

Nebraska Libraries & History

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NEBRASKA AND CARNEGIE LIBRARIES

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by

Marguerite Nesbit

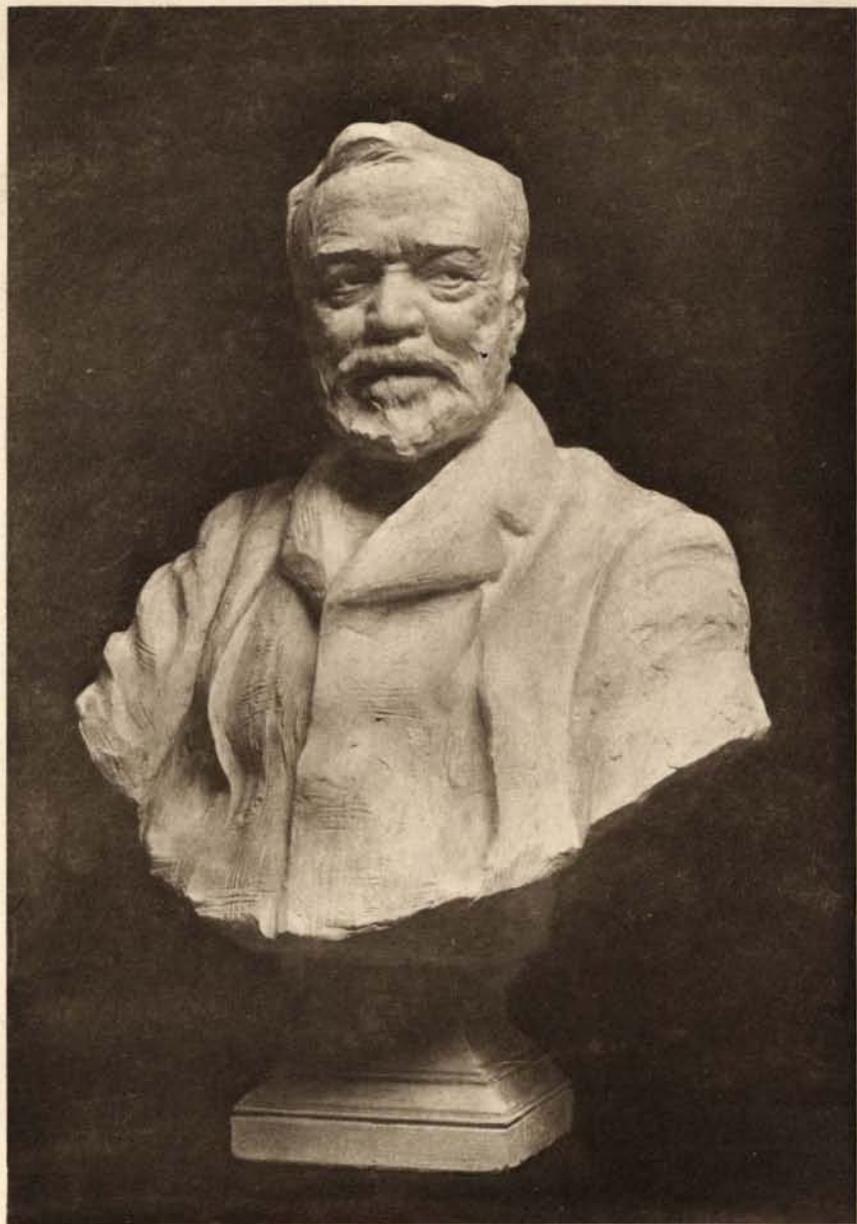
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Nebraska Library Commission
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Andrew Carnegie

SIR WILLIAM GOSCOMBE JOHN, R. A.
SCULPTOR

*A bust of Mr. Carnegie by the same sculptor is in
the Palace of Peace at The Hague.*

*The original of the bust here reproduced is in the
headquarters of the Endowment at Washington.*

NEBRASKA AND CARNEGIE LIBRARIES

by

Marguerite Nesbit

NEBRASKA CARNEGIE LIBRARIES NOT PICTURED

CLARKS

DEWITT

FULLERTON (at State Historical Society)

LEXINGTON

RANDOLPH

STROMSBURG

WYMORE

FOREWORD

One day while browsing in a library among the O20's I found a BOOK OF CARNEGIE LIBRARIES by T. W. Koch. Now it was with eagerness, I can assure you, that I scanned the pages.

To those of you who have read the book you may recall a chapter 'Iowa -- and the farther West.' In that chapter mention is made of the Public Library at Lincoln. Now, knowing that there are today in sixty-eight Nebraska towns Carnegie buildings, and realizing that in each community the library is just as important as the one in Lincoln I was persuaded to continue the story as far as Nebraska is concerned. In each town in which one of these buildings stands, a permanent memorial to the benefactor, that building is an outstanding bit of good architecture, a center of civic pride and a real community asset. Further it will be found that the smaller the community the more valuable is the gift.

When one begins to write on any subject, that subject becomes like a highway with side-roads appearing at intervals. This subject of Carnegie libraries in Nebraska is no exception when it comes to correlating subjects.

It seemed that a sketch of early Nebraska and of her growing industries and her vast resources should be considered. This is the background on which the whole cultural

and educational elements are grounded.

Only mere mention can be given to some of the libraries which have been the warp and woof in library activity; the State Library, the University Library, the Public Library Commission, the State Historical Society and the Legislative Reference Bureau. Then there are the several school and college libraries. Each of these should have a place in a complete discourse on Nebraska Libraries.

No paper on Carnegie Libraries would be complete without a story of Mr. Andrew Carnegie himself, and his big, generous idea.

Because of the place the many tax-supported libraries, not Carnegie gifts, have in individual localities, I wish to mention them in this foreword. Each of them is worthy of its place in the community and worthy of the name Public Library.

(75 listed)

Organized

* Ainsworth	1911
--Alma	1910
--Ansley	1916
Arapahoe	1920
Arlington	1918
*--Arnold	1920
Atkinson	1922
* Auburn	1914
--Axtell	1925
Bayard	1919
* Bridgeport	1922
Carroll	1906

Organized

* Cedar Rapids	1914
* Central City	1899
Chappell	1920
Comstock	1925
Crawford	1912
Creighton	1913
Crofton	1927
* Dakota City	1922
* Falls City	1902
* Friend	1909
Genoa	1902
Gering	1910

Organized

Gordon	1922
* Guide Rock	1918
* Hebron	1922
Hooper	1913
Humboldt	1890
Kimball	1919
Laurel	1909
Long Pine	1921
Louisville	1901
Lyons	1921
*--Merna	1916
Merriman	1927
Minden	1907
Mitchell	1916
* Morrill	1917
* Nebraska City	1896
Nelson	1896
Newman Grove	1923
Oakland	1916
* Omaha	1877
Ord	1922
*--Orleans	1917
Osceola	1906
Oshkosh	1921
Pender	1904

Organized

Ralston	1922
* Red Cloud	1918
Rushville	1921
* St. Edward	1925
*--Sargent	1921
Scotia	1927
Scribner	1900
--Silver Creek	1918
Spalding	1911
Springfield	1926
Sterling	1904
Syracuse	1901
* Tablerock	1917
Talmage	1904
Tilden	1922
--Ulysses	1916
Wahoo	1924
* Wakefield	1902
Walthill	1922
--Wausa	1920
* Weeping Water	1917
* West Point	1916
Winside	1911
* Wisner	1903
* Wood River	1906
* York	1894

* Library building

-- Township library

NEBRASKA AND CARNEGIE LIBRARIES

In the very center of the United States lies the state of Nebraska.

"Nebrathka" was the Otoe Indian name for the Platte or "Flat Water." As this unusual river called by Irving "the most magnificent and the most useless of rivers" flows across the state it was a very significant name to give the territory.

History begins with the first inhabitants found here by the white men. Nebraska was a great Indian center. Her wide open spaces provided excellent hunting grounds and an abundant food supply. When the white men came they found the Indians grouped in seven tribes, the Dakotas or Sioux, the Poncas, the Omahas, the Otoes, the Missouris, the Pawnees, the Arapahoes and the Cheyennes.

In 1541 Francis Vasquez Coronado and his party pushed as far north as this region. These were the first white men recorded by history as visiting this part of America. From a diary kept by Captain Juan Jaramillo, one of the party, interesting facts are gleaned. "This country presents a very fine appearance, than which I have not seen a better in all our Spain nor Italy nor a part of France, nor, indeed, in the other countries in which I have travelled, in his Majesty's service, for it is not a very rough country, but it is made

up of hillocks and plains, and very fine appearing rivers and streams, which certainly satisfied me and made me sure that it will be very fruitful in all sorts of products. Indeed, there is a profit in the cattle ready to the hand, from the quantity of them, which is as great as one could imagine. We found a variety of Castilian prunes which are not all red, but some of them black and green; the tree and fruit is certainly like that of Castile, with a very excellent flavor. Among the cows we found flax, which springs up from the earth in clumps apart from each other, which are noticeable, as the cattle do not eat it, their tops and blue flowers, are very perfect although small, resembling that of our own Spain, (or sumach like ours in Spain.) Here are grapes along some streams, of a fair flavor, not to be improved upon----"

The great herds of buffaloes found by this party in Quivira were a marvelous sight. The Spaniards had been guided here by an Indian, a member of the tribe living here. They therefore found the Indians very hospitable. It was probably August when they visited here and they went back south for the winter determined to return the following spring.

We learn that French traders and explorers traveled up the Missouri early in 1700.

The whole region became a much disputed territory in time. It has been held by three countries, Spain, France, and England and has therefore been under three flags. In 1803 it was a part of the great Louisiana territory sold by France to

United States.

As the grand pageant of the years passes in review explorers, missionaries, traders and home seekers appear. The last were pushing westward ever westward.

Nebraska was so located that many people passed through. Between the years 1836 and 1866 the government recorded at its forts that more than two and a half million people crossed Nebraska in covered wagons.

Passing on through the years we arrive at the Kansas-Nebraska days. Stephen A. Douglas introduced a bill in Congress in 1844 to organize the Nebraska territory. It failed. Likewise a second and third bill failed. Finally in 1854 a fourth known as the "Kansas-Nebraska" bill was passed after a long hard struggle, and was signed by President Franklin Pierce.

The original territory was very extensive. It stretched from the Kansas border to British America and from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains.

The fight for statehood was won in 1867 and Nebraska became a state March 1st of that year. Omaha, beautifully located on the bluffs of the Missouri River was at the very gate to the west. Omaha was the capital of the territory but Lincoln was finally chosen as the capital for the state.

The years following were never to be forgotten. Hard times, drouth and grasshoppers followed close upon each other. It was not long until the most desirable land in the eastern part of the state was all homesteaded and then the more adven-

turous home seekers pressed farther west. Those early days strengthened the fibre of the citizens and while some became discouraged and turned back many more stayed. To those who stayed we pay homage. It is to such as stayed that Hamlin Garland and Willa Cather, Bess Streeter Aldrich and others have paid tribute in story. It is to those who pressed on and succeeded that fitting monuments and memorials are erected, to keep alive the yeateryears for the people of today.

Just now one of the most interesting of commemoration projects in this state is that to mark the location of the last great historical battle between the Sioux and the Pawnees. This battle was in 1873 near Trenton in the southwest part of the state. In 1928 through interest aroused by Congressman Shallenberger, a federal appropriation of \$7500 was made. This is a real Indian story of historical significance. Perhaps the interest of a former Nebraskan, Gutzon Borglum will engage him in the creation of a suitable memorial to be placed on that last Indian battle-field.

Passing across the state from east to west or from south to north one finds many small towns for Nebraska is made up of small towns. The population in the majority of communities is five thousand or less. (Mostly less.) In these towns and in the country surrounding, live the bulwark of the state.

Native Americans, for the most part, or peoples from the agricultural sections of Northern Europe inhabit the communities. These latter people brought with them a true love

for the soil and intense ambition along with a love for American liberty. All these make them the most desirable of citizens.

As one approaches the average Nebraska town the usual skyline of a stand-pipe, two or three grain elevators and several church spires appear. Then upon entering the limits of the village there is the unfolding of the usual panorama: school house, railroad station with the stock yards near by, two or three filling stations and several garages, of which the Ford is no doubt the best equipped, a possible creamery, and numerous stores. Then one finds a Tourist park, often with a popular swimming pool. The streets are wide and the homes look comfortable. Sometimes there is a library.

Driving on over the well developed highway system through the corn shaded avenues, one is impressed by the fertility of the soil. Great fields of grain and alfalfa stretch out to the right and left. Farther west, fields of sugar beets and potatoes prove that products of the soil are abundant. In these western sections the agriculture is carried on by means of irrigation, the lack of water having been a serious drawback in earlier years. In 1854 Edward Everett Hale said of the area, 'It is wholly useless, for agricultural purposes and must remain so forever.'

The great areas where grazing predominates and the vast sections where wild hay flourishes, add much to the state's financial returns. It is very evident on every side that

Nebraska is an agricultural state and a ranking state in this very important industry.

One is attracted by the small groves of trees gracing the landscape. Except for trees along rivers and streams each clump of trees means a home. There was a time when it was thought impossible to grow trees in this state -- but that was years ago. Now, thanks to our noble citizen, J. Sterling Morton, Nebraska is known as the Tree Planter's state. Towering above the grove is another common sight -- that of the whirling wind-mill -- the never ending water supply for man and beast.

It is a beautiful state now but there were those were those who thought it beautiful when it lay as a prairie country. Bayard Taylor wrote, "The country is one of the most beautiful I ever looked upon. Nature has given it a smoothness and finish which elsewhere come from long cultivation."

One might dwell at length upon the growing industries, many of which we cannot even mention here. But this must be noted: there is that ever present tendency of Westward always Westward, in all the development and growth that has taken place with the state.

The educational system deserves more than a passing remark. Excellent opportunities are offered. It is a fact of which the state can be justly proud that practically everyone within the boundaries can read and write. The illiteracy is low -- one and four tenths percent -- places Nebraska second

among the states. Iowa, our neighbor to the east, is first.

Another commendable thing in any state and noticeable here, is the lack of real poverty. Over half of the families own their own homes and more than fifty percent of the farm lands are operated by owners.

Out from this state has gone a group of distinguished people. One Ellsworth Huntington, a well-known geographer, has said that Nebraska ranks second only to New England in the percentage of her people who have gained distinction.

Into the Nebraska territory during the latter half of the last century came hundreds of families ambitious and eager for new homes. Schools and churches were soon established, and in many instances libraries were started.

Since the Kansas-Nebraska Act of May 30, 1854, there has been a state library. The office of state librarian was created in 1867, and the Secretary of State was designated ex-officio as State Librarian. In 1871 two divisions were made of the state library. The miscellaneous material to be in charge of the Secretary of State and the law section under the care of the Clerk of the Supreme Court. January 1, 1921, by amendment to the Constitution the Clerk of the Supreme Court was also made State Librarian. This library is a creditable asset of our state, and is located in its spacious and beautiful quarters in the new Capitol Building.

The library of the University of Nebraska, established in 1871, has a library deserving special mention. The university

library is the largest in the state. Departmental libraries are located to be as accessible as possible to students and faculty. The central building is far from adequate to afford sufficient room. A new day for the library of the University of Nebraska is hoped for. A new building which will be the center of all university activity is the crying need for the campus.

The Public Library Commission, established in 1901, has as its members the State Librarian, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Chancellor and the Librarian of the University and a fifth member appointed by the Governor. The actual work of the Commission is administered by the Secretary and her staff.

The Commission has a three fold place in the library activities of the state. First: the Commission is required "to encourage the establishment of libraries where none exist and the improvement of those already established." Second: the loaning of books. Third: supervision of institutional libraries.

The State Historical Society (1878) and the Legislative Reference Bureau must be mentioned for the special work each carries on.

The libraries of the four State Teachers Colleges and the several denominational colleges in the state are with the university doing a commendable work.

As for the libraries in elementary and High Schools they are still in the embryonic stage. One High School library should

be mentioned for the place it has taken as a model library. The library of the Technical High School in Omaha is the heart and center of the school. As the wheel is built around the hub, so the school is about this library.

Public libraries have been possible in Nebraska since the law of 1877 although an act applicable to the 'city of Brownville' had been passed in 1875. The bill was unchanged until 1901 when the word 'free' was inserted in one place, and the levy was increased from one to two mills. In 1911 the law provided for the establishment of township and county libraries and the levy was again raised to three mills. Another levy for public libraries was placed at five mills, and at that same time the number of library trustees was reduced to five.

As the desire for public libraries became more imminent there was provided for the emergency a man, Andrew Carnegie, whose chief joy was in satisfying that desire and making public library buildings possible.

To Andrew Carnegie, a true son of Scotland, the United States, his adopted country, owes a great and lasting debt. In his autobiography is revealed the man we would like to have known. +

Andrew Carnegie was born in Dunfermline, Scotland, November 25, 1835. His parents were poor and honest, so he could rightfully say -- 'of good kith and kin.'

The father, William Carnegie, was a damask weaver. His grandfather for whom he must have been named, was Andrew Carnegie.

We are informed that the grandson was very like the grandfather Andrew, in all his mannerisms. Both could laugh trouble away and "make all ducks swans." His motto was taken from his beloved poet, Burns, "Thine own reproach alone do fear."

Andrew Carnegie looked like his other grandfather, Thomas Morrison, the publisher of the first radical paper in Scotland. There must have been a great likeness between the two for upon the visit of an uncle, Bailie Morrison, 25 years later, he was so impressed with the resemblance that his eyes filled with tears and he rushed from the room. There was the same gesture -- he could not tell just what it was -- Andrew's mother had often thought the same thing -- but neither could she describe it. How subtle is the law which transmits gestures!

Very little is said of the mother who meant so much to him. Her memory was too sacred for words. She is known to have inherited the dignity and refinement of a lady.

One of the great but silent influences in the life of this Scotch lad was the Abbey. The ever present Abbey was throwing its influence over the people of the little village, just as the great castle in Edinburgh was casting its lasting influence there. Everywhere romance and history!

His father prospered in his trade and all went well until the great industrial change was ushered in. Then hand power gave way to steam power and the hand loom became the steam loom.

The family was interested in studying the map of America and the regions around Lake Erie and Pittsburgh became more interesting after one, Uncle William, had sailed for those parts.

The Carnegies became active in the 'down with aristocracy movement.' Privilege was denounced in all forms. America was praised at this time. Andrew Carnegie states that he would have slain a king, duke or a lord, so bitter was his feeling at one time.

School days and hero days followed along. Wallace, Bruce, and Burns were the boys' idols. It really gave Andrew Carnegie a pang to think that America had heroes. He really did not feel at home here for years after the family moved. He had the same feeling as that of a Canadian who said of America -- "very well for a visit but I could never live so far away from the remains of Bruce and Wallace."

There seems to have been a religious disturbance within the family. The shorter catechism was never learned as the rest of his friends were learning it. His father once said, "Theologies were many but there was one religion."

The Carnegie home was pleasant. The children enjoyed their home. There were pets and many childhood friends. The young Andrew once bribed some of his many friends by naming their rabbits for them if they would carry his fodder.

The time came when the family decided to try life in America.

The father often sang:

"To the West, to the West, to the land of the free,
Where the mighty Missouri rolls down to the sea.
Where a man is a man even though he must toil
And the poorest may gather the fruits of the soil."

It was a sad leave taking as they left from the Firth of Forth. There were friends made among the sailors and the passengers, and the passage proved very interesting so that New York came at last. It was on to Pittsburgh by way of the Erie Canal, Buffalo, Lake Erie. It took three weeks to make the trip that now requires ten hours by rail (and no time by air.) There were old friends to welcome them in Pittsburgh.

The new home was established in Allegheny City where the father began to weave and the mother aided in binding shoes. Andrew was soon busy at odd jobs and then became a messenger boy.

About this time a great blessing opened up to the boys of Allegheny City and for Andrew Carnegie in particular. Colonel James Anderson announced that he would open his library on Saturday afternoons for working boys. Andrew Carnegie saw this notice in the paper. And in the next issue of the Dispatch he put a question to Colonel Anderson, asking if the boys who did not use their hands were to be excluded. The answer Colonel Anderson gave was, "A working boy should have a trade." The rejoinder of Andrew Carnegie's was signed, "A working boy without a trade." A day or two later an item

on the editorial page of the Dispatch read, "Will a Working Boy without a trade please call at the office."

To this man and to this library which was the haven for working boys Andrew Carnegie felt himself deeply indebted. It was the beginning of his library experiences. Of Colonel Anderson, he said, "To him I owe a taste for literature which I would not exchange for all the millions that were ever amassed by man."

Later a monument was erected by Mr. Carnegie to the memory of the man who had meant so much to him. This statue was placed in front of the library in Allegheny City. It stands there, a silent tribute to Colonel Anderson.

The success of Andrew Carnegie was most unusual. There came a time when Mr. Carnegie felt that he should practice what he had earlier written in 'The Gospel of Wealth.' The time had come to cease struggling for more wealth and the task for him was the distribution of what he had acquired. Said he: "This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of wealth: To set an example of modest, unostentatious living, shunning display or extravagance; to provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him; and after doing so, to consider all surplus revenues which come to him simply as trust funds, which he is called upon to administer, and strictly bound as a matter of duty to administer in the manner which, in his judgment, is best calculated to produce the most beneficial results for the community -- the man of

wealth thus becoming the mere trustee and agent for his poorer brethren, bringing ^{to} their service his superior wisdom, experience, and ability to administer, doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves."

His first distribution was known as the "Andrew Carnegie Relief Fund" and was for the men in the mills. It was designed to relieve those who might suffer from accidents and to provide small pensions for those who might need aid in their old age.

This Relief Fund was but the beginning of the several Funds established. But the first gift of Andrew Carnegie was a public library for his native town of Dunfermline.

There followed the libraries in Allegheny City, their first American home, and in Pittsburgh, the city in which he made his fortune. The Carnegie Institut~~e~~ in Pittsburgh is made up of a library, a museum, a picture gallery, a technical school and a school for young women. Request after request came to the great giver and city after city was made the recipient of a gift.

Mr. Carnegie's interest became universal. His gifts will reach on and on throughout the years. But the giving that was nearest and dearest to him was the establishment of libraries. It is not our purpose to estimate in figures the amounts given nor the number of persons daily enjoying the libraries. It is enough to know that there never has been another like the Andrew Carnegie who has made libraries possible. He once

said that if ever wealth came to him it should be used to establish free libraries, that other poor boys might receive opportunities similar to those for which he was indebted to that nobel^e man, Colonel Anderson. At another time he said if but one boy in each library was half as benefited as he had been he would be satisfied and that^{that} library would not have been established in vain.

Along in the years when Andrew Carnegie was stretching out in industrial activities there was out in the very heart of this country a new and growing state which was pushing and stretching out for its very existence. By the time Mr. Carnegie had decided to distribute the vast fortune he had acquired there were several Nebraska towns ready to receive a portion.

A great number of localities aided by Mr. Carnegie were in the sparsely settled and new sections of the United States. When the Carnegie plan of a library building was presented it proved a great advantage to those communities. The plan was always self-supporting, as each locality was asked to have an annual maintenance equal to at least ten percent of the grant made for the building. Mr. Carnegie never gave until the library could be maintained as a public institution, as much a part of city property as the public schools.

Mr. Carnegie considered a library the best gift that could be given a town. Said he: "Because it helps only those that help themselves, because it does not sap the foundation of manly independence, because it does not pauperize, because

it stretches a hand to the aspiring and places a ladder upon which they can only ascend by doing the climbing."

The very first libraries organized in Nebraska should have honorable mention. There were various reasons for the establishment of the several libraries or reading rooms. There was that urgent need for books in the first place. One of the interesting facts related regarding the need for such a place was that it would be a counter attraction for the saloons. And of the saloons, there were assorted varieties in those days.

The oldest library established was that in Omaha, in 1871, and known as the Omaha Library Association. By 1872 through a generous gift of one thousand volumes and the purchase of eight hundred more, the library had a very good beginning. For this Association a three dollar membership fee was charged which membership also entitled the holder of the ticket to attend the winter lecture course. In 1877 when the law permitting the establishment of municipal libraries was passed, Omaha was willing and ready to accept the institution. There was a big day for Omaha in February, 1878, when a large reading room was opened to the public for the first time.

The present site was the bequest of Mr. Byron Reed and was made possible when the city would erect a building. Mr. Reed was a donor who believed according to the Carnegie plan of giving and that was that in bestowing charity the main consideration should be to help those who would help themselves.

Omaha voted the bonds and the building was completed in 1893. There is one Carnegie building in Omaha on the South Side. This became a part of the Omaha system when South Omaha was annexed in 1905.

In brief, this is the history of the oldest public library in Nebraska. The growth of Omaha has been safe and sure. The library just now feels the drastic need for more room and we regret that at the recent city election, (May 1930) bonds failed to carry. Lincoln, the

Lincoln, the second library was organized in 1875. There has been dispute over the right to be 'first' between Omaha and Lincoln but the Omaha's have it. However, Lincoln can proudly boast of having the first Carnegie library building in the state.

The story of the city of Lincoln has many ups and downs. There was a struggle for its very existence; then the fight over the location of the capital, which until 1875 was a heated question; the effect of the dry years, of 1873-1874 and the grasshopper years which followed were never to be forgotten times in the entire state; then the terrible winters; these were incidents of those early years! In spite of all these seeming calamities there were progressive citizens who would not be discouraged by the hoppers and the weather.

The Lincoln Library had its beginning back in the days of 1875. A subscription library and reading room was founded, becoming the Lincoln Public Library in 1877. This was after the

act of the Legislature made it possible for a library to be supported and maintained by a municipality. Early in the year an appropriation had been requested from the council. The council passed the measure but it was vetoed by the mayor because: First, it would lead to other foolish appropriations and tend to extravagance; second, because of its unconstitutionality, there being no provision in the city charter for such action; lastly, because he "did not think the citizens cared to be taxed to furnish a resort for boys and young men inclined to be wild."

The library of Lincoln grew along with the expanding city. Gain after gain was noted and in 1901 the Carnegie building was erected. Later a branch library was needed and the Carnegie Corporation gave to Lincoln for the second time.

But there is a recent chapter to this Lincoln story. Within two years three outlying corporations, College View, University Place and Havelock, have been annexed and three more libraries, all Carnegie buildings, have been added to the system. This makes five buildings in all. The Library Board is greatly handicapped by a lack of funds. Sufficient income was not received before the addition of the three new buildings -- and the city is taxed to the limit. It would seem that the only way out is for a new law which will enable the city to increase the tax receipts. The Library Board has gone in for a hard bit of publicity and a real statement of facts and the people will at least be informed of the serious situation facing

their public library. An immediate remedy is essential.

The third oldest library organization is that at Crete. This association was established in 1878 and it struggled along until a Carnegie building was made possible in 1915. The site was donated by a fellow townsman, Mr. T. H. Miller. Crete is a beautiful college town about twenty miles from Lincoln. In addition to the public library in the town there is the Doane College library which adds a great deal to the library facilities. (The college was organized in 1872, making the college library older than the public library.)

But there were other towns whose organizations were made before 1900. Along through those hard years any movement of civic interest deserves high praise. Patient, long suffering and loyal people worked hard to accomplish results against most severe odds. The list of libraries and the date of the organization follows: already mentioned: - *Omaha 1871; *Lincoln 1875; *Crete 1878.

* Columbus	1878
* Grand Island	1884
* Superior	1884
* Plattsmouth	1886
* Tecumseh	1887
* Chadron	1889
Humboldt	1890
* Kearney	1890
* Seward	1890
* David City	1891
* Beatrice	1893
York	1894
* Holdrege	1895
Nebraska City	1896
Nelson	1896
* Wymore	1899
Central City	1899

* Carnegie building.

Of this group of early organizations all but two, Humboldt and Nelson, now have buildings, and fifteen of the number are Carnegie buildings.

While the first Carnegie building was in Lincoln in 1901 the second library was the one in Fremont in 1903. Then the next year, 1904, three more were dropped down into good Nebraska communities.

At Beatrice the public library is the outgrowth of two distinct groups, 'The Beatrice Literary Club' and the W.C.T.U. When in 1893 the Literary Club found itself in possession of a sum of money as well as the original library of the W.C.T.U. the council was again approached regarding assistance in the maintenance of a public library for public needs. They acted favorably upon the suggestion and the Beatrice Free Public Library was formally opened on the second floor of the new Post Office building in October 1893. Here the library continued until the new building was completed in 1904.

Over at Hastings at a very early date, movements looking toward establishment of a library were begun. The 'Red Ribbon Club' in 1878 had a Reading Room and in 1879 the Adams County Teachers Association was formed to provide a circulating library for the teachers. This latter plan did not succeed but in 1887 a permanent organization was made and a membership of one dollar was charged. In 1903 the library was taken over by the city and that same year the offer of \$15,000 was received from Andrew Carnegie. The building was opened in 1904.

In DeWitt in 1902 a reading room was established with the Congregational minister as leader. The new library board called Miss Edna Bullock of the Commission to confer with them regarding a building and in 1904 the Carnegie building was made ready.

The erection of the Carnegie Library building was the beginning of a real library career for Beatrice, Hastings, DeWitt and many more of the new active Nebraska libraries.

In 1905 the new public library in Grand Island was completed. Since 1884 when the library was organized, Mrs. O. A. Abbott, the mother of Miss Edith Abbott of Washington, has been the president of the library board.

Not far away, in Kearney, another building was opened the same year. Out in these cities of Grand Island and Kearney, where there has been such a remarkable growth there is need for more library accommodations.

In 1907 there were four new buildings ready to be opened to the eager public in Havelock, Holdrege, Pawnee City and Tecumseh.

McCook was added to the list in 1908, and Fairbury and Superior in 1909. In the latter city in 1884 the Ladies Library Association organized a library with a dollar membership fee. In 1885 a lot was purchased and in 1887 the first building was erected. This was occupied until the new Carnegie library was ready.

One needs a map of Nebraska at hand to be able to locate

the towns. To trace the well-known Platte River from the east side of the state where it joins the Missouri, back toward the west, following the broad valley, locates a great many of the places. One should also follow the Loup and the Republican and the Elkhorn. Nebraska is noted for its miles of river systems. This explains the routes that the early travelers must have followed as they crossed the plains and the founding of the several towns scattered along the rivers.

In 1910 Sutton received a building. In 1911 Alma, Ashland, Aurora, and Chadron, Neligh, Norfolk and Schuyler completed buildings.

All credit goes to the many clubs and literary societies which mothered the struggling libraries. In Ashland the narrator told us that the Woman's Club was organized in 1895 with a membership of twenty-two for the purpose of establishing a public library. In 1908 the city council accepted the library which had been organized by the club several years earlier. Then in 1911 an Ashland citizen donated a lot for the Carnegie building which had been promised.

Six more buildings were opened in 1912...Alliance, Geneva, North Bend, North Platte, O'Neill, Ponca. Far to the west and north lies Alliance, a town which has had a wild history. The early days in Alliance were days of adventure. Within the last few years the city has grown by leaps and bounds. In 1909 the library was organized by the Woman's Club and in 1912

a new \$10,000 building was occupied.

In Geneva the county seat of Fillmore County, a nucleus of the public library had been formed by a good doctor, Dr. H. L. Smith, when he gave his library of two thousand volumes to the Masonic Lodge for ^{the} use of the public. The library was housed in the Masonic Building. By 1905 the library had been turned over to the city and a librarian was appointed. Miss Nellie Williams, now Secretary of the Nebraska Public Library Commission, was the first librarian. In 1912 the Carnegie gift had been accepted and a new building erected.

Endowments for libraries are scarce in Nebraska, but the Geneva library has a one thousand dollar endowment the interest of which is to be used in buying books for boys. The gift was made by Mrs. P. B. Brayton, the first president of the Geneva library board.

Gifts of money are always acceptable to a library. It is a fact that the great New York City Public Library which has a large private income and receives a large appropriation from the city, for years sent out a printed request for gifts of money. Gifts were received, too, and the money expended in various ways but chiefly in decoration for branch libraries and for potted plants, etc. If this is permissible and acceptable in the largest of public libraries it could be adopted by other libraries.

North Platte is one of the booming cities located at the fork of the Platte River where it commands a wonderful valley.

Beyond North Platte are the Rockies! It is the county seat of Lincoln County, a county larger in area than Delaware. In March 1910 the Mayor of the city wrote to Mr. Carnegie asking for a gift and in May he called together seven men interested in the proposition. When we learn that the building was erected in 1912 we know that the plan must have been accepted. North Platte Public Library has felt growing pains several times. Now the most desirable advance they can hope for is that Lincoln County may have a county service soon.

Each year along here, records additional buildings. In each town where a Carnegie building was erected it can be looked upon with pride. So little thought had been put into any building program for the most of the towns that the new library building was oftentimes the most commanding building in *the* community.

At Gibbon in 1909 a little fund was set aside for a future public library. The Woman's Study League added to the amount and in 1910 the library was organized. We wish right here to mention the assistance and advice Miss Charlotte Templeton, then of the Nebraska Public Library Commission, was often called upon to contribute. So out in Gibbon they appealed to Miss Templeton and through her they learned of the Carnegie library plan. In 1913 the building was opened--another one of the state's township libraries.

Madison' is a library town. The present library had its beginning in 1907. Various ways and means were employed to

support the institution. Through the Library Commission, traveling libraries were received. A library association of two hundred members, was organized at one dollar per member. At the County Fair a literary hog was donated and guesses on his weight were sold, and at another Fair a calf was sold to the highest bidder. These ways and others furnished income for the struggling library, and in 1910 the city adopted it. Madison has a right to feel proud of the building erected in 1913 and of the record the library has ever since maintained.

Another northeastern town of which the state is proud is Wayne. Again a group of women had made a library possible for a whole community. The club was organized for 'Mutual sympathy and counsel, co-operation and broader culture.' In 1910 the council voted the maximum levy for the support of the library. The Federated Clubs presented the city with fifteen thousand volumes, a very nice gift for the new library. In 1913 the library was moved from the Court House, to the new Carnegie building. Wayne is another city which is handicapped in its best service for lack of room.

In 1914 Burwell, Fairfield, Fullerton, Seward, and Shelton received libraries. The story of each would no doubt tell of the number of loyal women and men who assisted in making the library possible.

It is rather a co-incident to note that Crete and Columbus which claim 1878 for the organization should each receive Carnegie buildings in 1915.

Columbus is a near United States Capital! Because of its

central location in the country it was strongly urged by a few (and by one George Francis Train, in particular) along in 1864, as the capital of the United States.

Franklin and Stanton were also 1915 libraries. In Franklin the local W.C.T.U. was instrumental in starting the library and in 1914 the Principal of the Academy gave his assistance to secure a Carnegie building. This was accomplished the next year. In 1922 when the Academy was closed their choice library was given to the public library. Franklin serves a very wide territory.

'One good turn deserves another.' One town after another was moved to ask the Carnegie Corporation for a library. For a number of years an average of five hundred applications from the United States and Canada alone, and nearly as many more from other English speaking nations, were received by the Corporation.

In 1916 ten more were added to the Nebraska group. They were Bloomfield, Broken Bow, Clay Center, College View, Gothenburg, Hartington, Harvard, Plainview, Plattsmouth, Tekamah and University Place.

In Clay Center there was a gymnasium constructed in connection with the library. This made it doubly important as a civic center.

Plattsmouth, it will be recalled, was one of the very early organizations (1895).

The stories regarding the beginning of each library are very

similar. In a town history names of individual citizens responsible for the public library, and of all other civic improvements, should be listed but it is impossible and impracticable to name many in a paper of this type.

Trying years were approaching, Libraries in construction and contracted for, were completed. The buildings at Arcadia, Blair, Loup City, Sidney, Spencer and Stromsburg were finished in 1917.

How often the libraries were in the beginning subscription libraries. Blair, the county seat of Washington County, was such. Blair is the only institution of any size in the county and would make an excellent center for a County library.

Ravenna's library was finished in 1918. There had been such an increase in the cost of labor and in building material since contracts were let, that the cost of the building exceeded the Carnegie Corporation gift. It was necessary for the city to furnish \$4,500 more to complete the plan.

In 1919 we add Clarks, David City, Lexington, and Wymore. Wymore is one of the old towns down in the southeastern part of the state. Many of the early settlers located in that section. As early as 1897 a small library had been established. The interest and ambition to have a public library never died out and their dream was realized in 1919.

There are two more to record. Two cities out 'where the west begins'. Scottsbluff's building was completed in 1921 and Cozad's in 1922. The arrangements had been completed before

the War but it was not wise to continue building programs so the libraries were delayed.

Scottsbluff is one of those cities, out in the sugar beet region, that has sprung up over night. Why, in 1900 Scottsbluff was scarcely noticeable and in 1930 it is a full grown city. The appropriation in 1918 was \$12,500 and by 1921 when the building could be undertaken the assessed valuation of property had so increased as to permit the Corporation to grant them \$15,000. Scottsbluff needs more room -- for Scottsbluff is still growing.

When Mr. Carnegie turned over the work of his many funds to the Carnegie Corporation, his benefactions lost a personal element. It was only natural that the Corporation should start an investigation of the libraries. It was discovered that some of the contracts had not been kept and that financial disaster had occurred. But for the most part that failure to keep the contract was not a failure on the part of the library, for the library did not enter into the agreement. The municipality agreed to support the library. Nevertheless, the Corporation, because of several reasons, announced in 1917 that it would give no more money for library buildings.

The Corporation has given largely since that date, to library education, but has given through the medium of the American Library Association.

We learned recently of a Carnegie Library in Nebraska which is nearly bankrupt. This is a serious situation which does

not sound good. Perhaps we should not pass judgment but according to information gleaned in Mr. Learned's 'The American Library: ~~the~~ the Diffusion of Knowledge', we learn that "However disagreeable the conclusion may be, libraries that lack support may as well confront the fact that they are not furnishing the kind of service required by the individuals whom they ought to reach." Something is wrong. It may be a combination of wrongs -- both from a lack of sufficient support and the wrong method of attack -- but whatever the cause, the community is suffering and will fall ^{far} short of a well rounded town if the library is allowed to fail. No more should the library be deprived of its rightful share of the income from the annual tax than should the public schools be cut short. The children would be cut out of their rightful heritage if either of the institutions should fail, and the university of the people would be destroyed if the library were closed. Mr. Carnegie had great faith in the public libraries. He at one time said, "My reasons for selecting public libraries being my belief, as Carlyle has recorded, that the true university of these days is a collection of books, and that thus such libraries are entitled to a first place as instruments for the elevation of the masses of the people."

Psycho-analysis might be introduced as a library subject -- for creative reading.

There is an indirect benefit derived from the many Carnegie gifts. Mr. Carnegie himself said that he did not wish to be

known for what he had given but for what he had induced others to give.

Always the greatest value of any gift of similar nature is not from the money value it may have, but in the civic interest and pride it arouses. So in many of the communities where a Carnegie library has been given, local interest has been created sufficient to add other worth while gifts.

And further, neighboring towns not so fortunate as to have a Carnegie library building, have been moved to secure one for themselves by other means. Often a local citizen has been inspired to do something for his own home town. Rivalry does wonders toward creating civic pride and if rightly directed can place a town on the highest of planes. No community should be without a library so if the desire to have a library building is flamed because a rival town is the proud possessor of one, it is a flame that can well be fanned.

The unparalled gifts of Mr. Carnegie for library buildings, did far more to create an interest in the library movement than any other one thing. This action of one man has given courage and hope to library enthusiasts.

So in our own state of Nebraska there are those towns, sixty-eight of them, which are most fortunate in having been recipients of the great benefactor, Andrew Carnegie. Recipients of a 'creative benevolence' as Mr. Stuart T. Sherman chose to name it.

There are those towns, twenty-one in all, which have been

blessed with a library building, the gift of a local philanthropist, or a group of public-spirited citizens. There is nothing more deserving of commendation. It will be recalled that Mr. Carnegie's first gift was a public library to his own town of Dunfermline, in Scotland.

There are still other communities without library buildings and so needful for adequate facilities. This last group is composed of towns having a library organization and a municipal levy but no library home. There are fifty-four of this class. Some of the towns are still regretting that the Carnegie fund is no more available for building purposes and still hoping that some enterprising citizen will be moved to contribute toward such a worthy cause. John Bright has a word just along this thought, "It is impossible for any man to bestow a greater benefit upon a young man than to give him access to books and a free library."

And there is that other large group where there are no libraries. There are no towns of over two thousand population where no library now exists but it is a long, long trail to that time when as in Massachusetts, every town (but one) will have a library. In fact that time will never be -- it would not be advisable. There are in Nebraska ninety-three counties and in twenty-one of these, there are today no libraries. The size of some of these counties is greater in square miles than the areas of several eastern states. Why, Cherry County with 5,979 square miles is considerably larger than Connecticut

with 4,965 square miles, or Delaware with 2,370 square miles, or Rhode Island with 1,248 square miles. While a group of six counties would practically cover New England, ^{and} Rhode Island and Delaware might play hide and seek in the spaces!

<u>COUNTY</u> (NEBR.)	<u>AREA</u>	<u>POPULATION</u> (1920)
Cherry	5979 sq. miles	11,753
Custer	2588	26,407
Holt	2393	17,151
Lincoln	2536	23,420
Sioux	2055	4,528
Sheridan	2469	9,625
Rhode Island	1248	604,397
Delaware	2370	223,003
Connecticut	4965	1,380,631
Pennsylvania	45126	8,720,017
Massachusetts	8266	3,852,356
Nebraska	77520	1,296,372

The population, it is true, is not dense but people as red-blooded as the people in Massachusetts or Rhode Island live there, and they call for service. What a field for county-extension along with several of the other counties where but one or two organized libraries now function. Why not? This is the next step to take -- we have the need and we have the law and we have no county libraries.

Nebraska was seventy-five years old in 1929. It is said the first seventy-five years are the hardest! Therefore, we will push out to greater years and they will be bigger and better than ever.

CARNEGIE LIBRARIES IN NEBRASKA (cont)

	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	ORGAN- IZED
PLAINVIEW																x							1908
PLATTSMOUTH																x							1886
PONCA												x											1910
RANDOLPH																	x						1918
RAVENNA																		x					1918
SCHUYLER											x												1909
SCOTTSBLUFF																					x		1917
SEWARD														x									1890
SHELTON														x									1907
SIDNEY																	x						1917
SOUTH OMAHA																							1904
SPENCER																x							1916
STANTON															x								1915
STROMSBURG																	x						1918
SUPERIOR								x															1884
SUTTON										x													1908
TECUMSEH							x																1887
TEKAMAH																x							1916
UNIVERSITY PLACE																x							1916
WAYNE													x										1903
WYMORE																			x				1917

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