

LIBRARY PARK
(Orland Civic Center)
Bounded by Mill, Third, Yolo, and Fourth Streets
Orland
Glenn County
California

HALS CA-100
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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LIBRARY PARK (Orland Civic Center)

HALS NO. CA-100

- Location:** Bounded by Mill, Third, Yolo, and Fourth Streets, Orland, Glenn County, California
39.74510, -122.19400 (Northwest corner, Garmin GPS unit, accuracy 7', WGS84)
- Significance:** Library Park is an example of a civic improvement project initiated by a women's improvement club in rural northern California in the 1910s, near the end of the Progressive Era. Library Park is also an example of a public park created as a site for a Carnegie Library near the end of the Carnegie Library program.
- Description:** Library Park is a 2.4 acre (9712 sq. m) public park near the center of the City of Orland, an agricultural community in the northern Sacramento Valley of California. The park occupies a full block measuring about 300' (91 m) east to west and 425' (130 m) north to south.¹

The lot is level, with an average elevation of about 251' (77 m), and an imperceptible slope down from northwest to southeast. Prior to 1916, the lot had an elevated area at the north end, where the Pabst Flour Mill stood in the early 1880s, and a seasonally wet depression to the south. The site was leveled between December 1916 and February 1917 by moving soil from the elevation and from nearby sites into the depression.²

Winters are wet with minimum temperatures averaging 38°F (3.2°C) and summers are dry with maximum temperatures averaging 94°F (34°C). Annual precipitation averages 20" (51 cm). The dominant soil types in the vicinity are loamy. In 1907, Orland was chosen for one of the first federal reclamation projects in California; farms have thrived since irrigation water began flowing in early 1910.³

¹ Basic Property Reports for Glenn County APN 040-21-7-001-0 and 040-21-7-002-0 as of Nov 2012, HomeInfoMax.com.

² USGS, *Orland, Calif.*, 1951 topographic map, photorevised 1978; Wigmore, *Story*, 6; "Women of Improvement Club Enthusiastic Over Proposed Civic Center Plan," *Orland Register* 25 Nov 1916: 1; "Employer and Employee to Shovel Dirt on Big Boost Day for Municipal Park," *Orland Register* 6 Dec 1916: 1; "Boost Day Proves That the Land of Orland Knows How," *Orland Register* 16 Dec 1916: 1; "Civic Center Hole Being Filled," *Orland Register* 20 Jan 1917: 1; "Park Leveled and Ready for Setting to Border and Other Trees," *Orland Register* 28 Feb 1917: 1.

³ NOAA and DRI, Western Regional Climate Center, "Period of Record General Climate Summary, Orland, California (046506): 1903-2012," <http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/>; USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, "Web Soil Survey: Glenn County, California (CA021)," 19 Dec 2011, <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>; U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, "Orland Project," 11 May 2011, <http://www.usbr.gov/projects/>.

The trees in the park provide welcome shade on hot summer days. Most of the trees are deciduous, several are coniferous, and a few are broad-leaf evergreen. There are no palm trees. Most of the trees are healthy and mature; some of the deciduous trees are immature and a few of the conifers are in decline. Tree genera include *Acer* (Maple), *Arbutus* (Strawberry Madrone), *Betula* (Birch), *Cedrus* (Cedar), *Crataegus* (Hawthorn), *Ginkgo* (Maidenhair Tree), *Lagerstroemia* (Crape Myrtle), *Liriodendron* (Tulip Tree), *Magnolia* (Magnolia), *Myrtus* (Myrtle), *Pistacia* (Pistache), *Platanus* (Sycamore), *Prunus* (Flowering Plum), *Pyrus* (Ornamental Pear), *Quercus* (Oak), *Sequoia* (Redwood), *Sequoiadendron* (Sequoia), and *Ulmus* (Elm). The understory is mostly lawn, except for a garden at the northwest entrance, foundation shrubs around buildings, and a few shrubs scattered elsewhere.

According to park tree selection committee member and park commissioner L. W. Wigmore, the tree palette evolved by trial and error. Palm and shade trees were planted in the northeast quadrant in 1913. After the 1916-17 grading project, the park was re-planted with *Acacia* (Acacia) on the east and west borders, *Platanus* (Sycamore) on the north and south borders, and *Cupressus* (Cypress), *Juglans* (Walnut), *Sequoia* (Redwood), *Ulmus* (Elm), and other slow growing species in the interior. Faster growing species were planted in 1921, with the intention of removing them as slower growing species matured. *Cedrus* (Cedar) were planted by 1930. *Populus* (Poplar) were intentionally killed by girdling in 1949. According to aerial photographs, all the street-side planting strips of border trees were removed between 1969 and 1998, with only a planting strip of lawn remaining on the north side. The current selection of trees is in the spirit of the original design, but the lack of uniform border trees is not.⁴

The main circulation route through the park is a slightly curving concrete diagonal path between the residential neighborhood to the southeast and the business district to the northwest. There are concrete sidewalks on all sides. There are also concrete paths to building entrances and a short concrete arc-shaped path in the northeast corner. Historic circulation routes were similar, except paved with compacted soil or asphalt.⁵

Buildings and structures are the Carnegie Library, built in 1919, opened in 1920, and converted to a Community Center in the 1970s; Restroom Building, built in ca. 1958; Orland Free Library, opened in 1971 and extended in 2013; Library Park Arch, dedicated in 2003; and the Gazebo, dedicated in 2008. All are clustered in the northern half of the park, except the Gazebo, which is to the

⁴ Wigmore, *Story*, 42, 68, 101; CCNY Records, Letter from Mrs. M. A. Sayler to James Bertram, 10 Dec 1913; "Park Leveled," op. cit. "Shade Trees for the Civic Center," *The Reclamation Record* vol. 12 (Oct 1921) Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 215; USGS, "Orland," 1969 and 1998; "Trees to be Planted at Once in Civic Center According to the Plans of the State Gardener," *Orland Register* 14 Feb 1917: 1.

⁵ USGS, "Orland," 1947, 1969, and 1998; Dr. Gene Russell, Electronic mail to Cate Bainton, 29-30 Jul 2013.

south. All are one-story tall, except the Carnegie Library which is 1.5 stories. The Arch announces the park's northwest entrance to passers-by in the business district, and complements the larger 1920s arch across the northern highway entrance to the city.⁶

Small-scale elements include a flagpole in front of the community center; benches of wood, concrete, or stone scattered throughout the park, ca. 1961 to ca. 2012; sidewalk light poles near the community center; light posts along the diagonal path, 2007; concrete drinking fountain on north side; brick drinking fountain on south side with hidden time capsule from the City's centennial celebration, 2009; metal picnic tables; pedestal barbecue; and an interpretive display for the historic flour mill near the library entrance, 1988. Non-extant elements include a WWI cannon on the lawn northeast of the Carnegie building from 1921 to 1942, when it was donated for a WWII scrap metal drive, and a brick barbecue-fireplace near the location of the new brick drinking fountain.⁷

History: In the 1880s, self-made steel magnate Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) funded one library building in Scotland, where he was born, and two in Pennsylvania, where he had settled with his immigrant parents in his teens and later developed a steel empire. Carnegie, who had taught himself as a young man from borrowed books, considered public libraries an excellent philanthropic investment. Although the Carnegie Library Program was never officially announced or formally named, communities around the nation learned of it quickly through word-of-mouth and national publications in the 1890s and 1900s, and sent requests for library funding. Those requests were handled by Carnegie's personal secretary, James Bertram. Initially, Bertram was lenient in his grants, but that changed with experience. By 1913 – when the Orland Women's Improvement Club applied for funds – he required small communities (such as Orland) to demonstrate need, provide written agreement from the town's governing body to tax library support at a rate of 10 percent of the initial grant per year, purchase a site for the library, design the building according to his *Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings*, submit building plans for review, and stay within budget. Orland accomplished the first three steps and was promised a grant of \$8000 in 1913. Bertram based that amount on the 1910 federal census population for Orland. He had learned from experience to not rely on population counts sent by communities. Orland, which was growing quickly due to the federal irrigation project, spent the next four years unsuccessfully trying to persuade Bertram to increase the amount to \$10,000. In 1917, Orland resigned itself to the smaller grant and hired architect William H. Weeks – who designed

⁶ “New Library in Civic Center Occupied,” *Orland Register* 17 Dec 1919: 1; “Library Dedication Saturday,” *Orland Unit-Register* 13 May 1971: 1; Rick Longley, “Gazebo Dedicated in Park,” *Orland Press-Register* 28 Aug 2008; Rick Longley, “Orland Library Celebrates Ground Breaking,” *Orland Press-Register* 19 Apr 2013; Russell, E-mail, op. cit.; Van Slyck, “Free to All,” 217; Carnegie Libraries in CA, “Orland.”

⁷ Wigmore, *Story*, 87; Russell, *Land*, 69, 78; Joan Riker for Orland Women's Improvement Club, “Orland Parks, Penny Pines and the Library,” 10 Dec 2007; Russell, E-mail, op. cit.

more Carnegie libraries in California than any other architect – to design the Orland library. When the United States entered World War I, library construction was both too expensive and forbidden by the Non-War Construction Committee. Construction finally started, and was completed, in 1919. Orland's Carnegie Library opened in 1920. According to Carnegie Library historian Jones, when the Carnegie Library Program ended in 1919, it had funded half of the public libraries in the United States. After Carnegie died in 1919, the Carnegie Foundation ended the program, convinced that there were more effective ways to support public libraries.⁸

In 1890, at the start of the Progressive Era, the General Federation of Women's Clubs was established. Women's Clubs around the nation became more involved in their communities, including advocating for libraries and parks. In many small communities, it was the women's clubs that initiated the request for a Carnegie Library. The Orland Women's Improvement Club was founded in 1909. They successfully lobbied for the creation of a park (Spence Park) and established a reading room. After obtaining approval from town trustees in January 1913, the club took out a \$1000 loan to purchase three lots for a Carnegie Library. In April 1913, Club Secretary Marie L. Saylor sent the request for a library grant to the Carnegie Corporation. The Club obtained Bertram's promise of an \$8000 grant in November 1913. Through various fundraising events, the Club raised the money to pay off the loan by 1914. Club member Hattie A. Baugh was on the Carnegie Library committee formed by town trustees in ca. 1915. In 1916, the town proposed issuing a \$7000 bond to purchase the remainder of the then-vacant block for a "Civic Center" park. The bond passed by a three-to-one vote on March 3, 1916. The Club volunteered to pay \$50 for a landscape design by State Gardener William E. Vortriede, and town trustees accepted their offer. Town businesses shut down on December 13, 1916 for a community workday to level the park; the Club made a goose stew dinner for the volunteers, from geese shot by local hunters. Club member Addah K. Scarce was on the park tree selection committee formed in early 1917. Bertram sometimes dealt with more than 1000 letters a day, and his replies could be curt and cursory, especially to a town that had multiple people writing to ask for a larger grant. It was Library Committee President Willard Clark who handled correspondence with Bertram from late 1917 to the successful completion of the building.⁹

⁸ Carnegie, *Autobiography*, 2, 30, 45-47. Jones, *Carnegie*, 3, 10, 12, 21-30, 33; CCNY Records, Correspondence between Bertram and Orland officials, 1913-1919; "Bids On Carnegie Library Are Too High And All Are Turned Down," *Orland Register* 31 Jul 1918: 1; "New Library," op. cit., Van Slyck, *Free to All*, 217.

⁹ National Park Service, "Women in the Progressive Era," <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/pwwmh/prog.htm>; Van Slyck, *Free to All*, 126, 133; Wigmore, *Story*, 27; Russell, *Land*, 67, 68; CCNY Records, Correspondence, op. cit.; Jones, *Carnegie*, 25, 40; "Town to Help on Carnegie," *Orland Register* 11 Jan 1913: 1; "Trustees Ready to Vote Funds for Library," *Orland Register* 9 Jul 1913: 1; *Orland Register* articles on 1913-14 fundraising events too numerous to list; "Improvement Club is After library Plans," *Orland Register* 25 Apr 1914: 1; "Woman's Improvement Club Back Park Project," *Orland Register* 15 Jan 1916: 1; "Civic Center Bond Carry by Three to One

Library Park has been in continuous use as a public park since it was developed. Public events in the park include the library's annual ice-cream social fundraiser and the seasonal farmers' market. The Women's Improvement Club continues to support the library, scholarships, and other causes. The many other local organizations that have contributed to the library and park are too numerous to list.¹⁰

Sources:

Historic aerial photographs

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Historian:

Cate Bainton

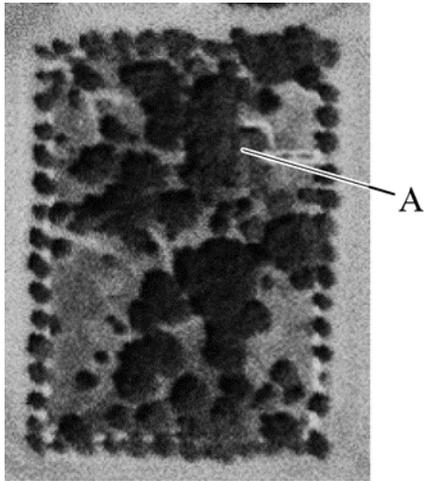
HALS Northern California Chapter

31 Jul 2013

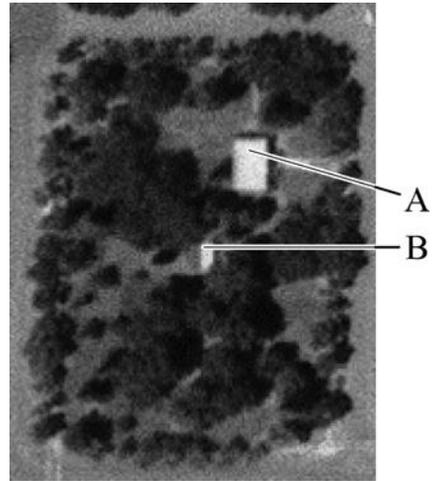
2013 HALS Challenge Entry: *Documenting the Cultural Landscapes of Women*

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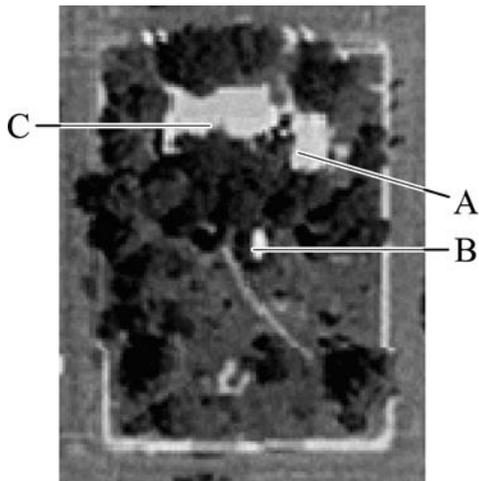
¹⁰ Orland Free Library, "29th Annual Ice Cream Social," 20 Aug 2012, <http://www.orlandfreelibrary.net/>; Rick Longley, "Rummage Sale Gearing up at Fairgrounds," *Orland Press-Register* 26 Feb 2013; Russell, E-mail, op. cit.



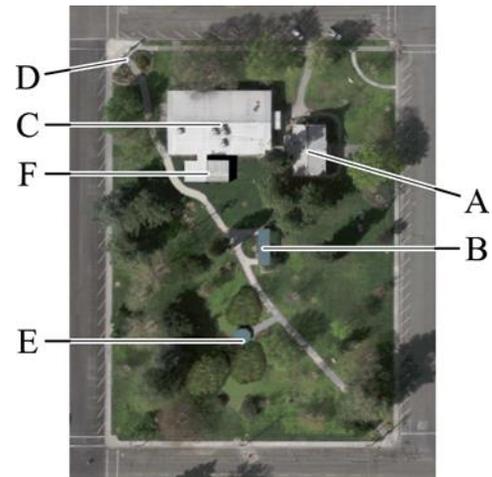
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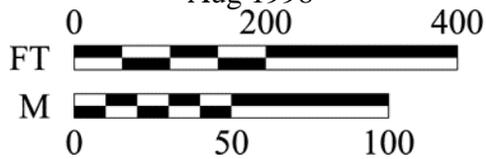
Aug 1969



Aug 1998



Jul 2013 (rendered on Apr 2008 photo)

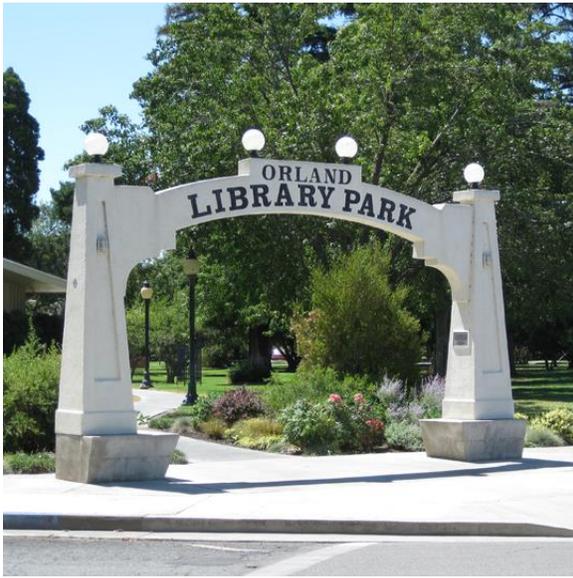


The evolution of Library Park.

- A Carnegie Library or Community Center
- B Restroom Building
- C Orland Free Library

- D Arch
- E Gazebo
- F Library Addition

(Photography by or for USGS; delineation and rendering by Cate Bainton, 2013)



View looking southeast from northwest corner.



View looking southwest from northeast corner, with old library on left, new library on right.



View looking northeast from southwest corner.



View looking northwest from southeast corner.

Views looking diagonally into Library Park from the four corners. (Cate Bainton, 27 Jul 2013)



Benches in northeast quadrant by Women's Improvement Club, ca. 1961 and ca. 2010. (Cate Bainton, 16 May 2008 and 8 Jul 2008)



Interpretive display near entrance to new library by Kiwanis, ca. 1988. (Cate Bainton, 16 May 2013)



Restroom building at center of park by VFW, ca. 1958. (Cate Bainton, 8 Jul 2013)



Lights along diagonal path, gazebo, and brick drinking fountain with time capsule by Art Commission, 2007-09. (Cate Bainton, 8 Jul 2013)

A sampling of elements funded by local organizations.