

Carnegie Free Library
301 South Pittsburgh Street
Connellsville
Fayette County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5476

HABS
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26-CONL,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CARNEGIE FREE LIBRARY

HABS No. PA-5476

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Location: 301 South Pittsburgh Street, bounded by South Street, South Carnegie Avenue (formerly Mountain Avenue), and Baldwin Avenue (marked Wills Road), Connellsville, Fayette County, Pa.

Present Owners: Carnegie Free Library Board of Trustees.

Present Occupant: Carnegie Free Library.

Significance: Connellsville was the regional center of the world famous Connellsville coking fields that supplied the Pittsburgh steel industry during its peak in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Andrew Carnegie made his fortune in Pittsburgh steel and related industries and held a substantial interest in the Henry Clay Frick Company, the largest coking company in the region. Carnegie's disproportionately large library donation of \$50,000, later raised to \$75,000, to a town with an official population of 5,697 was an acknowledgement of the region's contribution to his financial empire. Community leaders' desire to have a public library reflected their progressive aspirations for the burgeoning town. They chose an "Italian Renaissance" design for the building, completed in 1903. It still serves Connellsville as the Carnegie Free Library and is virtually unaltered.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: May 1901-March 1903. Construction was reportedly delayed because of "strikes and an inability to obtain the stone of which the walls are built." The cornerstone was laid July 31, 1901. Opening ceremonies were held April 30, 1903 (McClenathan, 445-48).
2. Architect: Jennings Moss McCollum (1864-1937) of Pittsburgh was selected by the Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Library Board of Trustees at its meeting on March 12, 1901. McCollum's plans were chosen from among those submitted by eight area architects at the Committee's invitation. His commission was set at five percent. (Minutes, 37, 39; McClenathan, 445)

McCollum was a resident of Washington, Pa., and was born at Amity in Washington County in 1864. His father was a building contractor and he followed his father's trade, working as a carpenter until 1889. He then apprenticed and worked with W. E. Ely, a Washington architect, for twelve years before opening his

own office in Pittsburgh in 1901 in the Bank for Savings Building which also housed the Pittsburgh Stock Exchange. The Connellsville Carnegie Library would have been one of his first commissions in independent practice. He employed Presley C. Dowler, just graduated from the University of Pennsylvania's architecture program, as a draftsman and, by the end of 1902, had promoted him to partner. Dowler stayed with McCollum until 1911 and went on to become a prominent Pittsburgh architect. He maintained an office there into the 1950s. One of the buildings they designed in partnership was the Braddock National Bank of Braddock, Pa.

McCollum's office was last listed in the Pittsburgh city directory in 1934. He died three years later at his home at 513 East Beau Street in Washington. He married Nora Ann Patterson in 1892, and they were the parents of three daughters. McCollum was credited with the design of "schools, churches, and public buildings all over the country," including the parochial school of Immaculate Conception Church and most of the public schools in Washington, a hotel in Pittsburgh, and the First National Bank of Columbus, Ohio. He is also responsible for the Washington Trust Building (1903, annex 1925) opposite the County Courthouse in Washington (McFarland, 661; Pittsburgh of Today, 214-15; The Morning Observer, 15 July 1937, 2; Pittsburgh and Washington, Pa. city directories; Hambly, 11; Knestrick, 18).

3. Contractors: J. A. Nixon of Titusville, Pa., was awarded the contract for construction of the building on April 30, 1901. Nixon submitted the lowest bid of five applicants which included two firms from Pittsburgh, one from Allegheny, Pa., and one--W. A. Hazelett--from Connellsville. The contract price for the building was \$39,850 and did not include such things as gas and electric fixtures, steam heating plant, landscaping, decorating and furnishings. Nixon was originally held responsible for much of this work, but when he did not respond to McCollum's instructions "to finish the building," the architect let separate contracts for "electrical wiring, plumbing, drainage and marble work" (Minutes, 41; McClenathan, 445; DC, 10 Nov. 1902).

Plans for the ceremony to lay the cornerstone were discussed at the Trustees' meeting July 29, 1901. Captain E. Dunn said that

at his suggestion a suitable box was being prepared by the Steel and Iron Aluminum Coating Company of South Connellsville, whose material is impervious to rust, for encasing such papers and other souvenirs of the present as thought proper and desirable to deposit in the corner stone for the inspection and delectation of future ages (Minutes, 45).

At the Trustees' meeting August 1, 1902 "plans and specifications for decorating the different rooms of the Library Building were discussed" and Bryant Brothers Frescoe and Art Decorators of Columbus, Ohio were chosen to do the work for their proposal of \$1,000. President McClenathan and E. Dunn were assigned to select the colors and designs for the Trustees' room (Minutes, 61).

4. Original plans and construction: During its meetings in February 1901, the Board of Trustees decided that their building should be constructed of native sandstone, contain a lecture room, and be "as large as possible for the money," although one member urged that "beauty ought not to be sacrificed to size." These were apparently the extent of the guidelines given to prospective architects.

The Board arrived at these general requirements after viewing and discussing a number of pictures of extant libraries presented by the Building Committee. Board President J. C. McClenathan favored the plans of an unidentified "New England Library" which was eighty feet square, two stories in height, with a lecture room and reading or instruction rooms on the second floor. Other members feared that the cost of a building this size would exceed their budget. They estimated that \$12,000 of the \$50,000 grant from Carnegie would be required for grading the grounds and preparation of the foundation, leaving \$38,000 for the building itself (Minutes, 33, 35).

Two weeks after the Board chose McCollum as architect, the local newspaper printed his sketch of the proposed Library (see supplemental information below) along with McCollum's "brief discussion of its construction and interior arrangement:"

The floor plans consist of a general reading room, children's reading room, periodical room, reference room, stack room, delivery lobby, toilet room and side halls on the first floor. The delivery lobby is reached by the main entrance, and also by the side entrances, with the reading rooms on either side of the lobby. The delivery desk is so situated in the delivery lobby that every part of the first floor and stairways leading to the second is visible from same, providing complete supervision of the whole and allowing free access to the shelves for the public. The partitions separating the reading rooms from the delivery lobby and stack rooms are glass. The entrance to and the exit from the stack room is through turnstiles, making it necessary for every one that goes to or from the stack room to pass out by the delivery desk.

The eight stacks in the stack room have a capacity of about 16,000 volumes which may be trebled by superimposing fourteen more stacks of same size and connecting them with balconies. The reading room will have nine tables, each 3 x 5 feet, with seats for fifty-four people. The second floor contains an assembly hall with a seating capacity of 450, Board of Trustees' room and committee room. The basement contains a work room for unpacking, repairing, etc., boiler room and three large rooms to be used as directed by the Trustees.

The superstructure is to be built of native sand stone with terra cotta trimming. Roof to be of tile. Floors to be fire-proofed (The Courier, March 28, 1901).

McCullum's description corresponds to how the library was built, but there is some difference between his sketch of the exterior and the actual appearance of the building. The pitch of the roof was lowered, its projection over the cornice was lessened and cornice modillions eliminated. These details gave the building, at least in sketch form, a vertical monumentality; without them its horizontal bulk is dominant. The other major detail of the sketch that is absent in the extant building is a rather elaborate pediment and door surround at the side door. All of these changes probably represent sacrifices made to cut costs.

5. Alterations and additions: The Carnegie Free Library has undergone very few alterations since its opening. A succession of coats of paint has obscured the frescoe details that originally decorated the first-floor ceiling. The glass and wood partition separating the reading room in the southwest corner of the first floor from the center hall has been removed, but the matching partition on the opposite side of the hall is still intact. Turnstiles regulating access to the stacks were removed by order of the Trustees' Committee on Building and Grounds in June 1915. The Library was closed for three weeks during the summer of 1912 for unspecified repairs to the interior. O. S. Gettys won the contract for this work with a bid of \$240. At the Trustees' meeting on December 6, 1912, a committee was appointed to consider "the future needs of the Library in the way of an addition to the present building," but no further mention of the subject appears in the meeting records. At the meeting held April 15, 1913, "the need of a second story to the stacks was discussed but no definite action could be taken because of the lack of funds to carry on the work" (Minutes, 203, 193, 195, 197).

The only substantial alteration was the expansion of the book stack area into the basement and second floor space finally made in 1967-68. Plans for this work were prepared by J. C. Fulton and

Son, architects of Uniontown, Pa. In McCollum's original plan the stack room on the first floor was open to the roof, providing room for expansion into the second-floor space. The Fultons chose to use this option and installed a steel frame that supported new first and second floors with stairways to the new stacks in the basement and second floor. A ceiling was added at the second floor level. The new stacks raised the Library's book capacity to 70,000, a figure believed to be commensurate with the approximately 35,000 potential library patrons in the area. A new heating system for the building was also installed during these renovations. Cost of the project amounted to \$80,000 and was paid with library savings and matching funds from the state (The Courier, August 10, 1968; Fulton and Son plans).

B. Historical Context:

1. The Connellsville Coke Region and the Carnegie Library

Pennsylvania's coal mines and coke fields are a source of never ending interest to tourists The world famous Connellsville Coke Region, in Fayette County, with its batteries of ovens stretching over many square miles, is always attractive to tourists, especially at night when the myriad fires of the beehive ovens light the skies (Pennsylvania Highways, 1927, 39).

Industrial blight or memento of our past? Now that the last beehive coke ovens have been phased out of operation, how do we view their crumbling remains? (Demerest and Levy, 29).

At its peak around 1910 the countryside of the Connellsville Coke Region, encompassing southern Westmoreland and much of Fayette County, was crossed with rows of beehive coke ovens. They totaled 40,000 and produced sixty percent of the nation's coke--18 million tons each year (Demerest and Levy, 31). Because of its central location, Connellsville gave the region its name. The Connellsville Courier became the newspaper of the industry; its masthead included a row of ovens, a coal train, and a miner. Beginning in 1880 it carried weekly reports on the "operation and output" of the coke ovens. In 1939 the Courier dropped the column (Geary, 36, 106). Coke-making had ceased to dominate the local economy, but coal mining continued and, like many other towns in the counties surrounding Pittsburgh, Connellsville's economy continued to be tied to the Pittsburgh steel industry.

The coke ovens going to ruin across the hillsides are only one of the more blatant reminders of the foundations of Connellsville's development. In its downtown are churches, commercial and public buildings which also owe their existence to Connellsville coke. The Carnegie Library, appropriately located on Pittsburgh Street, is especially indicative of Connellsville's history. Leading citizens could consider a public library viable only after the coke industry had made the town prosperous enough to support their cultural aspirations. Yet only a portion of the wealth derived from Connellsville's coke stayed in Connellsville. When library construction began in 1901, the city had no sewage and only a few streets were paved; certainly the city government could not afford to finance something so far beyond basic services. Of the investors in the local coke industry, the largest was Henry Clay Frick. In 1906, Frick owned 16,844 of the 34,403 ovens in the region, but Frick was based in Pittsburgh and was not known for his philanthropy. The next largest owner was W. J. Rainey, a Cleveland, Ohio, industrialist with 3,511 ovens. The remaining 14,048 ovens were divided among sixty-two companies. Of these only three had more than a thousand ovens, sixteen had between 100 and 200, thirty had less than 100. Many of the companies were, like Johnstown's Cambria Steel with 610 ovens, based outside the area. It had taken a large state contribution and much struggle to accumulate enough local donations to establish Connellsville's Cottage State Hospital in 1890 so that the many industry-related accident victims did not have to endure the trip to Pittsburgh for treatment. Local industrialists apparently had neither the resources nor the inclination to support a library (McClenathan, 287-91, 463-71; Ellis, 520).

Andrew Carnegie, on the other hand, had a reputation for donating libraries. He was a Scottish immigrant who rose from working-class origins to head a Pittsburgh steelmaking empire. He credited much of his ability and ambition to the education he acquired when he was allowed access to a library when he was a boy working in Pittsburgh. Carnegie decided early on to dedicate much of his fortune to philanthropy, and he designed and selected projects which he believed would foster the same circumstances that aided his own success. In 1886 he donated the first Carnegie Library to the town of Allegheny, Pa. Soon his name became a virtual synonym for the free public library where common people could better themselves through education. By 1919 he had funded the completion of 2,509 libraries around the world. Over 41 million was spent for 1,679 buildings in the United States. The publicity Carnegie's donations received

created a local library movement, and in 1898, he organized a "full-scale program" to coordinate requests and donations (Bobinski, 3, 9-16).

In New Haven, Connellsville's neighbor across the Youghiogheny River, Dr. T. S. Cartwright wrote to Carnegie to ask for a library that would house his collection of 2,000 books and be affiliated with his church. Carnegie instead proposed a library maintained with town funds. Cartwright knew that New Haven was not large enough to support a library. When he confided the problem to a friend in Connellsville he learned that people there had just begun to consider requesting a Carnegie library grant. They knew that two separate requests from neighboring towns would be refused so Cartwright decided to drop his "parochial claim for the good of the general cause and for a free library" that would serve "not only Connellsville but also New Haven, Wheeler, Trotter, Leisenring, South Connellsville and all other surrounding towns in this region" (The Courier, 21 April 1899).

Of the towns Cartwright mentioned specifically, New Haven and Connellsville were the oldest. South Connellsville was an extension of the original town. Wheeler, Trotter, and Leisenring were all mining towns established by coal and coke companies (Ellis, 520). William Crawford, a surveyor and land agent for George Washington, was the first permanent settler of New Haven, arriving in 1765. Early industries included woolen and clothing mills and a locomotive works. A charter for New Haven borough was approved in 1839 but a borough government was not organized until 1867 (McClenathan, 117-18).

Connellsville was founded by Zachariah Connell, a friend of William Crawford, who was also a surveyor and a land agent for such eminent land speculators as Virginia's Governor Dinwiddie and Maryland's Governor Howard. Connell was living along the edge of the Youghiogheny by 1772. Emigrants who followed Braddock's Road north from Virginia often stopped at the spot Crawford and Connell had chosen. During periods of high water, the river was navigable from this point, and settlers and entrepreneurs heading west built rafts here to carry their goods down to the Ohio. Connell surveyed and chartered a town at the site in 1793. It was incorporated as the borough of Connellsville in 1806. Connell set aside three parcels on the town plan as public property. A public square along the river was reserved for the town's inhabitants and "for travelers who may erect thereon temporary boatyards." In 1902, this lot became the

site of an "old style Dutch" city hall. A square bordering South Alley was allotted for churches or schools, and soon became the site of a series of public school buildings. The third reservation was for a graveyard. It was represented in the 1806 borough plat, located across South Alley opposite the school grounds. It would eventually become the site of the Carnegie Library (McClenathan, 41-51, 65-7, 80-1).

In the original town charter, Zachariah Connell also set aside "an excellent Stone Coal Bank" at the edge of the Youghiogheny, where inhabitants could mine their own coal and "from which coal may be conveniently conveyed by water all along the front of said Town." Emigrants soon found that coal banks were plentiful in the area. Iron ore was also commonly found in the larger western Pennsylvania area, and there were usually several charcoal-fueled iron furnaces in each county. A man named Nichols is credited with introducing coke making to Fayette County. Nichols was from Durham, England, where coal was burned in beehive-shaped ovens to burn off impurities. The purified coal was called coke and was a superior substitute for charcoal in ironmaking. Nichols was working at a Connellsville foundry in 1833 when he oversaw construction and operation of the first successful beehive coke oven. The coke that the foundry could not use was shipped down the Youghiogheny and sold to others (McClenathan, 50, 263-74).

The success of Nichols' experiment inspired imitation, and in the 1840s partnerships were formed to send coke farther downriver to Cincinnati, an ironmaking center. The completion of the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad in 1857 encouraged more investment and development of the Fayette County coalfields. In the 1870s the growth of the Pittsburgh mills supported even more rapid expansion. By 1876 there were 3,000 ovens in the region, 4,000 by 1879. Around 1880 the first cross-country shipments were made to supply the San Francisco smelting industry. Exports from the Connellsville coke region were eventually made to Mexico, South America, and Australia. Except during economic depressions, the demand for the Connellsville product always exceeded the supply. The metallurgical structure of the coal in the region insured a very high quality coke and made it popular on a world scale. John Fulton, a mining engineer, author of a treatise on coal and coke, and superintendent of the Cambria Steel works, went on record testifying to the superiority of Connellsville coke (McClenathan, 275-80; The Courier, "First Beehive Oven . . ." 17 Nov. 1952; Fulton).

Henry C. Frick, a Fayette County native, recognized the potential of its coal and coke. In 1871 he formed H. C. Frick and Company with holdings of 300 acres of coal land and fifty coke ovens. Within ten years he owned 3,000 acres and over 1,000 ovens. The Pittsburgh steel mills of Andrew Carnegie were Frick's biggest customer. One of Carnegie's business strategies was vertical integration--gaining control of the raw materials of steel-making and of the means to distribute the finished product. In 1882 Frick agreed to a partnership with Carnegie which increased the power and wealth of both men. In 1901, when Carnegie's holdings were incorporated in the formation of U.S. Steel, Frick's Connellsville property became the Frick District of U.S. Steel's Coal Division (McClenathan, 281; The Courier, 17 Nov. 1952, C:10).

2. Securing the Library Donation:

In 1899, when leading citizens of Connellsville, Pa. began to organize an effort to solicit Carnegie's aid to build a community library, they reasoned that since Carnegie "had made many millions out of his investments in Connellsville coal," he would give their petition "favorable consideration." The town council passed a resolution demonstrating its support of the effort and appointed a committee to communicate with Mr. Carnegie. A letter was drafted and mailed to his New York home on April 19, 1899. Five days later Dr. J. C. McClenathan, president of the committee, received Carnegie's reply, pledging \$50,000 "provided a suitable site is furnished and the council agrees to grant a fund annually to maintain and operate the library," the standard prerequisites to a Carnegie library grant. As Carnegie was about to leave on a visit to Europe, the committee was instructed that Major William N. Frew, President of the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, would serve as his representative in subsequent negotiations. (McClenathan, 435-38)

After consulting with Major Frew, the committee's first action was to arrange for the establishment of a permanent Library Board of Trustees modeled on that of the Pittsburgh Institute. The twelve-member Board consisted of six permanent members and three representatives each from the town council and the school board. Both the school board and the council had passed resolutions promising to assess a one-mill tax for support of the Library. (McClenathan, 441)

When they met to discuss a possible location for the Library, the Trustees were informed of a law allowing school

boards to appropriate for educational use grounds reserved for cemeteries. They agreed that the location of the old "Connell Grave Yard" on Pittsburgh Street was "pleasant and probably as central as any site that can be selected." The School Board agreed to appropriate the property, sponsored legal action condemning it, had the bodies transferred to plots in the Chestnut Hill Cemetery, and transferred the property to the Library Trustees. When these preliminary arrangements were completed almost two years after receiving approval from Mr. Carnegie, the Library Board invited architects to submit plans for a building (DC 21 April 1899; McClenathan, 439).

3. Obstacles to the Library:

Connellsville's Carnegie Free Library was completed behind schedule in March 1903. Authors of a 1906 borough history reported cryptically that the contractor was hampered by "strikes and inability to obtain the stone of which the walls are built" (McClenathan, 447; Minutes, 47). The local newspaper also reported a minor scandal involving an inspector from the Bureau of Underwriters who claimed the new building's electrical wiring was defective. When called to account for this failing, architect J. M. McCollum assured the Trustees that the electrical contracting firm was the best in Pittsburgh, and in fact, he explained that this inspector had recently been fired from the firm for incompetency and charged that he "was out for 'graft'." McCollum reported that his own inspection of the building's wiring showed that it was perfectly safe. Because the building was "practically fireproof," the Trustees decided to dispense with both insurance and the passing evaluation from the Bureau of Underwriters necessary to obtain it (Minutes, 79; Courier).

The local Connellsville Courier also reported a prolonged dispute between the Board of Trustees and the "Hogg heirs," owners of property adjoining the Library's original cemetery lot. At their meeting on February 20, 1902, the Trustees resolved "that the Hogg Heirs are not entitled to receive one cent of damages for their land sought to be condemned for Library purposes." At least two additional contiguous lots were acquired by the Trustees. They sold a house on one of the lots to P. Bufano for \$200 in November 1902 "provided the money be paid down and the house removed within thirty days" (Minutes, 53, 81, 65, 79; Courier).

More serious problems for the Trustees revolved around the issue of funding for Library maintenance required by

Carnegie and local opposition to this long term burden on local resources. According to a library supporter, the "first attempt to injure the library cause" occurred when auditors for the Town Council were influenced to refuse approval of the \$2,000 incurred in clearing the graveyard site. The expense was later granted "after the misrepresentations which had been made to the auditors had been corrected and the facts made clear to them" (McClenathan, 440).

At about the same time these expenses were challenged, in April 1900, opponents of the Library sent a petition to Andrew Carnegie in care of Major Frew in Pittsburgh. They objected to the Trustees' willingness "to perpetually obligate the Borough corporation" for the library's maintenance. They pointed out that the borough was already in debt almost to the legal limit and that it was "in sad need of sanitary improvements, being unsewered, and having but a small portion of the streets paved." They acknowledged Carnegie's generosity but urged him "to withhold your donation until the promoters provide for the expense of maintenance by voluntary contribution." Although the authors of the petition claimed to represent a large majority of property holders in the town," library promoters reported that even after "a thorough canvass of the town" only a handful of citizens were found to sign it. Major Frew perhaps betrayed his sympathies by declining to forward the petition to Carnegie. His reply, interpreted by the promoters as "a flat denial to pay any attention" to the petition, stated that Mr. Carnegie would not reconsider his donation unless elected officials of Connellsville indicated that they rescinded the borough's commitment to abide by his conditions (McClenathan, 443-44).

The Library Trustees breathed easier when this threat to their project was deflected, but were soon confronted with further obstacles. By January 1902 they realized that the expense of finishing the grounds would exceed their budget and they wrote to Carnegie asking for "an increase of his appropriation." His refusal was based on the census record of the town's population and it prompted L. F. Ruth, Board Treasurer, to send a second insistent letter elaborating on why the initial donation was insufficient. He pointed out that the census figures were misleading because they included only the population within the borough limits. Defining the community that the Library would serve as the total population within a five-mile radius, Ruth estimated, would raise the population to 35,000, and in this light, the \$50,000 grant was quite small. "Furthermore," he wrote,

we feel that the Connellsville coke region has particular claims above a great many other places that have been favored by your generosity, in that all the working people in this region have been for years directly or indirectly in your employ which we do not think can be said of nine tenths of the communities which have secured Carnegie Libraries (CLC, Ruth to Carnegie, Feb. 7, 1902).

In reply, the Trustees were asked to forward estimates for the Library and grounds. They collected a number of figures and concluded that in acquiring and preparing the site and grading and widening the surrounding streets, the town council and school board had already spent \$49,133.85. Hence, they wrote to Carnegie, "you will see by these figures that the municipality is really giving more toward the Library Project than you are." Based on estimates for the building provided by McCollum they further informed him that \$16,500 beyond his \$50,000 grant was needed "to actually put the property in the right shape." Carnegie relented and agreed to increase their allowance, but only by \$7,000. The Trustees thanked him, but also "expressed a regret that the full amount asked for had not been granted." Their next correspondence with him was to report that "after many and vexatious delays the Carnegie Free Library of Connellsville is completed and the books are being shelved and cataloged" (CLC, March 11 and 24, 1902, February 10, 1903).

They had not yet seen the last of "vexation," however; the faction questioning a perpetual borough appropriation for the Library had continued its agitation. Nine months after the Library was completed and opened to the public it submitted a petition to the Borough Council requesting that the question of Library support be put to a popular vote. The Trustees sponsored a pro-Library campaign urging voters to help prevent its closing by voting for "honor and progress" and for Library support. The election was held February 1, 1904, and the measure passed by a margin of 231 votes (767 for, 536 against) (McClenathan, 451-53; "To the Patrons and Friends of the CFL," and "Vote for the Library!" CCFL).

This money could only be used for maintenance, however, and the Trustees needed funds to complete the purchase of lots to fill out the Library grounds. This task became more difficult when several property owners refused to sell. With the aid of George M. Hosack, the State Representative from Pittsburgh, the Trustees succeeded in having an act

passed in the Pennsylvania Assembly enabling borough councils or school boards in the state to "appropriate private property for public library purposes." With this authority, the Town Council then condemned the remaining property but could not afford to pay the owners the assessed value of the damages. Because the original \$50,000 grant was depleted the Trustees were forced to return to Mr. Carnegie to plead for additional funds. He at first refused the request, citing his policy of investing responsibility in the local population:

I do think that the Community which is not willing to maintain a Library had better not possess it. It is only the feeling that the Library belongs to every citizen, richest and poorest alike, that gives it a soul, as it were.

Carnegie reconsidered this decision, explaining that he had not understood that the Town Council "had refused to maintain the Library until it was put in shape" and allowed the Trustees up to an additional \$18,000 for that purpose, making the total Carnegie donation \$75,000. The Trustees immediately paid off the remaining property owners and volunteered their time to supervise day laborers who graded these grounds and built steps and a retaining wall around the front of the Library square (McClenathan, 453-56).

4. The Library's Role in Community and Culture:

Organizers envisioned the Connellsville Carnegie Free Library as a "promoter of public morals" and "a powerful adjunct to our educational system." ("Vote for the Library!" CCFL) When they learned that Carnegie had agreed to their request for a library and of the amount he proposed, the committee developed more ambitious plans to establish a mining school in conjunction with the library. They wrote to Carnegie hoping that he would consent to the addition:

We thought in view of your very large mining and coking interests in the Connellsville region--the largest held here--that you would be interested in a matter that promised to improve mining practice.

As business men we desired to present the matter before the adoption of any plans for the building, so that if the plan receives favorable consideration the building may be modeled to suit.

A reply came from Carnegie's secretary, James Bertram, noted for his often peremptory manner.

Mr. Carnegie believes in one thing at a time. When Connellsville has a public library it will be time enough to take up the question of a School of Mines.

With this dismissal the Trustees opened the competition for plans for a building designed for use as a library. (Minutes, 31, 33)

A library alone was still seen as a general force for community service and cultural enrichment. As one librarian put it, her role, and by extension, the Library's, was to select and promote books with the express view of stimulating and improving the moral life of the community. (The Courier) This belief in the power of the books housed in the Library was the basis for its considerable symbolic role both as a public institution and as a material public monument. The practical enactment of this role included the affiliation of other civic groups and events with the Library. McCollum's design, as did most library designs of the day, reveals the assumption of such affiliation by the inclusion of auditoriums and meeting rooms.

In Connellsville, this aspect of the Library's role in the community was initiated even before it was built. The Library Trustees sponsored a benefit lecture by William Jennings Bryan in the Connellsville Opera House February 27, 1902. They held a second benefit event a year later--"an Old Fiddler's contest"--in the new building's "Music Hall," the second-floor auditorium (Minutes, 53, 55, 71).

Even before the Library was officially opened to the public, the Trustees received requests for permission to use the auditorium. In keeping with the conception of the Library as a purely cultural institution above partisan and monetary interest, they resolved not to allow use of Library space by businesses or political or religious groups. A few requests received during the Library's early years were refused based on this injunction, notably, that of the Connellsville Socialists in March 1911 for the use of the auditorium for a lecture on "Social Economies." In the opinion of a Library Committee "the lecture is only a part of a well-defined political movement by a regularly organized political party" and the committee was "not prepared to turn [the auditorium] into a common campaign hall." A request from the local Methodist Episcopal Church to stage a play in the auditorium

was turned down in April 1915, but a request was granted the Episcopal Church for the use of the auditorium for a reception for their visiting bishop on the condition "that no religious services are to be held" (Minutes, 181, 207).

In December 1902, the Trustees agreed to a proposal by S. R. Mason to allow him to use the Hall for three performances in return for his gift of a \$400 piano. The graduating class of the Connellsville High School was given free use of the auditorium on an evening in February 1903. A Library Orchestra directed by S. F. Hood was granted use of the Hall for practice on Sunday afternoons and for a benefit concert January 26, 1903. (Minutes, 71, 73, 75, 197, 201) Women's clubs including the Art Society and the Women's Culture Club held meetings and annual programs at the Library. Librarian Anna B. Day organized the Culture Club as the Literary Study Club in 1903 to promote interest in the Library. In 1923 a committee from the Culture Club attended a city council meeting to appeal for an increase in the Library appropriation. In the same year the Kiwanis Club announced that it would undertake the "care and beautification" of the Library lawn as one of its community service projects. The club also sponsored a community-wide book collection to supplement the Library's holdings. Although very aware that the Library was in need of direct financial aid, club members declined to make monetary contributions on the grounds that this would encourage the city council to shirk its responsibility of providing for the Library through taxation. (Misc. papers, CCFL; Courier, 1923, 11/17/52, D:9)

Both the Kiwanis and Culture Clubs found other means to ease the Library's financial strains. In February 1923, at the suggestion of Assistant Librarian Sally Seaton, the Kiwanis Club presented a letter to the Library Board outlining a mutually beneficial arrangement in which the Club would remodel the Library basement and pay for utilities and maintenance in return for its use as Kiwanis Club meeting facilities. The Club would continue the Library's policy of renting the space to other nonpolitical, nonsectarian groups. Remodeling of the basement consisted of the removal of certain partitions; the laying of a hardwood floor over the main part of the basement which shall be converted into a single large dining and social room; the fitting up of a thoroughly modern kitchen, and the installation of chairs, dining tables, etc.

The walls and ceiling of the room would be plastered and painted white.

A few months later, in July 1923, the Women's Culture Club presented a letter proposing a similar arrangement for its use of a portion of the second floor. The Club would install two partitions dividing the auditorium into thirds. The middle section would continue to be used as an auditorium, the new space on its south side would be retained by the Library, that on the north would be further divided and remodeled as a committee room, kitchenette, and toilet room for use as "the club home during the life of the Culture Club" (Minutes, 251).

The success of the Library was measured by this kind of community involvement as well as by the level of patronage in its reading and reference rooms. During its first years, the librarian made annual reports of circulation statistics to the Trustees. In initial promotions of the Library and in subsequent plans for funding, its benefit to children was the issue cited most often and least open to criticism. Librarian Anna Day was praised for her work in attracting young children to the Library. Attendance at weekly "story hours" was reported as sometimes reaching 250. (Courier 17 Nov, 1952, B:2) The appropriation from the school board made the Library's role as "an adjunct to the educational system" more than just rhetoric. Librarians provided district teachers with lists of Library holdings graded to different reading levels. In 1912 the Trustees approved a proposal by Librarian E. V. Clark to establish a Library branch in the Fourth Street School on Connellsville's West Side. After a trial period of four months they noted "the excellent work being accomplished by the West Side Station" and hired Miss Mabel Stillwagon as its librarian at a salary of \$10.00 per month. (Minutes, 195, 197) The Trustees and librarians could only hope that their efforts would have the same results that they read about in a teacher's testimonial for Pittsburgh's Carnegie Library:

I have often thought that you people at Carnegie library cannot have any conception of the amount and value of the work you are doing for our public schools to-day. . . . yellow-backed literature (remembered as a constant thorn in the flesh of teachers during my own childhood) has completely disappeared from our schools--crowded out bodily to make room for good, wholesome books. . . . What was at first a duty lesson soon became a pleasure that the pupils began begging for permission to read as much as they pleased, instead of being in honor bound to read only the amount assigned (Scrapbook, CCFL).

Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Contemporaries described this building in its original sketch plan as "Italian Renaissance" style. When built, the details that gave the building this flavor were sacrificed so that it is less elaborate and monumental and more modern in appearance. The horizontal dimension of this rectangular building is most dominant. Remaining classical details include engaged Ionic columns between the second-story windows and the pedimented central bay.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This rectangular building has two stories and a full basement. It measures 92'-0" (nine-bay west and east facades) x 74'-6" (seven-bay north and south facades).
2. Foundations: The foundation forms a water table that is pierced by the basement windows and is of rusticated sandstone laid in regular courses.
3. Walls: The exterior walls are of finished, Haldeman buff sandstone laid in regular courses. The central pedimented bay protrudes slightly from the west facade of the main block. A shield surrounded by classical foliage is in the center of this denticulated pediment. A sandstone stringcourse circles the building between the first and second stories. Just below this stringcourse in the front central bay "CARNEGIE FREE LIBRARY" is inscribed in a band of sandstone above the main entrance. Engaged Ionic columns flank the three windows in the second story of the central bay and separate the four bays on either side.
4. Structural system, framing: Stone.
5. Chimneys: A buff sandstone chimney rises from the basement boiler room above the roofline just inside the rear wall near the southeast corner.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main doors are solid wood panels with classical applied wood decorations of rope and garlands framing central rondels. The doorway has a round-arched

frame with a scrolled keystone. A window with wood mullions in a pattern of crosses within squares fills the tympanum and narrow window panels in a matching pattern flank the doors.

There are identical doorways on the building's north and south sides. Both have the round-arched opening with scrolled keystone and the mullioned window in the tympanum. The doors are wood-panelled with fanlight windows. The doorways are surmounted by a plain architrave set on pilasters.

- b. Windows: Two single-light, slot-like windows with iron grills are on either side of the main entrance. A set of three one-over-one-light sash windows is in the front central bay's second story. Two windows are set above each side entrance. They are elongated, extending the height of the second floor to light the interior staircase and each consists of two one-over-one-light sashes. A bank of seven one-over-one-light sash windows is placed in each floor of the center section of the rear wall to light the book stacks. All other windows are also one-over-one-light double-hung sash. Basement windows are smaller and are spaced under those in the main floors.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, materials: The low-pitched, hipped roof is covered with asphalt shingles which replaced original red Spanish tiles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The molded sandstone cornice is adorned by a row of dentils and an "egg and dart" pattern.

Early photographs show classical acroteria ornaments at the peak and corners of the pediment over the central bay (photographs in Artwork of Fayette County and CCFL).

C. Description of the Interior:

- 1. Floor plan: There have been only minor alterations of the original plans. The layout of each floor is very similar. The first floor has been least altered. Halls leading from the three entrances meet at the semi-circular "delivery" or circulation desk. A book and reading room is in each front corner, a periodical room in the northeast corner and the librarians' office in the southeast corner. This last room was subdivided to provide a separate office for the head librarian. All rooms were originally divided by glass partitions to control noise level yet allow librarians to

monitor patrons' activities from their central vantage point at the circulation desk. The partition around the southwest corner room has been removed. The main doorway facing Pittsburgh Street is locked, and the north side door is now used as the main entrance.

On the second floor stacks have been installed in the space originally reserved for that purpose. The Board of Trustees' room and committee room on either side of the stacks are unchanged except that the committee room in the southeast corner has a dropped ceiling and now holds books in the Pennsylvania collection. The front half of the second floor was originally entirely open, housing the 450-seat Music Hall or Auditorium. A room partitioned off in the southwest corner has a dropped ceiling and now houses the Connellsville Historical Society. There is a meeting room with a small kitchen and toilet in the northwest corner (Minutes, 251). Except for this loss in size, the auditorium has changed little. It has an 18'-0" x 38'-0" stage with a serpentine front and a wine-colored, crushed-velvet curtain.

2. Stairways: Two wood stairways, one at each side entrance, connect the floors. The stairs have turned balusters. Newell posts are decorated with dentils, beading, and an egg and dart pattern, and the main posts are topped with a small sphere supported by four scrolls. Wood steps lead up from the front entrance to the first-floor level. Gray marble covers the walls to dado level along the stairs in each foyer.
3. Flooring: Original tile--colored black, buff, yellow, and brick-red--laid in a pattern of mosaic squares, remains in the main hall on the first floor. The remainder of the floors were varnished wood like that in the northwest reading room. Linoleum now covers the floor in the southeast corner rooms and in the stack rooms. Brown carpet has been laid in the northeast and southwest corner rooms.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceilings are plastered. On the first floor they are painted yellow and are in disrepair from water damage. Water damage in the Trustees' room on the second floor is now being repaired, and there are plans to replace the roof to prevent further damage.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Interior doors are paneled wood. Brass hardware has acroteria and other classical details. The doors leading into the main foyer have a single, narrow light the length of the door.

- b. Windows: Windows are framed with plain wood molding.
6. Decorative features and trim: The first-floor ceiling is criss-crossed with molded wood simulating structural beams. These were originally decorated with a band of painted leaf, garland, and flower designs. A garland-and-shield design was also painted around the top edge of the walls (photograph in Artwork of Fayette County).

A marble tablet inscribed with a list of the original Board of Trustees and dated 1901 is mounted in the first-floor wall on the north side of the doorway to the front foyer.

In the auditorium, two classically decorated plinths flank the stage. The wall slopes up into the ceiling from a molded cornice. Second-floor rooms also have a molded chair rail and another strip of molding around the walls about 3' from ceiling height.

7. Mechanical systems:
- a. HVAC: Original steam heating system was fueled by coal. The present hot water heating system was installed in 1968 (Courier, 10 July 1968).
- b. Lighting: Originally gas and electric.
8. Original furnishings: Built-in, D-shaped librarians' desk in the center of the first floor. Original oak tables and bentwood chairs remain in use in the librarians' offices and in the second-floor Pennsylvania room. Other original furnishings include bookshelves that line the walls of the first-floor northwest reading room and in the Pennsylvania room, folding wood chairs in the auditorium, a toilet with wood components in the closet off the Trustees' room, and oak and black leather chairs in the Trustees' room.

D. Site

1. General Setting and orientation: The building is set on the slope of a hill in a parallelogram-shaped plot. It faces west and overlooks South Pittsburgh Street, one of Connellsville's main streets. The Library is at the edge of the city's central business district in the center of an area with a number of other public buildings. A commercial building, the Masonic Temple, Christian Church, and YMCA line the opposite side of S. Pittsburgh Street. Two other churches are located on the north and south sides. Two schools which once stood on the lot on the Library's north side have been demolished. A residential neighborhood begins on the east side of Carnegie Avenue.

2. Historical landscape design: The original Board of Trustees went to some trouble to obtain a clear, self-contained site for the Library. Its previous use as a cemetery and a public school on the block to the north had set the precedent for the site's role as a public area. A second school was built between 1891 and 1901. In the years 1901-08, three other buildings were erected around the Library square: the YMCA at the southwest corner of Fairview Avenue and Pittsburgh Street, the Masonic Temple at the southwest corner of South Alley and South Pittsburgh Street, and the Baptist Church on the south side of Baldwin Alley. Between 1908 and 1914 Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church was erected on the block to the northeast, the Christian Church on the block to the northwest. A bandstand was built at the southeast corner of the school block immediately across from the Library and a large wing was added to the high school. A commercial building housing the Wells-Mills Electric Company and later the Crawford Motor Company was built on S. Pittsburgh next to the Masonic Temple (Sanborn maps).

A concrete walkway to the Library's front entrance rises in a series of steps from Pittsburgh Street. Stone retaining walls border the property along Pittsburgh Street and Baldwin Avenue. The Kiwanis Club took over maintenance of the grounds in 1923 and planted shrubbery and trees (*Courier*, 1923). There is now a small black-topped area for staff parking at the building's southeast corner. A small storage shed has been placed nearby, opposite the south entrance.

A bronze statue of Colonel William Crawford (1732-1782) was erected on the Library's front lawn in 1917. The Trustees registered their permission to have the statue installed on Library grounds as early as 1903 and again in 1917. Crawford was one of the first settlers in the area, arriving from Virginia in 1765. He was a friend and agent of George Washington and claimed thousands of acres in the region for the President. He became a leading citizen of the area, serving as a county justice of the Peace in the 1770s. In 1782 he led an expedition against the Indians in the Sandusky River region. The expedition ended in retreat and Crawford was captured and killed (see Thomas Gaddis House, HABS No. PA-5474; Minutes 75, 207; McClenathan, 28-37, 181-84; Geary, apdx.; Slaughter, 83-4).

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings:

Floor plans made in 1966 and 1967 by architects J. C. Fulton and Son of Uniontown, Pa. Collection of CCFL. Attached as supplemental material.

B. Early Views:

Architect J. M. McCollum's sketch of exterior published in the Connellsville Courier March 28, 1901 and in a supplement to The Daily News January 1902. Attached as supplemental material.

Photographs of the exterior, of the circulation desk and of the northwest corner reading room published in Artwork of Fayette County, Pa. (Gravure Illustration Company), 1905.

Undated photograph of the exterior, the basement meeting room, and second floor auditorium. Collection of CCFL.

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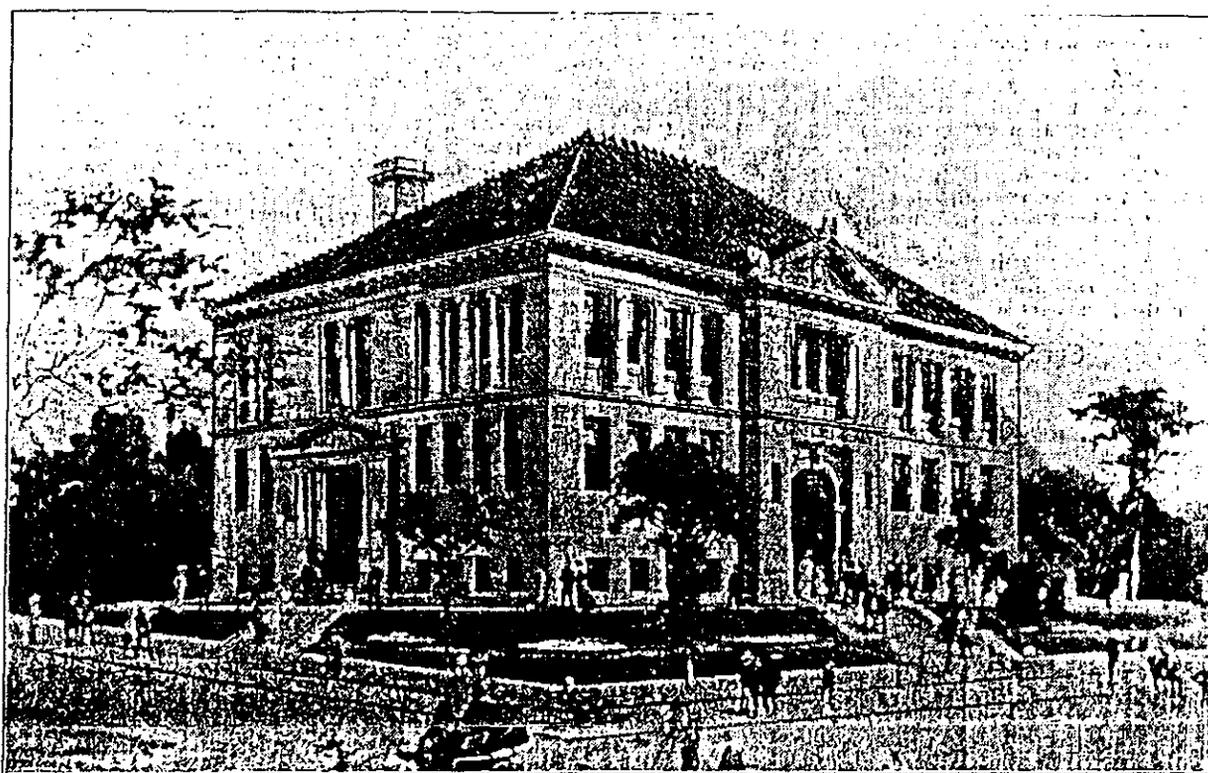
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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

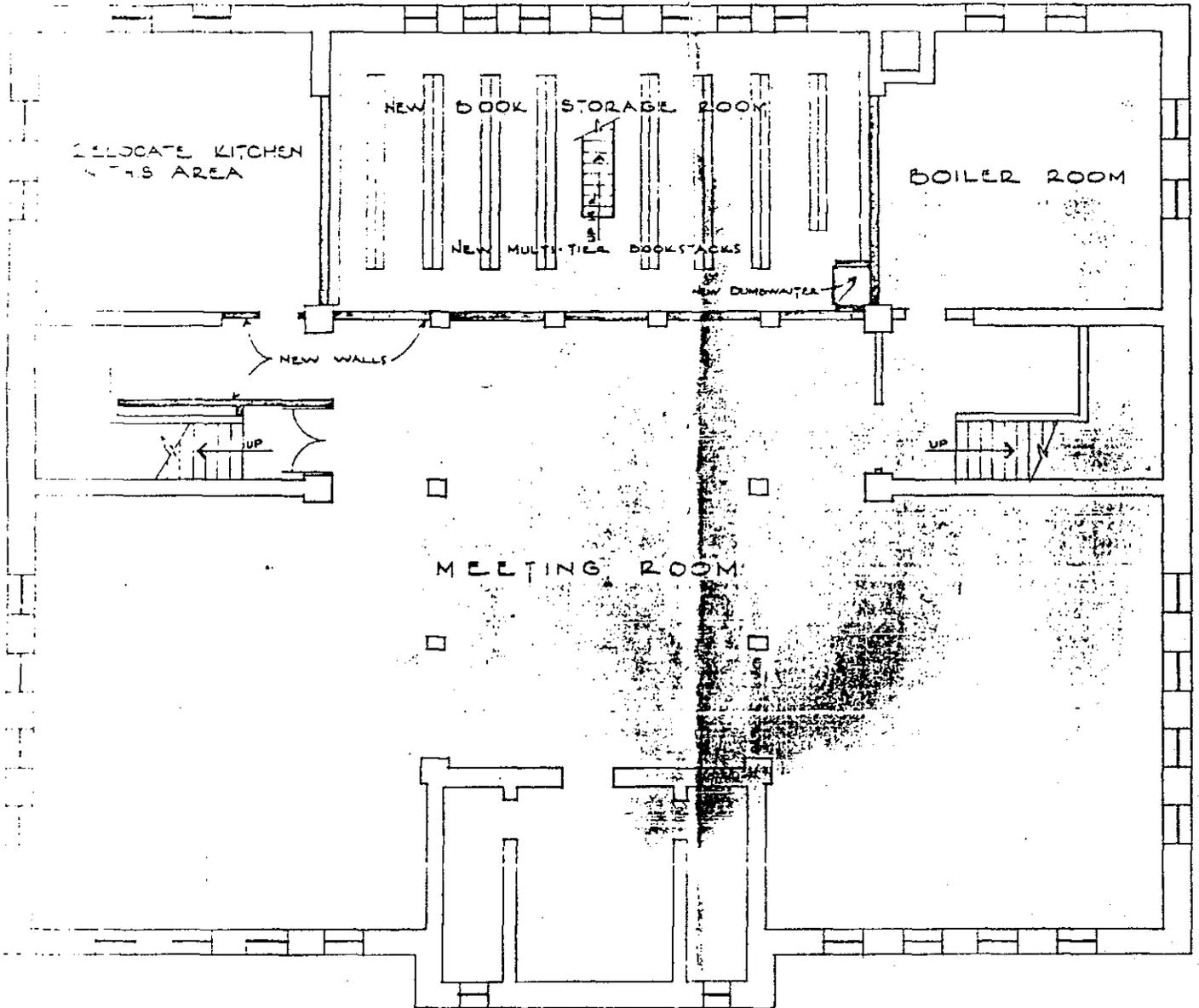
This report was prepared by Kim E. Wallace for the Historic American Buildings Survey in the spring of 1989 as part of America's Industrial Heritage Project, National Park Service.

PART V. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

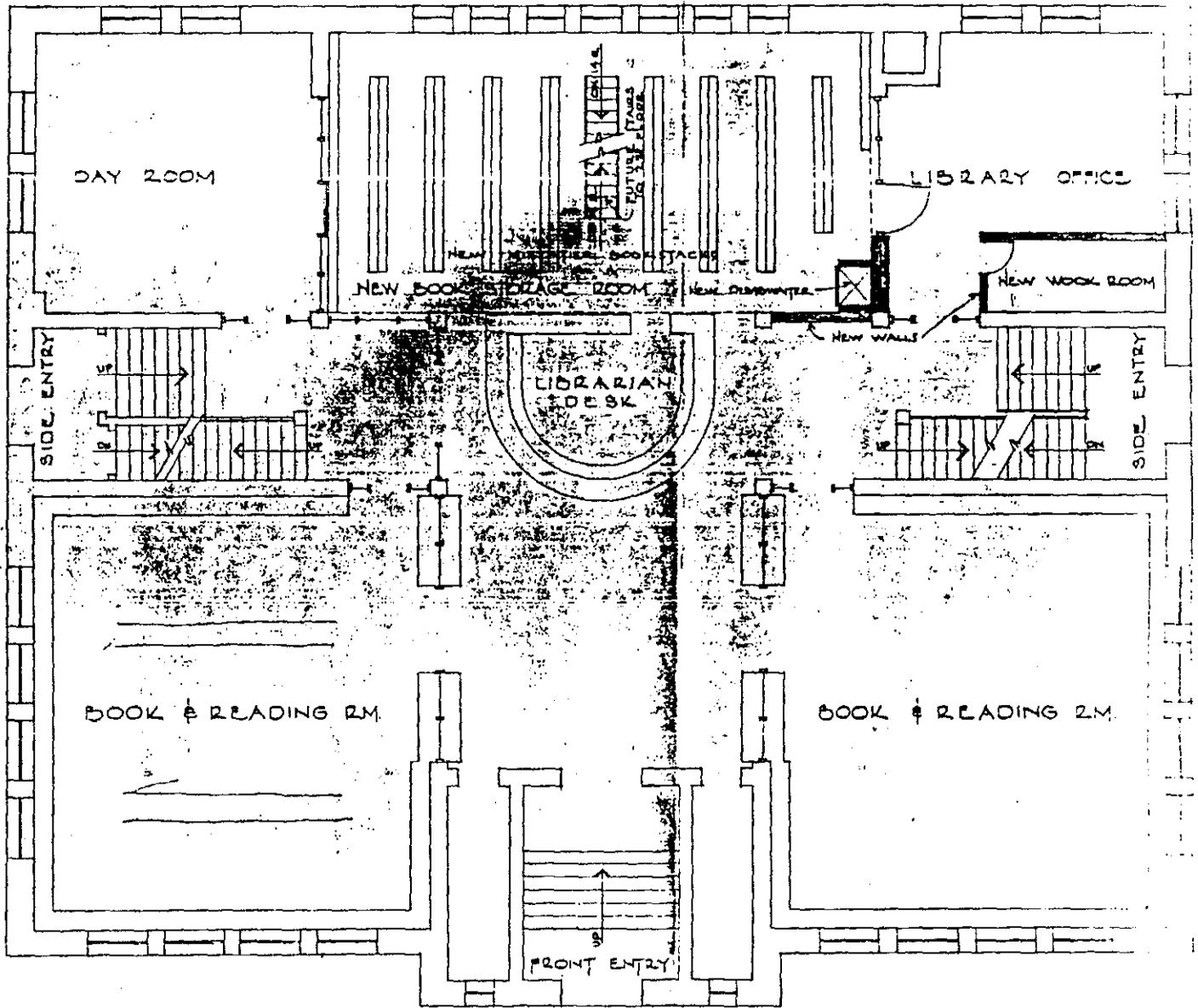
- A. Architect J.M. McCollum's sketch of the exterior, published in a supplement to The Daily News, January 1902. See page 25.
- B. Floor plans made in 1966 by architects J.C. Fulton and son of Uniontown, Pa. See pages 26-28.



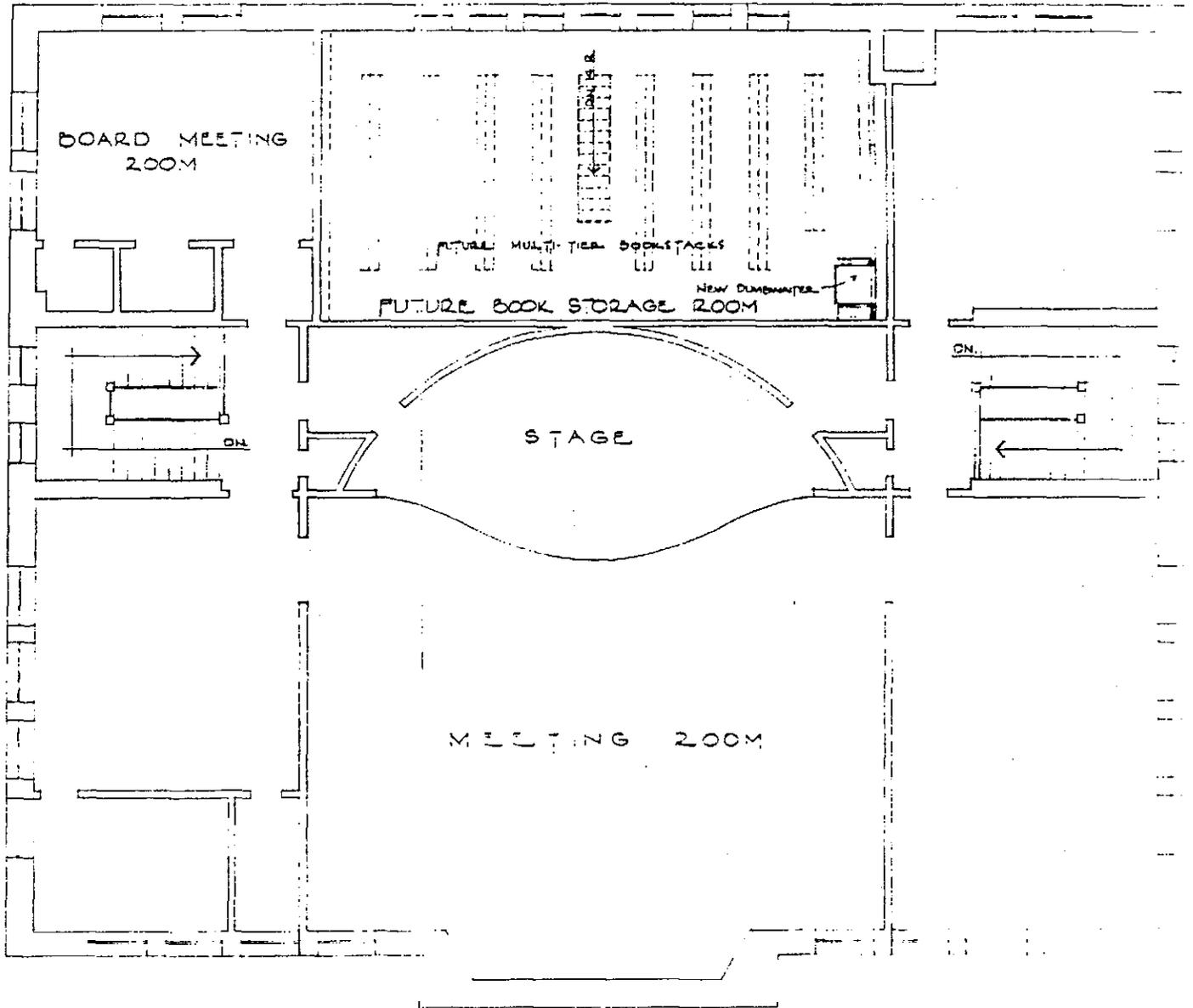
Architect J.M. McCollum's sketch of the exterior, published in a supplement to The Daily News, January 1902.



Floor plans made in 1966 by architects J.C. Fulton and son of Uniontown, Pa.
Basement floor plan.



Floor plans made in 1966 by architects J.C. Fulton and son of Uniontown, Pa.
First floor plan.



Floor plans made in 1966 by architects J.C. Fulton and son of Uniontown, Pa.
Second floor plan.