NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Fairfield Carnegie Library

Other names/site number CY05-004

2. Location

Street & number 412 N. D Street — Not for publication [N/A]

City or town Fairfield — Vicinity [N/A]

State Nebraska Code NE County Clay Code 035 Zip code 68938

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [x] meets [] does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [x] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official — Date 10/12/01

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

[ ] entered in the National Register.
[ ] see continuation sheet.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register.
[ ] see continuation sheet.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register.
[ ] other, (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper — Date of Action

printed on recycled paper

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ___ Private
- X Public-local
- ___ Public-state
- ___ Public-federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- X Building(s)
- ___ District
- ___ Site
- ___ Structure
- ___ Object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/Library

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Public Library/Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/Prairie vernacular

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Concrete
Walls Brick
Roof Asphalt shingle
Other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

X **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

___ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

X **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

___ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

___ **A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

___ **B** Removed from its original location.

___ **C** A birthplace or a grave.

___ **D** A cemetery.

___ **E** A reconstructed building, object, or structure.

___ **F** A commemorative property.

___ **G** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education

Architecture

Period of Significance
1913-1951

Significant Dates
1913

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
R.W. Grant -- Architect

T.J. Fowler, Jr. -- Builder

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

___ Previously listed in the National Register

___ Previously determined eligible by the National Register

___ Designated a National Historic Landmark

___ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____.

Primary location for additional data:

X State Historic Preservation Office

___ Other State agency

___ Federal agency

___ Local Government

___ University

X Other
Name of repository: Fairfield Public Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	575940	4475790	3.			
2.				4.			

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bill Callahan
organization Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office date 8-17-01
street & number 1500 R Street, Box 82554 telephone 402.471.4788
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501-2554

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title City of Fairfield
street & number 401 N. D Street telephone 402.726.2478
city or town Fairfield state NE zip code 68938

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Description

Fairfield, Nebraska (2000 pop. 467) is located in the southwest quadrant of Clay County, approximately ten miles southwest of Clay Center, the Clay County (2000 pop. 7,039) seat. Clay County is in southeast Nebraska, and Fairfield is approximately 100 miles southwest of Lincoln, the state capital. This area of the state is defined by fertile rolling hills and a primarily agricultural economy. Fairfield is just northeast of the Little Blue River Valley, which also marks the location of the historic Pony Express and Oregon Trail routes through this part of Nebraska. Fairfield is laid out in a grid pattern, with a central business district creating a distinct, linear north-south town core. The Fairfield Carnegie Library is located on the northeast end of the central business district, on the edge of a residential area.

The Fairfield Carnegie Library was constructed in 1913. The Library was designed by prolific Beatrice, Nebraska architect R.W. Grant, and was constructed by local contractor T.J. Fowler Jr. Grant also designed the Samuel D. Kilpatrick House in Beatrice (NRHP1984) as well as Carnegie libraries in Tekamah (Burt County) and Geneva (Fillmore County).

The Library is a one-story dark brick structure with a raised basement. The bricks are slightly variegated in color, giving a lighter appearance to a building that would have otherwise had a monolithic and austere overall look. The Fairfield Carnegie Library's roof is hipped, covered with asphalt shingles, and has prominent overhanging eaves with exposed rafters.

The structure is rectangular in form, approximately 25'x 48'; and the primary facade of the building faces west. The west entry projects from the wall approximately nine feet, and is approximately twelve feet in width. The entry door is reached by three broad concrete steps flanked by low, rectangular brick pedestals, which are in turn capped by stone.

The entry door is a modern metal construction placed within the historic opening, and is flanked by intact sidelights. Cross-bucked divided light transom windows surmount the door and sidelights. A stone pediment with "Public Library" carved into it crowns the entryway. A capital letter "C" (for Carnegie) is carved above the "L" in "Library."

A pair of 1/1 wood double hung windows are located north and south of the entryway. Each of these windows is capped by a stone belt course, which is in turn topped by cross-bucked divided light transom windows directly over the main windows. The stone beltcourse continues around the building on all four facades, and assists in breaking up what would otherwise be monolithic brick facades. Each pair of windows has a slender stone sill. Below each window, smaller 1/1 double hung windows open into the raised basement. This pattern: transom, beltcourse, window, sill and basement window, is followed symmetrically around all four facades of the building.

The north façade is punctured by four windows: main floor and basement. The main floor windows are covered with metal siding, but the historic wood double hung windows remain beneath the metal. The north side basement windows are 1/1 wood double hung, and open into a museum space. The south façade has an identical arrangement, however the main floor windows are not covered.

The rear (east) side of the building faces a vacant lot. The rear of the Library repeats the fenestration of the rest of the building with six symmetrically placed windows, transoms, the beltcourse, sills and basement windows. The exception is the southern window, which is placed above the rear entry to the building. The rear entry is enclosed, and enters into the basement. A stout brick chimney is adjacent just to the north of the rear entry, and pierces the roof at the eave.

The primary entrance to the building opens into a small foyer, which terminates with a split stairway. The south stair leads to the basement; the north stair leads to the main floor of the Library. The foyer, interior doors, stairs and handrails are

intact from the date of the Library's construction. The basement, which historically was used for a lecture hall, "Ladies Rest Room," lavatories and a furnace room, is currently used as a museum, "alumni room," lavatories and a furnace room (see floor plan). All doors and trim are intact from the date of construction.

Remarkably, the upstairs is still used, with an unaltered floor plan, as the local public library. The main room is approximately 25'X38' and is crammed, floor to ceiling, with books, bookcases and smallish reading areas. At some unrecorded date, the ceiling was lowered, but otherwise the interior is intact from its date of construction.

Overall, the Fairfield Carnegie Library is virtually intact from its date of construction. This integrity extends to its use. Carnegie libraries that remain libraries without large additions or significant alterations are very rare in Nebraska. In fact, an unscientific 2001 NEHSPO office poll indicates that this condition of overall physical integrity and use may in fact be unique in the state.

According to the Multiple Property Document *Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922* "A high degree of historic architectural integrity will be required of all potentially eligible Carnegie Libraries under Criterion C. Of primary importance are the exterior plan and style, with secondary emphasis on the building materials and interior layout." (Sec. F, IV, P.1) The very minor changes made to the Fairfield Carnegie Library (two covered windows on the north façade, new entry door) do not preclude its eligibility under Criterion C. The MPD also states: "Under Criteria A and B, where significance is derived from associations with important persons or events, integrity must be sufficient to convey the original function and design of the building." (Sec. F, IV, p. 1) The overall physical integrity and current use of the Fairfield Carnegie Library is truly striking, and the building easily passes the test for significance under Criterion A, as a building that conveys the historic nature and significance of Carnegie libraries.

Statement of Significance

The Fairfield Carnegie Library meets registration requirements of the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, *Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922*. The Fairfield Carnegie Library is significantly associated with the historic context *Educational Enrichment: Carnegie Libraries.* The Library is locally significant in the area of education as an important example of a Carnegie Library. Additionally, the Fairfield Carnegie Library meets the Multiple Property document's criteria for listing under Criterion C for architectural significance. The building's period of significance is derived from the year the Library was built, 1913, through 1951, fifty years before the date of this nomination.

In 1912, Dr. G.H. Bentz of Fairfield circulated a petition requesting that the City of Fairfield (1920 pop. 784) construct a public library. Dr. Bentz petition was successful, for in October of 1912 the Fairfield city council adopted an ordinance authorizing the construction of a library and a fund- raising subscription for the purchase of a site for its construction. [1] The local paper opined that a library was a good idea because "Well read minds support wholesome laws. True intelligence elevates the morals of a community. Good books of easy access rid the street corners of many loafers. With plenty of interesting books at hand...(a library) will do much towards eradicating many prominent evils and correcting many crooked and perverse ways." [2] The City Council pursued funding from the Carnegie Foundation for construction of the library. For their part, the Council levied a mill tax in order to raise $600 annually for maintenance and expenses. $1,700 was raised locally, and the Carnegie Foundation granted the City $6,000 for the construction of the library.[3]

Construction bids were opened on March 10, 1913 and Fairfield builder Thomas Fowler Jr. was awarded the contract. Prominent and prolific Beatrice architect R.W. Grant was hired as the building architect.[4] Carnegie libraries appear to have been somewhat of a specialty for Grant, as he is also the architect of record for the Tekamah and Geneva Carnegies. Aside from the Fairfield library's primary function as an "...adult school."[5] the library was to have "...a large roomy basement which will be divided into several rooms...for use of the City Council, Firemen, public meetings of all kinds for our citizens and countrymen..."[6] and a Rest Room for ..."ladies rest and comfort ." [7]

The Grand Officers of the Knights of Pythias laid the corner stone for the new Fairfield Public Library on July 7, 1913. [8] Construction was completed by December of 1913, and the grand opening and dedication of the library was held on

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[1] Fairfield Auxiliary "Local Library History Given" December 19, 1935
[2] Fairfield Auxiliary September 4, 1912
[3] Fairfield Auxiliary "Local Library History Given" December 19, 1935 and "Fairfield Ambition for a Public Library is Realized" undated personal history compiled by E.H. Lewis
[4] Ibid
[5] Fairfield Auxiliary, October 2, 1912
[6] Fairfield Auxiliary, January 13, 1913
[7] Fairfield Auxiliary, September 4, 1912
[8] Fairfield Auxiliary, December 19, 1935 and Lewis history

January 12, 1914. [9] The Fairfield Carnegie Library has remained in use as a public library, virtually unaltered, since that date.

As in so many other communities around the country, Fairfield did not have a sole-use public library until the Carnegie Foundation funded its construction. The largesse of the Carnegie Foundation assisted in the creation of public library systems that continue to have profound community impacts to this day. Many small communities are served by well-established public libraries whose existence, it may be argued, is founded upon an original gift by the Carnegie Foundation.

According to the Multiple Property Document *Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922* "The construction of library buildings in Nebraska communities had an impact beyond the provision of reading material to the public." (Sec. E, P.3) The MPD continues: "The buildings were designed to provide facilities for other education activities as well as the library." (Sec. E, P.3) Carnegie libraries served an educational function beyond their use as book repositories, a function that is maintained by most public libraries today. The gift of Carnegie libraries helped create our system of educationally-oriented, small town public library systems. The Fairfield Carnegie Library is one such building that, in many ways, became a foundation of community life.

The MPD further states "A high degree of historic architectural integrity will be required of all potentially eligible Carnegie Libraries under Criterion C. Of primary importance are the exterior plan and style, with secondary emphasis on the building materials and interior layout." (Sec. F, IV, P.1) The very minor changes made to the Fairfield Carnegie Library (two covered windows on the north façade, new entry door) do not preclude its eligibility under Criterion C as specified in the MPD.

[9] Dedication Program of the Fairfield Public Library, January 12, 1913

Bibliography

Dedication Program of the Fairfield Public Library, January 12, 1913. Copy located in NESHPO files

Fairfield Auxiliary September 4, 1912

Fairfield Auxiliary, October 2, 1912

Fairfield Auxiliary, December 4, 1912

Fairfield Auxiliary, January 13, 1913

Fairfield Auxiliary, December 19, 1935

Fimple, Kathleen, *Carnegie Libraries in Nebraska, 1899 to 1922.* National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. 1990, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office

Kay, John, et al. *Nebraska Historic Buildings Reconnaissance Survey, Final Report of Clay County, Nebraska.* 1991, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office.

Lewis, E.H. "Fairfield Ambition for a Public Library is Realized" undated personal history. Copy located in NESHPO files

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 16, 17 and 18, Block 13, Original Town of Fairfield, Clay County, Nebraska.

Boundary Justification

Boundary includes parcel of land historically associated with the Fairfield Carnegie Library.

All photos by Bill Callahan, 2001, original negatives at NeSHPO

Primary façade – looking east

Primary façade looking east

Entablature above primary entrance looking east

Primary façade, window detail, looking northeast

View of rear looking southwest

View of rear looking northwest

Interior

Interior