

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Carnegie Public Library

and/or common Cabell County Public Library

2. Location

street & number 900 Fifth not for publication

city, town Huntington vicinity of congressional district Fourth

state West Virginia code county Cabell code 011

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u> </u> district	<u>X</u> public	<u>X</u> occupied	<u> </u> agriculture <u> </u> museum
<u>X</u> building(s)	<u> </u> private	<u> </u> unoccupied	<u> </u> commercial <u> </u> park
<u> </u> structure	<u> </u> both	<u> </u> work in progress	<u>X</u> educational <u> </u> private residence
<u> </u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u> </u> entertainment <u> </u> religious
<u> </u> object	<u> </u> in process	<u> </u> yes: restricted	<u> </u> government <u> </u> scientific
	<u> </u> being considered	<u>X</u> yes: unrestricted	<u> </u> industrial <u> </u> transportation
		<u> </u> no	<u> </u> military <u> </u> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Board of Directors, Cabell County Public Library

street & number 900 Fifth Avenue

city, town Huntington vicinity of state West Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cabell County Court House

street & number 8th Street and 4th Avenue

city, town Huntington state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☐ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Carnegie Public Library of Huntington, Cabell County, West Virginia, was built in 1902, in a style incorporating the then fashionable Beaux Arts classicism. Although the Huntington library building is modest in size compared to a famous counterpart, the New York Public Library by Carrere and Hastings (1895-1902), it nevertheless exhibits certain similarities of detail and proportion characterizing many public buildings of the period now rapidly disappearing from the streetscapes of late twentieth century America.

Precise symmetry and academically correct placement of classical detail distinguish the two major elevations of the Carnegie Library. The sense of mass is purveyed, in part, by rusticated raised basement carrying pedimented pavilions on the south (front) and west (side) elevations. The pedimented central pavilion of the front elevation is especially forceful in its conveyance of monumentality as seen in paired Ionic columns of its portico. Triangular pedimentation of the ground floor entrance tabernacle is echoed on a grand scale by the greater porticoed pediment articulated with raking cornices, acroteria, and a garland-enriched cartouche all fashioned of terra cotta.

The smooth, gray ashlar wall surfaces of the building are evenly divided by pilasters carrying an entablature carved with rondels and the names of classical and literary figures. The paneled wall surfaces thus created by the pilasters are filled with windows elaborately framed at the second level with shouldered stone trim and headed at the ground level with triangular pediments.

General overall condition of the exterior is good, though water erosion of upper wall surfaces and efflorescence appearing in the entablature may require possible future stabilizing or restoration efforts.

The interior of the library building was renovated in the 1930's under the direction of local architect Albert F. Tucker. Among significant interior features that survive are the large oaken double stairway with its fine newel posts and the large, broadly proportioned windows enriched with egg and dart moulding. The building also retains, for the most part, its original hardwood floors.

Constructed on the corner of what was called Government Square in Huntington, the monumentality of the building has been reduced in appearance by the construction of two buildings, to the rear and east side, that are of equal height. Nonetheless, the building's stature is still plainly evident from the front (south) and west elevations.

The Carnegie Public Library in Huntington, West Virginia, is a public building of local distinction, built at a time when Beaux Arts classicism was an architectural style at the height of popularity.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1902-03 Builder/Architect James B. Stewart, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Carnegie Public Library, located at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 9th Street in Huntington, Cabell County, West Virginia, stands as a significant example of Beaux Art Classicism in a small town setting.¹ It is also significant as an example of the philanthropy practiced by many of the late 19th century "robber barons"² and as an early center of educational activity in this part of the state.³

Explanatory Notes

1. As described in some depth in the Description (Part 7) the Carnegie Public Library in Huntington is a significant example of Beaux Art Classicism in a public building erected in a small town setting. The Library was constructed in 1902-03, from the plans of a prominent Huntington architect, James B. Stewart. At its completion, it was "the most outstanding edifice of which Huntington can boast", and was "the most pretentious building on Government Square". Even today, despite intrusions on the rear and east elevations as well as many nearby buildings of equal or larger proportions, the Library is one of Huntington's most striking buildings. In addition, it is felt by some individuals that the erection of such an imposing structure in what was then a relatively small city of 10,000 contributed to the rising prestige of Huntington that helped to raise the city to become West Virginia's largest municipality.

2. In 1901 the City of Huntington, indeed the entirety of Cabell County, had no public library as such. The only existing library was the one found in the First Congregational Church of Huntington, which had been founded primarily with books donated by various New England individuals and institutions, including the historic Winthrop Church of Charlestown, Massachusetts. In 1901 the famous industrialist-turned-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) offered to donate \$25,000 to the City of Huntington for the erection of a public library on condition that the city provide a lot and promise to provide \$2,500 annually for its maintenance and upkeep. The city immediately agreed. A lot on Government Square, 90 x 90 feet, was conveyed by the city to the Board of Education on February 18, 1902. As soon as the spring weather broke, construction began. In March of 1902 Mr. Carnegie agreed to make an additional gift of \$10,000.00, raising the cost of the building to \$35,000.00, with the Board of Education agreeing to raise their annual appropriation for maintenance from \$2,500.00 to \$3,500.00.

It took all summer and into the fall for workmen to excavate the basement and to lay the elaborate rusticated base and foundation (described in Part 7). A lavish cornerstone laying ceremony was held on November 14, 1902, and presided over by W.H.H. Holswade, President of the Board of Education, and Mayor H.C. Gordon of Huntington. Despite overcast skies, a large multitude turned out for the occasion.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Carnegie Public Library, Huntington, Cabell County, West Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The building was further enhanced when, at a meeting of the Board of Education on December 12, 1902, it was decided to veneer the rear wall and 40 feet of the east wall with stone rather than the original plan of using bricks and cemented into imitation stone.

On April 12, 1903, an Examiner from Carnegie's organization came to Huntington to check on the progress of the library. According to the Huntington Advertiser, the examiner was "very much pleased" with the progress of the building.

After nearly two years' labor, the Carnegie Public Library was completed in December of 1903 and formally dedicated in a lavish ceremony held on January 1, 1904.

3. The Carnegie Public Library opened its doors on January 1, 1904, with Miss Adrienne Burns as the first librarian. The library opened to the public with a mere 750 books on its shelves. By the time Miss Burns was replaced as librarian by Miss Lewis Harvey in 1908, the collection had grown to 6,000 volumes, many of them donated by the citizens of Huntington. Initially, the executive offices of the Board of Education were also located in the library building, but this situation did not endure long into the century's second decade.

In 1912 a juvenile Section was added to the library, which has gained in proportion over the years.

Miss Lewis Burns, second librarian, had the longest tenure of any Cabell County Librarian, and one of the longest in the State's history, her service spanning 35 years (1908-1943).

It has been said that Huntington has produced more Rhodes Scholars than any other city of its size in the United States. Certainly, the existence of a free public library has contributed in no small measure to the high degree of educational achievement of the citizens of Huntington.

The Carnegie Public Library is, therefore, significant, not only as a locally distinguished example of Beaux Art Classicism, but as an example of the effect of philanthropic activity on the educational affairs of a community. It is a building that has been not only a source of pride for Huntingtonians during this century, but one with which their lives have been intimately linked.

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Huntington Advertiser, Huntington, W. Va., 1902 through 1904; November 25, 1923, June 29, 1929; April 10, 1902.

Lewis, Virgil A. West Virginia Handbook, W. Va. Commission of Louisiana Purchase Exposition, 1904.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property One city lot.

Quadrangle name Huntington, Ohio-West Virginia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	7	3	7	4	0	0	0	4	2	5	3	1	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification The Carnegie Public Library stands on a parcel of land, 90' by 90', situated on Huntington City block 116, taking up portions of Lots 26, 27, and 28. The parcel is located on the corner of Fifth Ave., and Ninth Street.

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

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael J. Pauley, Historian; Rodney S. Collins, Architectural Historian
Historic Preservation Unit

organization W. VA. Department of Culture and History date July 30, 1979
Science and Cultural Center

street & number Capitol Complex telephone 304/348-0244

city or town Charleston state West Virginia 25305

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Clarence M. Moore

title Director, Historic Preservation Unit

date February 5, 1980

For HCPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest

date

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Carnegie Public Library, Huntington, Cabell County, West Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

Miller, Doris C. A Centennial History of Huntington. W. Va., Huntington, 1971

Wallace, George Seldon, Cabell County Annals and Families, Garrett & Massis,
Richmond, Virginia, 1935

Correspondence of the Carnegie Corporation of New York regarding the Huntington, W. Va.
Library, November 11, 1901 to December 22, 1902 (microfilm. box no. 14) Carnegie
Corporation of New York, 437 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022.



