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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved

date

n/a

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Orosi/Cutler Branch Library, one of the few frame Carnegie libraries, is a simple bungalow in an inverted T shape over a raised basement. The gables at each end have vertical slat venting. The siding is beveled (originally white) with a random stone foundation. All masonry, both inside and out, is random stone with an unusual overlaid tubular grouting.

The chimneys, one at each end of the building, are capped, and there is an exterior chimney flared at the bottom on the east. There is a bank of four windows (double hung, 6 over 3) on each side of the centrally placed entry.

Concrete steps lead to a recessed entrance porch. A bracketed pediment, originally with a sign reading Orosi Branch Library, is supported by square pilasters with simple capitals. The main entrance has large double doors, six lights on each, paneled bottom half. There is a fixed six-light transom over all.

The vestibule is directly in back of the double doors, and the circulation desk is located there. The left side of this small area is open to the stacks and reading room. The right side is separated from the adjacent room by large glass panes. Three square pilasters and one column are the only ornamental details.

The room directly to the right as one enters was originally a meeting room and was separated from the vestibule by french doors with large fixed panes over. Windows are all 6 over 3 placed rather high on walls that have a continuous crown molding. The most impressive feature of this room (and discouraged by James Bertram as using space that could be used to shelve books) is the random stone fireplace. Its mantel is a large wood slab supported by five large square brackets. The hearth is a single piece of slate. The obligatory picture of the benefactor, Andrew Carnegie, hangs over the mantel. There are pilasters with very simple capitals on each side of the opening leading to the vestibule.

The room to the left was originally the stacks or book room (the collection was small in 1921). The west wall has the original wood bookcases, the others having been replaced by metal stacks.

Except in a few small communities, no frame buildings were built as Carnegie libraries. That, coupled with the fact that the building is much as it was 62 years ago, makes this library unique.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input 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** 1917(Grant); 1921(Bldg)

**Builder/Architect**

Builder - Fred Hill; design based upon  
"Notes on Library Buildings," by  
James Bertram

For 62 years, this library and the building that housed it has been well used as an integral part of the Orosi community and an object of civic pride. It is one of the last Carnegie libraries to be built in California and is one of only 48 Carnegie libraries out of the original 142 in California still in use as a public library. Burton J. Hendrick, Carnegie's biographer, has declared that the free public library was as much a part of life in the United States as the public school and the church. The American community could not function without it. H. V. Faulkner credited Andrew Carnegie with being the greatest single incentive to library growth in the United States. It is almost a certainty that Orosi would not have had its library which has served so many people without a Carnegie gift.

Orosi is a small agricultural community founded in 1888. In 1910, upon public demand, the first library was established in a room in Ryan's Cyclery. There were three more moves, each time to a small room in some otherwise occupied building. In 1914, the Orosi Improvement Club, a group of enthusiastic women workers "for the general welfare of Orosi & vicinity", raised \$250.00, one-half the purchase price of a lot. The owner took a mortgage for the balance to be paid in three years and, in 1917, a Carnegie grant for \$3,000.00 was obtained. Unfortunately, World War I intervened, and interest and energies were channeled elsewhere. This was one of the last library grants issued in California, as the program was suspended in November 1917. It wasn't until 1921 that the grant was used and the library became a reality.

The design for the Orosi Library is based upon "Notes on Library Buildings", a leaflet printed in 1911 by James Bertran, Carnegie's private secretary, as a guide to each community along with the promise of funds. Each community was to obtain the greatest amount of usable space consistent with "good taste in building". The Orosi Library's floor plan is almost identical to that given for the smallest building. No suggestions were made about the exterior, but the implication was to keep a "plain, dignified structure". Bertran warned against building "Greek temples" instead of libraries. Orosi followed that dictum strictly in building the antithesis of Greek temples, the simple California bungalow. This is one of the very few examples of a Carnegie library which is a wood-frame building, rather than the more usual masonry building.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bobrinski, George; Carnegie Libraries, American Library Association, Chicago, 1969.  
Cherry, Susan S., "Carnegies Live"; American Libraries, April 1981, p. 184.  
Cutler-Orosi Courier, March 31, 1955.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .11

Quadrangle name Orange Cove South

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	1	1	2	9	5	0	6	0	4	0	4	6	6	4	0
Zone			Easting						Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting						Northing						

C 

Zone			Easting						Northing						

D 

Zone			Easting						Northing						

E 

Zone			Easting						Northing						

F 

Zone			Easting						Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting						Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting						Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Property dimensions are 70' x 75', described as Lot 11, Block 56, Book 25 of the Tulare Co. Assessors Map. Property occupies its historic lot at the northwest corner of Eddy Street and El Monte Way (Avenue 416).

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

state	n/a	code	county	n/a	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title PAT CLEVINGER (OHP staff revision 2/1/83)

organization VISALIA HERITAGE, INC. date 4/15/82

street & number 345 Todd Drive telephone (209) 734-3136

city or town Visalia state CA 93291

## 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 [Signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 6/20/83

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is eligible for inclusion in the National Register.

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

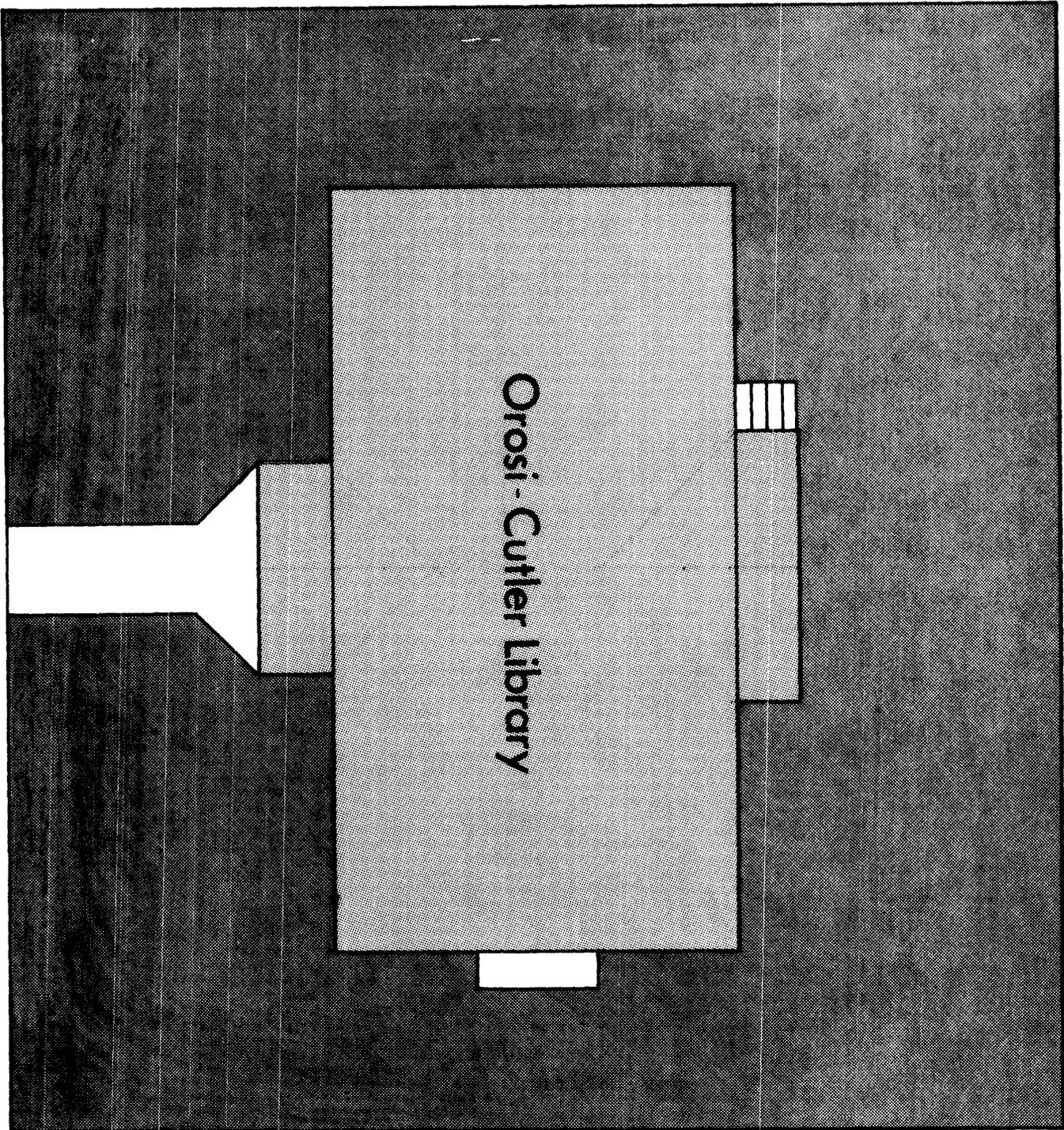
ITEM NUMBER 9

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES (Continued)

Mitchell, Annie R., The Way It Was, Valley Publishers, Fresno, 1976.



Elmonte Way

Eddy St.