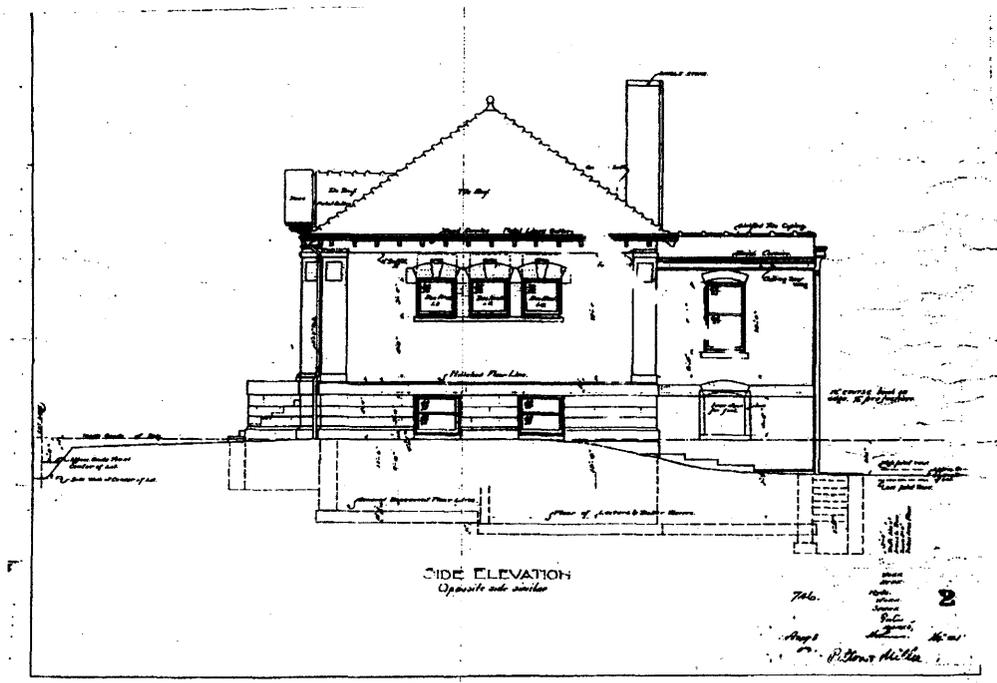
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 2

The three windows on the side elevations are shorter, measuring 34" wide by 3'6" tall, have the same brick and stone arches and stone sill treatment, but are located much higher in the wall, and are filled with stained glass designs. Although a stone cornice was used on the front portico, a wood cornice with small brackets was used along all other walls. The drawing of the side elevations shows that the rear wing of the building has a flat roof. This section is recessed 6" on the east and west walls and is 13'9" deep. A single tall window is located in the east and west walls of this section of the building. The basement windows are symmetrically arranged on all elevations and are the same size as the stained glass windows on the ends.



Side (east) elevation by Patton & Miller, August 1903  
(Courtesy of Chariton Free Public Library)

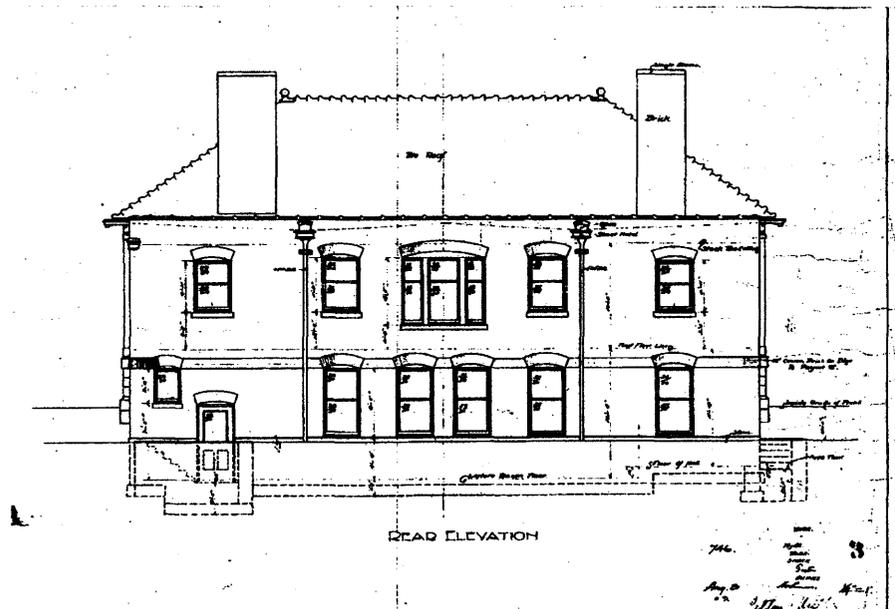
The drawing for the original rear elevation of the building shows that the ground level was lower, allowing for five windows in the basement to be the same height as those above on the main floor. This wall is no longer visible due to the 1993 addition but the drawing is included here to provide complete documentation.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 3



Drawing of rear (north) elevation by Patton & Miller, August 1903  
(Courtesy of Chariton Free Public Library)

### Interior

The floor plans of the Chariton Library show that the main floor was designed to accommodate all of the primary library activities, while the basement level provided space for a lecture hall, a room for the historical society, the mechanical systems and storage. The symmetrical design of the exterior is reflected in the symmetry of the floor plan. At the front entrance the library patron must make a decision to climb the center steps into the main level, or to descend one of the two sets of steps on the sides leading to the basement.

On the main floor the patron steps into the center area labeled "Delivery Room" on the plans. It is in this 12'6" x 14' area that the circulation desk is located. To the right (east) is a broad arched opening leading into the "Children's Reading Room" and to the left (west) is an identical opening leading into the "General Reading Room." Each of these rooms measures 22'3" x 28'3." In the north section of the building, the "Librarians Room" (13'6" x 13') is located in the NE corner, the "Reference Study" area (13'6" x 13') is in the NW corner, and the "Stack Room" (29' x 13') occupies the center section. The stained glass windows seen on the exterior provide light from above into the two reading rooms. The design of these stained glass windows is distinctly Prairie in feeling. Woodwork throughout the building is of quarter sawn Golden Oak. This includes the stairway railings, ceiling beams, baseboards and cornices, fireplace mantel, wainscoting, and the circulation desk and original furniture (shelving, tables, chairs). The gentle arches opening off the delivery area into the other rooms is repeated in the design of the

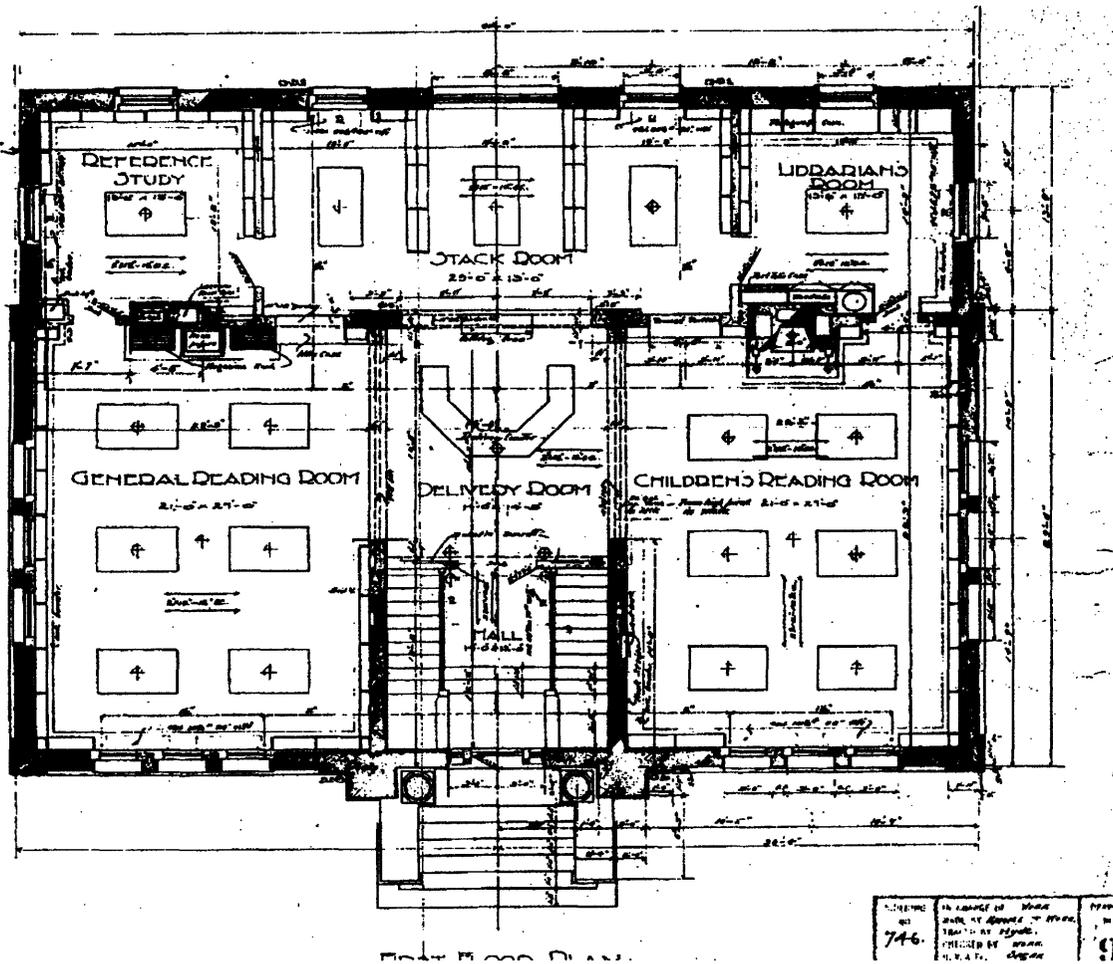
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 4

fireplace mantel, the circulation desk, and the ends of book shelves. Although not visible today, originally several of the walls were frescoed. A special gift to the library at the time of construction is a plaster bas relief panel located above the fireplace. This is a copy of a work by Thorwaldsen titled "Greek Soldiers." The fireplace at the north end of the Children's Room is balanced in the General Reading Room by built-in magazine racks.



Plan of Main Floor by Patton & Miller, August 1903  
(Courtesy of Chariton Free Public Library)

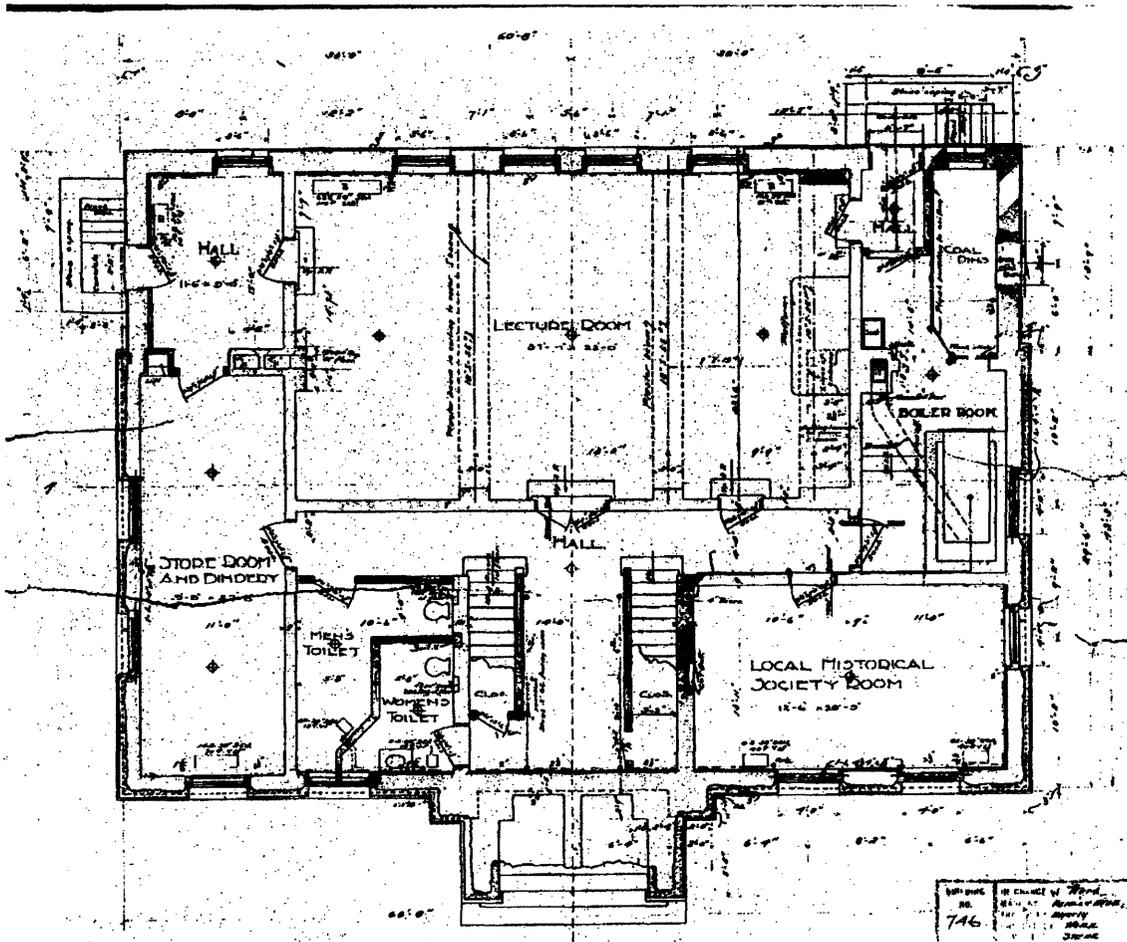
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 5

The basement level serves several diverse purposes. Immediately to the left (west) of the staircase are the "Men's and Women's Toilets". Next to these, along the west wall is a "Store Room and Bindery" (9'9" x 27'), with a separate "Hall" in the NW corner that measures 11'6" x 9'. The SE corner of the basement is the "Local Historical Society Room" (12'6" x 29'). The NE corner contains the "Coal Bins," Boiler Room," and an exit door. The center of the north half of this floor was designed as a 37' x 22' "Lecture Room." Woodwork in the public areas of the basement is the same Golden Oak found on the main floor.



Basement Floor Plan by Patton & Miller, August 1903  
(Courtesy of Chariton Free Public Library)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa**

Section number 7 Page 6

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**Integrity**

The integrity of the original block of the library building has been maintained to a remarkable degree. On the exterior the only obvious change is the installation of new windows in the full-length openings, while the shorter stained glass windows have been given new protective coverings. On the interior, the only alterations appear to be in floor covering and new lighting fixtures.

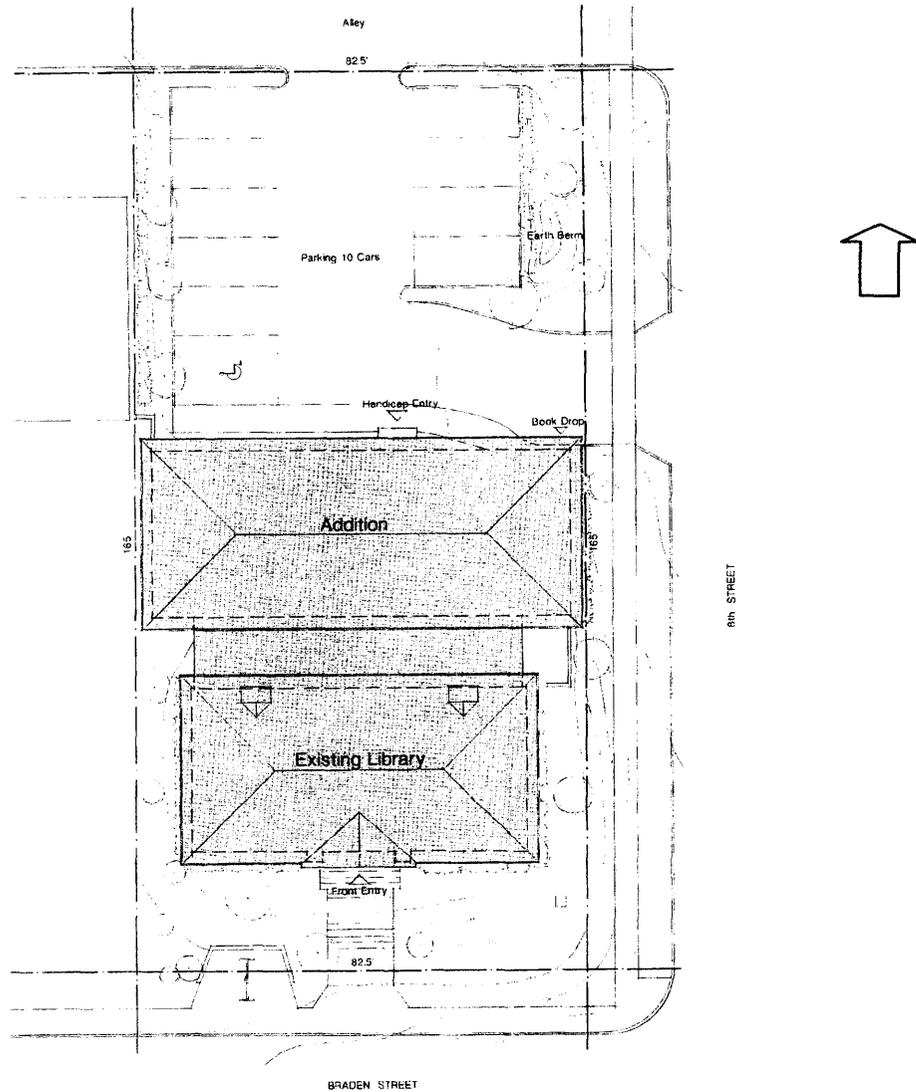
When the rear addition was planned in 1993 the architectural firm of Bergland & Cram of Mason City was selected. The decision was made that the new addition would be sympathetic to the historic building, but make a firm distinction between the two sections. This was accomplished through the use of similar materials, but with a definite break in the plane of the side walls on the east and west. The continued use of the rock-faced brown brick, and Bedford limestone, both rusticated and dressed, provided a smooth visual transition between the two sections. The hip roof echoes the shape of the original roof and continues the use of red tile. The windows throughout the new wing continue the brick and stone arches and stone sills of the original section. The flat roof portion of the original building is slightly (approximately 12") narrower than the main section. The new addition attaches to that narrower part, and measures 82.5' x 35', making it approximately 10' wider than the original structure on each side. The library lot has a gentle downward slope to the north, allowing the addition to open directly at ground level. This new rear entrance provides handicapped accessibility with no steps on the exterior, and an elevator not far from the entrance on the interior. The openings from the rear addition into the original building make use of the original fenestration, and along the south wall of the new wing, the original brick exterior wall is visible. The oak baseboard and cornice of the original building are continued in the addition as well.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa

Section number 7      Page 7



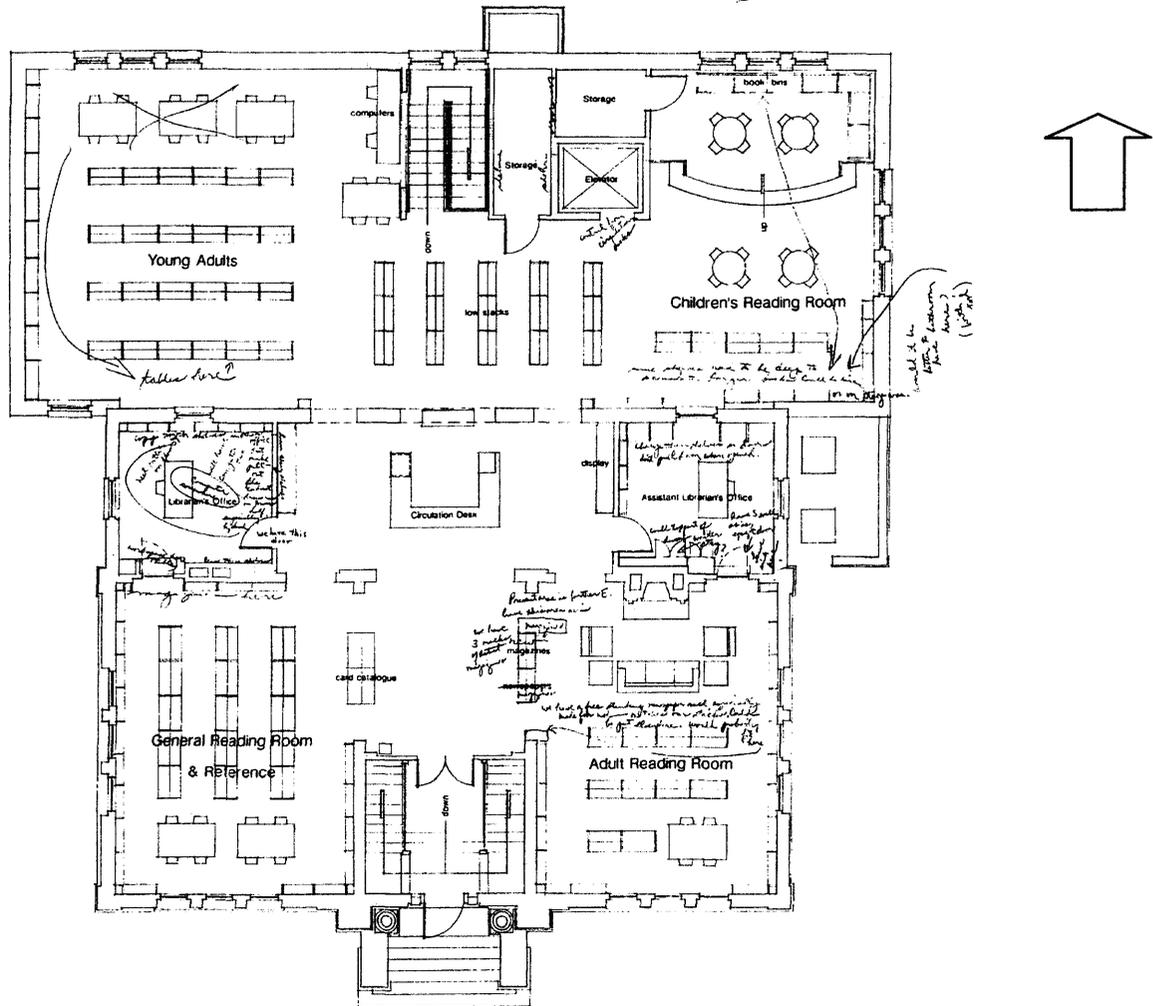
1993 Site plan by Bergland & Cram showing new addition and parking area  
(Courtesy of Chariton Free Public Library)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 8



FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

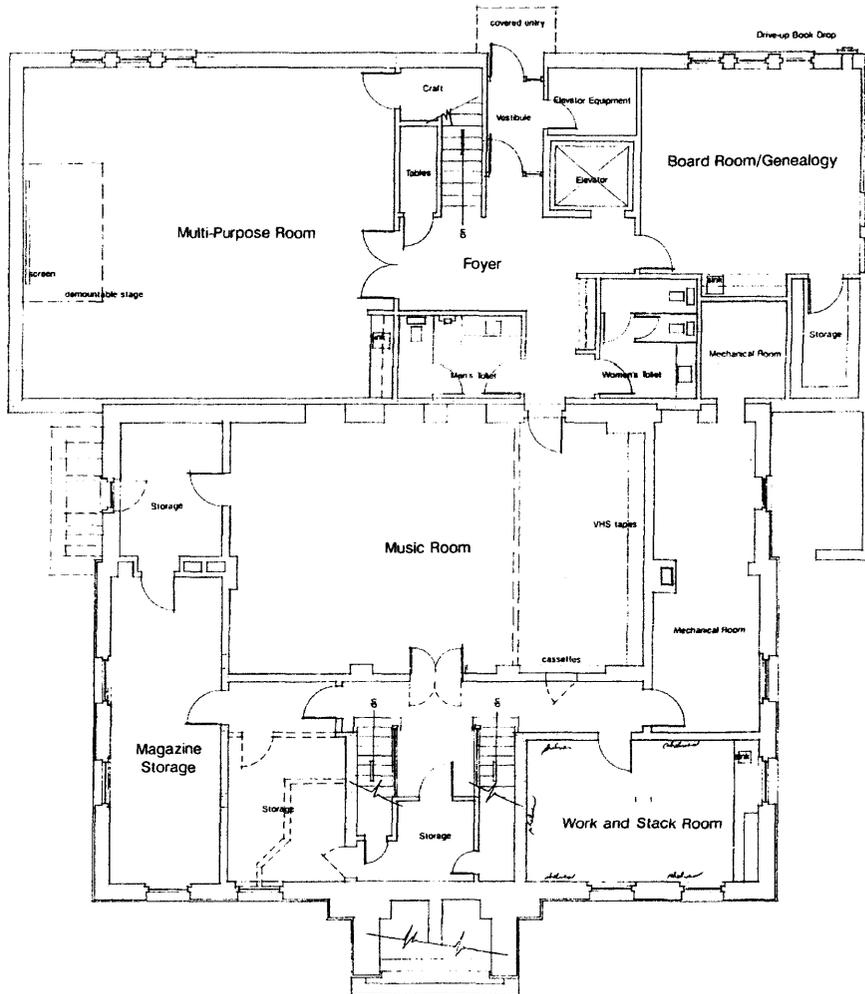
1993 Plan of Main Floor  
Showing original and new addition by Bergland & Cram  
(Courtesy Chariton Free Public Library)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 9



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

1993 Plan of Basement Level  
Showing original and new addition by Bergland & Cram  
(Courtesy Chariton Free Public Library)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

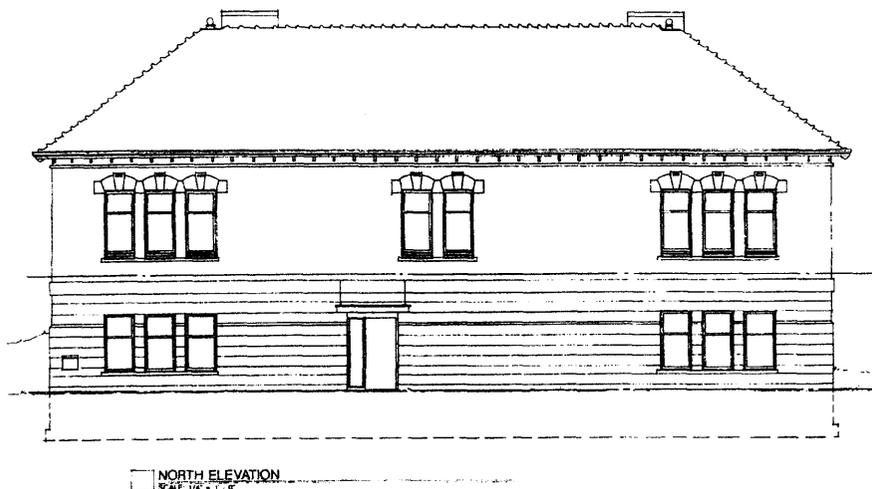
**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa**

Section number 7 Page 10



1993 drawings showing  
East elevation with the addition at right (top) and  
Rear (north) elevation of addition (bottom) by Bergland & Cram  
(Courtesy Chariton Free Public Library)

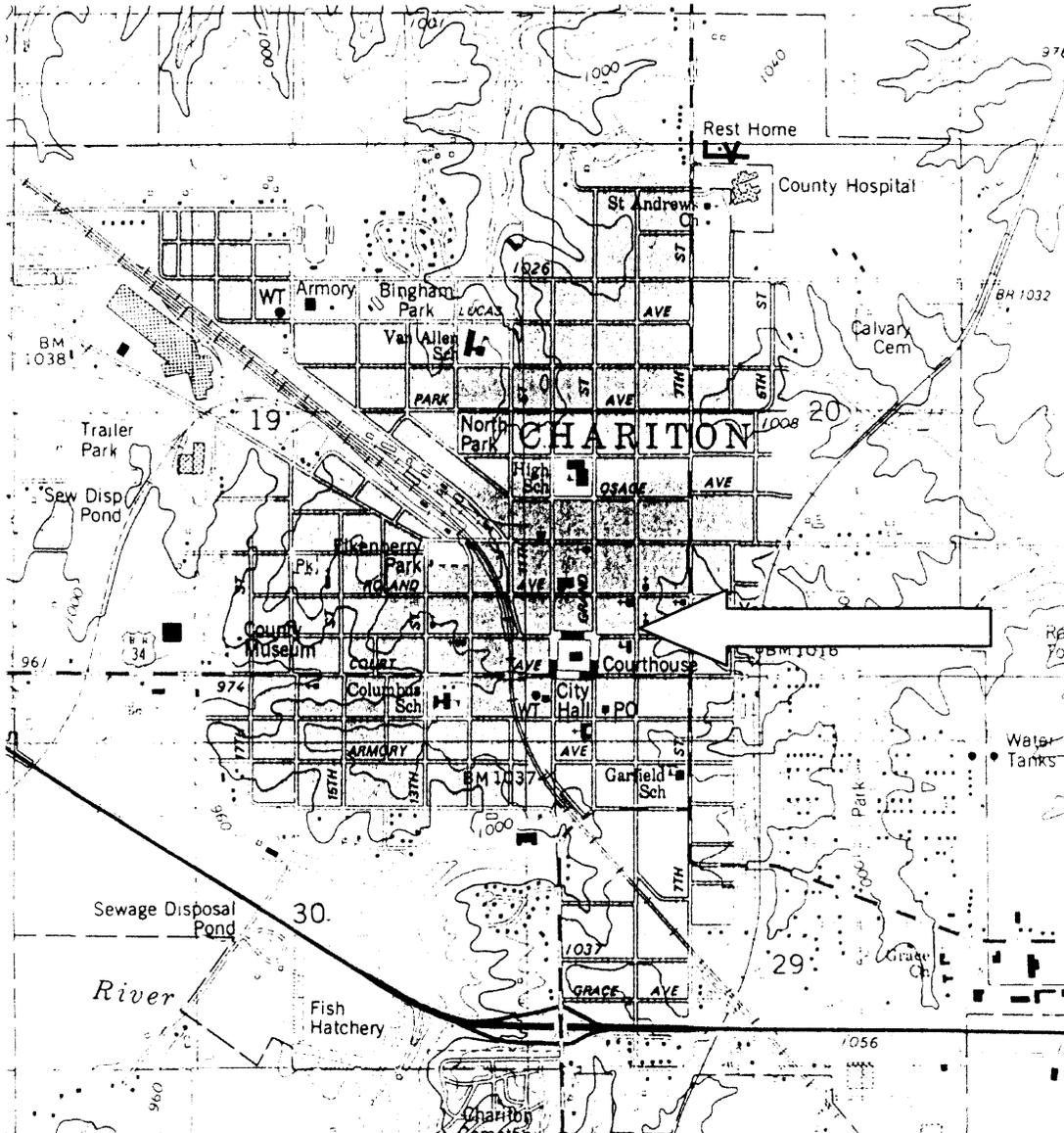


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 11



U.S.G.S. Topographic Map of Chariton  
Edited 1982

Note Courthouse Square near center of town  
Location of the Free Public Library indicated by arrow



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa**

Section number 8 Page 13

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

The Chariton Free Public Library (1904) at 803 Braden is one of 101 Carnegie libraries in the state of Iowa and is locally significant under Criterion A as an illustration of the importance of the public library movement in terms of education, and as a leveler of social class by providing services to all regardless of social position or finances. It is of local significance under Criterion C as a fine example of Classical Revival design executed in brick and stone by noted Chicago architects Patton & Miller. It has been said that the floor plan used here was so functional that it became known as the "Chariton Plan" and was widely used by Patton & Miller for small and medium size libraries in the Midwest. Proof of the importance of the "Chariton Plan" would provide state-wide significance under Criterion C.

**Criterion A:**

Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, if you wanted to borrow a book from a library in an Iowa community you needed to be a member of the Library Association or to pay a subscription fee to the library. It was the women who usually took the lead in establishing a library in their community. They would hold fund-raisers and staff the library reading rooms.

The first government supported library in the U.S. opened in Boston in 1848. The public library movement spread, and the American Library Association published the first issue of *Library Journal* at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. In 1884 Melvil Dewey established the first U.S. library school at Columbia University. (Krutzy, p 110)

Industrialist Andrew Carnegie watched this slow development of the public library as an institution.

Early in his extraordinary life, Carnegie wrote of the obligation of the wealthy to use their surplus income to benefit fellow citizens (eventually he gave away ninety percent of his own wealth). Carnegie had definite ideas about how the money should be dispersed. In an essay titled "The Best Fields for Philanthropy," he listed libraries as second only to universities among seven areas worthy of donation by the wealthy. True to his word, Carnegie eventually spent forty million dollars constructing library buildings in the United States. (*ibid.*, pp111-112)

Although he funded some public libraries prior to 1898 (including the Fairfield, Iowa Public Library, 1892-93, that was the first Carnegie library west of Pennsylvania), the major funding period of the Carnegie Foundation was 1898 to 1917. The general pattern of providing funds for a local library began with a citizen writing a letter to the Foundation requesting funds for such a building. James Bertram, Carnegie's personal secretary, would reply and explain the conditions that had to be met before a grant could be made. These were: the community had to provide a site for the library; the city had to guarantee that they would provide a certain amount of money (usually ten percent of the grant) for maintenance annually; and, the city

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

**Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa**

Section number **8** Page **14**

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agreed that it would be a free public library, open to all. After, 1908, a sketch plan of the proposed building that indicated a workable plan also had to be approved.

When the Iowa Library Commission was established in 1900 there were 48 free public libraries in Iowa. By 1903 that number had grown to 73, an increase of 25 in just three years. 1903, which was the peak year for Carnegie grants nation-wide, was also the peak year for Carnegie grants to Iowa communities. Of the one hundred and one Carnegie libraries funded in the state of Iowa twenty-two, nearly one quarter, were funded that year. These communities were: Algona, Ames, Carroll, Chariton, Charles City, Cherokee, Council Bluffs, Glenwood, Indianola, Iowa Falls, Jefferson Le Mars, Marengo, Marion, Monticello, Mount Vernon, Perry, Shenandoah, Spencer, Storm Lake, Vinton, and Waverly. (Klingensmith, 8-4) Ultimately, Andrew Carnegie funded the construction of 1,679 libraries in 1,412 towns across the United States. Almost half of the 1,679 Carnegie libraries in the U.S. are in the Midwest. With 101 Carnegie libraries, Iowa ranks sixth in the number of Carnegie libraries constructed.

There were several perceived benefits from a free public library: that it would help provide a democratic education for all; that it would provide a good moral example; and, there was always the strong sense of basic civic pride.

In Chariton a Library and Reading Room Association was formed in 1879, supported by subscriptions and entertainments. Unfortunately, it was short lived. The county superintendent of schools, a Professor Hanlin, later started a teachers' library in the court house. Together these made a library of 800 volumes. In January 1898 the History Club gave a reception to the other study clubs of the city and proposed a federation for the purpose of supporting a library. Just as it was in other towns, it was the women who took the lead in establishing the Chariton Library. At the initial meeting \$198 was pledged for immediate support, with twenty-three clubs supporting the effort and the 800 books from the courthouse were obtained. (Scott paper) The Chariton Federation of Women's Clubs opened a free public library in two rooms above Gibbons Drug Store (north end of the east side of the square). The Librarian, Miss Margaret Brown, was assisted by Miss Ethel Bartholomew.

In March of 1899 the city voted to approve a permanent tax to support the library by a margin of 325 to 107. School children had been enlisted to write letters to their fathers urging them to vote yes. In June 1899 the mayor appointed a Library Board of Trustees: Thomas Gay, T.M. Stuart, Miss Margaret McCormick, Mrs. Dewey, Mrs. Crips, F.R. Crocker, Miss Ethel Bartholomew, Rev. Whitten, and Miss Margaret Brown. At the first board of trustees meeting in July 1899, treasurer Margaret McCormick reported receipts of \$237.76, and expenditures of \$237.76. The library was open four and one-half hours per day, six days a week. In February 1901 Librarian Margaret Brown tendered her resignation as she had accepted a position as the assistant traveling librarian for the State Library. The board refused to accept her resignation, instead urging her to do both jobs, working at the Chariton Library as much as possible. Due to this, the assistant librarian's pay was increased to \$16.00 per month. (Board of Trustees minutes)

It was soon recognized that the physical arrangement above the Drug Store was not ideal, and there was discussion of constructing a library building. Miss Margaret Brown and

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa**

Section number 8 Page 15

---

Thomas Gay, President of the Library Board, jointly prepared a letter to Andrew Carnegie requesting funds from his foundation. In January 1903 the board received a letter from Carnegie offering a gift of \$10,000. A motion to accept the gift was made, and a committee was appointed to select a site. At the March meeting the site at the corner of Braden and 8<sup>th</sup> Street was recommended and approved. (Minutes from 20 January and 31 March 1903) A building committee was appointed and they traveled to several new libraries around the state to "obtain a basis for comparison and a knowledge of the needs and requirements for a library. They selected as architects the firm of Patton & Miller of Chicago, library specialists who will have supervision of the building as well as preparation of the plans and specifications. The (accepted) plan provides ample space for general reading room, children's room and shelving of books, room for future growth being taken into consideration by adopting a plan which is easily capable of extension." The foundation was laid in the fall of 1903, ready for construction to start as soon as possible in the spring. (Librarian's Report to the Board of Trustees, 31 December 1903)

On Saturday 23 April 1904 the corner stone was laid by Mrs. Victoria Dewey. A newspaper article from the following week noted "This is the first time we have ever heard of a woman officiating at the formal laying of a corner stone of any public building. Mrs. Dewey performed her duties in that capacity with dignity and grace." (Clipping with no newspaper name or date provided) In July 1904 Thomas Gay sent a formal letter to the Lucas County Historical Society offering the use of the room set aside for them in the new building.

Believing that the preservation of historical matter is of great importance in the development of our county, and that the Library should be the depository, the Trustees of the Chariton Library, desire to announce that a room in the basement of the new Carnegie building has been set aside for the use of the Historical Society. In turning over the room our conditions are, that all cases containing the valuable possessions of the society, shall be locked, and that at such times as the room is not in actual use, by your organization for your meetings, the Library may make use of it, for such purposes as may be deemed expedient by the Trustees.

Very truly,  
Thomas Gay, President  
Margaret W. Brown, Secretary

The Chariton Free Public Library was dedicated with great ceremony on 28 October 1904. A children's program at the library was held at 1:30 in the afternoon. All the children in the Chariton Public Schools marched from their school buildings to the library where there was a formal flag raising, a speech on patriotism, and the singing of "America". Then each grade passed through the library placing the books presented by them on the shelves of the Children's Room. At 3:00 o'clock the formal dedication services were held at the First Methodist Church, with a reception at the library following at 7:00 PM. At the formal dedication, Thomas Gay, Board President gave a lengthy speech entitled "The Influence of the Library on Character Building." This was followed by "Unity of Education Interest and Work," a series of shorter

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 16

speeches: "The Library Movement in Iowa" by the State Librarian; "The Club and The Library" by a female member of the Iowa Library Commission; "The School and the Library" by the Superintendent of Schools; "Libraries and the State" by a legislator from Council Bluffs; and, "The Library and its Local Relations" by the Secretary of the Iowa Library Commission.

The titles of these speeches illustrate how valuable a library and its offerings were considered to be by the society of 1904. A century later, libraries are taken for granted. Their services have always been available, and it is difficult to imagine not being able to visit one.



GIFT OF MR. ANDREW CARPENTER

The Board of Trustees  
of the  
Free Public Library  
Chariton, Iowa  
invite you to be present at the  
Dedication of the Library Building  
at the Methodist Church  
October twenty-eighth, nineteen hundred four  
at three o'clock

THE LIBRARY WILL BE OPEN THROUGHOUT THE DAY

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa**

Section number **8** Page **17**

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Over the years the Chariton Library, like others in the state, has offered a variety of opportunities to their patrons. New books were added each year, and special services were provided. In 1916 the Librarian, Miss Eleanor La Mar, contacted Benjamin Shambaugh, Superintendent of the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City, about borrowing some materials for a project called "Iowa Day." Shambaugh responded by explaining that due to "the dangers of loss and accident in transit" the society did not allow any materials to be taken from their rooms. He closed by saying "Your Iowa Day is an excellent idea. We will make mention of it among the notes in the Iowa Journal of History and Politics." (Letter 4 November 1916) During World War I, the State Director of the National War Savings Committee sent letters to all Iowa public libraries with War Savings Stamp book inserts, requesting that these be placed in every book checked out of the libraries. (Letter 5 November 1918) In 1925 Stella Scott, one of the first librarians in Chariton, presented a paper to the Pandora Study Club in which she noted accomplishments of the Library.

It has always been the aim of our library to get the children to acquire the library habit.....The library has always tried to cooperate with the schools to help the children with their reference work, and to supply supplementary reading where it was possible. We also furnished mounted pictures for special days. The library now is able to furnish supplementary reading for all grades as well as the high school, and many of the country schools avail themselves of the opportunity to get books, as also do Russell, Derby, Williamson, Lucas, etc.

Our library now observes book week each year to urge the children to acquire the reading habit. This usually comes the second week in November.....Five Hundred children attended the story hour during this time (Saturday, November 14) and they loaned the largest number of books in the history of the library. The circulation that day was 316.

We now have 11,682 books. It might be interesting to hear the report for October 1925. The number of new books purchased was 69. There were 73 new readers' cards issued and that number will be increased in November. The total number of books loaned during the month was 3,572, a gain of 755 over October of last year. The average circulation daily was 172. 4,150 people visited the library during this month.

The Chariton Free Public Library provided similar services throughout the Depression, providing free reading materials and programs, and sometimes just providing a warm place to visit. During the 1940s and '50s the library continued to offer children's story hours and special events, and added as many new books as the budget would allow. Today the Library serves the needs of the citizens of Lucas County not only through books, magazines, and programs, but also through the loan of videos and CDs, and the use of computers.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 18



Undated Postcard  
(Courtesy of Chariton Free Public Library)

**Criterion C:**

The selection of Patton and Miller as the architects for the new library was a wise one. In 1902 architect Grant Miller spoke to the Iowa Library Association in Grinnell, saying:

The public library is an ancient institution, but when it came under the influence of the intense activity of the latter part of the nineteenth century, it received such an extraordinary expansion and such a revolution of methods as to make it almost a new creation.  
(Krutzy, p 110)

His Chicago firm had just received the first of what would be many commissions for Iowa libraries. By 1909 Patton and Miller libraries could be found in all parts of the state.

The Classical Revival style became very popular for public libraries around 1900. This was influenced by the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago where the majority of the buildings were Classical Revival in design. Patton and Miller designed their first library in this style in 1901 for Freeport, Illinois. Miller explained to the Iowa Library Commission:

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa**

Section number **8** Page **19**

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The revival of classic architecture is bringing with it an appreciation of the refinement that characterizes such work, and a desire that our libraries shall be built of enduring materials, and shall be nobly and fitly designed, even though simplicity is enforced by financial considerations. (*Ibid.*, p 114)

In the next few years, Patton and Miller designed five large libraries in the state in this style: Marshalltown, Clinton, Mason City, Council Bluffs, and Webster City. Not all Iowa towns needed, or could support, a massive stone Classical Revival library. Between 1902 and 1904 the firm received ten commissions for smaller libraries, ranging in cost between \$7,500 and \$12,500. Library critic Chalmers Hadley described the differences between the two different types of libraries in a speech to the American Library Association:

Our largest library structures continue to follow the Greek type and so secure the compactness and monumental impressiveness which it affords, but there has been a notable departure from this type in our smaller libraries in favor of a style less expensive than the Greek, less institutional and less formal in appearance, and more flexible in design. (*Ibid.*, p 117)

To Andrew Carnegie and the librarians, the interior plan of a library was much more important than the style of the exterior. At a meeting of the Iowa Library Association in January 1903 Miller described the most common plan of a public library:

The location of the entrance [is] at the center of the front of the building. Lying directly back of the entrance is the delivery room; to the right and left of the delivery room in the two wings, we find a general reading room and reference room, a children's reading room, and back of the delivery room, to the rear, is located a stack room, and of a width that will overlap the ends of the two reading rooms. In one of the internal angles formed by the intersection of the stack room and reading room, is found the librarian's and cataloguing room, and in the other a reference study, which is convenient to both the stack and general reading room.....This same general arrangement may be carried out in a building with a corner entrance, with slight modifications, and can be made a very practical plan. (*Ibid.*, p 120)

In Kruty's article he says that this plan described by Miller was the one used by the firm for most of their Iowa libraries and it became known as the "Chariton Plan" because it was first used for the Chariton Free Public Library. John M. Witt also referred to this as the "Chariton Plan" in his book on Carnegie Libraries in Iowa. Unfortunately, neither author cited a source for this designation. Recent research has been unable to locate the original source.

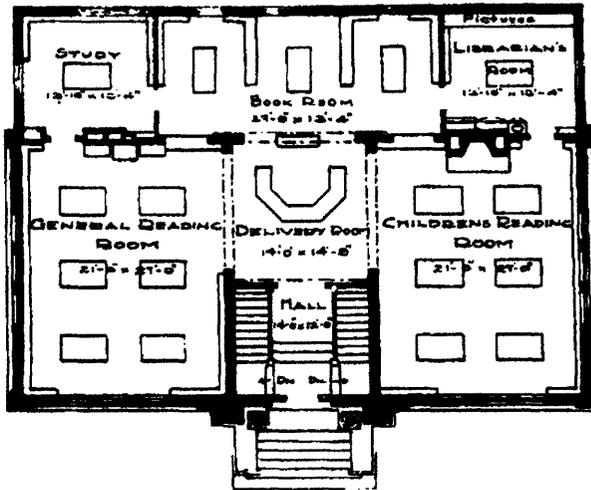
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 20

*The Chariton Free Public Library was completed in 1904 at a cost of \$11,000. One of the smaller-style Patton and Miller libraries, this building served as the model for the "Chariton Plan"—the design followed by Patton and Miller in most of their Iowa libraries.*



*The Chariton Plan suggested not only an entrance at the center of the front of the building, but an interior arrangement of rooms which provided a workable library plan.*

Illustration from Kruty's article, p 121

### Conclusion:

The Chariton Free Public Library achieves Criterion A significance as it is representative of the free public library movement that swept the country in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The citizens of Chariton saw the library as a place to learn and grow, to become a better member of society. The library is locally significant under Criterion C as it was the first public building constructed in Chariton in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was the first building in the newly popular Classical Revival style. If, and when, the original source referring to this as the "Chariton Plan" is identified, and it can be proven that this was the prototype for many of Patton and Miller's small libraries, it should be considered for state-wide significance.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa**

Section number 9 Page 21

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa**

Section number 10 Page 22

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**GEOGRAPHIC DATA:**

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

Original Plat, Block 8, E ½ of lot 8, and S 17 ½' of E ½ of lot 5.

**Boundary Justification:**

This is the area historically associated with the library building.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Chariton Free Public Library  
Lucas County, Iowa**

Section number    Photos    Page    23

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The photographs submitted with this nomination were taken by Molly Myers Naumann in August 2004. The negatives are on file at the Chariton Free Public Library, Chariton, IA.

- 1      Façade looking NE
- 2      West elevation looking NE
- 3      Façade looking NW
- 4      Rear elevation ( 1993 addition) looking SW
- 5      Detail: Rear addition in foreground, original portion in background
- 6      Detail: Front portico and steps
- 7      Interior: Steps in foyer
- 8      Interior: From foyer into main floor with circulation desk
- 9      Interior: Looking from central portion toward stacks in west room
- 10     Interior: Fireplace in east room with Greek relief above mantle
- 11     Interior: Circulation desk with openings into new addition in background
- 12     Interior: Stairs from entry down into basement