

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**SENT TO D.C.**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

3-25-96

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 Streator Public Library

other names/site number N/A

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 130 South Park Street not for publication \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Streator vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
state Illinois code IL county LaSalle code 099 zip code 61364

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide  locally. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William C. Wheeler /SHO  
Signature of certifying official

3-25-96  
Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
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 commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

=====  
4. National Park Service Certification  
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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

=====  
5. Classification  
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- \_\_\_\_\_ private
- public-local
- \_\_\_\_\_ public-State
- \_\_\_\_\_ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ district
- \_\_\_\_\_ site
- \_\_\_\_\_ structure
- \_\_\_\_\_ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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

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6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education  
Social

Sub: Library  
Meeting Hall

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education

Sub: Library

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone  
roof Synthetics  
walls Brick  
Terra Cotta  
other \_\_\_\_\_

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

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8. Statement of Significance

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

- 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.
- 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.)

- 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Education  
Social History

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Period of Significance 1903-1946

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Significant Dates 1903

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Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

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Architect/Builder Patton and Miller, Architects

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 of Additional Data  
 State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: Streator Public Library, Streator, Illinois

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 10. Geographical Data  
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Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	345990	4553430	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 Jane Farero, Janice Hart, Jane Hart, William Bills, Brian Kmetz

organization Streator Public Library Board date January 20, 1996

street & number 130 South Park Street telephone 815-672-5665

city or town Streator state IL zip code 61364

=====  
 Additional Documentation  
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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 Streator Public Library Board

street & number 130 South Park Street

telephone 815-672-5665

city or town Streator

state IL zip code 61364  
=====

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine 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 (16 U.S.C. 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.

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Streator Public Library

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### 7. Narrative Description

The Streator Public Library was designed by Patton and Miller, architects from Chicago. Plans and specifications were completed September 20, 1901 and construction work started in March 1902. The building was completed in early January of 1903 and formally dedicated on January 31, 1903.

The Streator Public Library is located on the northwest corner of Park Street (State Route 23 North) and Bridge Street (State Route 18 East). The street address is 130 South Park Street and the legal description is Lots 16 and 17, Block 22, in the Original Town of Streator. The Streator Public Library is one block south of Main Street, the center of Streator's business district and, is bordered on all sides by business or commercial establishments. The City of Streator is approximately 18 miles south of Ottawa, Illinois.

The library lot is 106 feet 8 inches wide and 140 feet deep. The building is basically a Greek cross shape 80 feet 8 inches wide and 73 feet 6 inches deep. With indents at the four corners, the net area is 5,100 square feet. The front of the building faces Park Street and is located 19 feet from the front property line. There is a paved parking area approximately 22 feet by 100 feet facing the alley at the rear of the property. The building has a raised basement making the first floor 6 feet above exterior grade. It is 14 feet 2 inches from the first to second floor and with exception of the stack area, the second floor ceiling is 12 feet 2 inches high. In the center of the building is the rotunda with a dome 24 feet in diameter. The interior high point of the dome is 35 feet above the first floor and it is an additional 12 feet to the exterior high point. Originally the dome was covered with metal shingles with a sheet metal skylight in the center. In 1930 this material was removed and replaced with black asphalt shingles. With the exception of the dome, the library roof is flat. Exterior walls and load-bearing interior walls are masonry construction. Wood is used for non load-bearing partitions, floor joists, and all roof framing. Steel beams and columns are used at wall openings.

The architects skillfully combined brick, stone and terra cotta into a very attractive Classical Revival style building. Exterior walls are smooth Bedford stone from exterior grade to the underside of first story windows. It is also used for columns, pilasters, window sills and trim, entrance steps and platform. The brick, laid in a Flemish bond, is repressed paving brick 2-3/4 inches by 8 inches and was manufactured in Streator.

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There are two large brick chimneys 9 feet 6 inches x 3 feet approximately 16 feet from the rear wall and 18 feet from the side walls. The south chimney services two fireplaces in the south wing and the north chimney services two fireplaces in the north wing plus the library heating system. In 1994 the top three feet of the north chimney was completely rebuilt. The roof is wood construction with sufficient slope to insure proper drainage. The gutter is inside the parapet wall and down spouts are in the exterior masonry walls. The roof was replaced in 1995 with a single ply roofing system.

A decorative terra cotta cornice and brick and terra cotta parapet walls encircle the building. The terra cotta cornice stops at the northwest corner of the building. Beginning at the bottom of the cornice is a frieze of smooth panels resembling stone blocks with a raised stringcourse. The terra cotta lintels of the second story windows extend into the cornice. Directly above is a fretwork pattern, egg and dart molding, modillions, and a projecting stringcourse. Above the stringcourse are smooth terra cotta resembling cut stone blocks, a brick parapet, and a terra cotta coping. Directly above the recessed front entryway at the level of the brick parapet is a decorative terra cotta panel with swags, rosettes, foliate moldings, and a centered round ball. On either side of this panel are terra cotta balusters with recessed terra cotta panels behind.

At the front east entrance are twelve Bedford stone steps twenty-four feet long, one foot two inches wide and approximately six inches high. On each side of the steps there are massive stone wing walls, three feet wide, eleven feet long and five feet high at the east end. There is a stone platform at the top of the steps. This area extends 3 feet 10 inches past the face of the building resulting in a recessed entry way 24 feet long, 20 feet high and 3 feet 10 inches deep. Support for the ceiling and wall above are two, 24-inch diameter stone columns, with matching flat stone pilasters at each end. The columns have Ionic capitals. Resting on the columns and pilasters are a series of angled channels and beams that are hidden by the terra cotta. The entryway is trimmed with flat stone pilasters directly behind the columns and stone inserts at the interior corners running the height of the recess. Originally the front entrance was a pair of wood doors 30 inches by 84 inches by 2-1/4 inches. The doors and hardware deteriorated to the point they were no longer usable and in 1988 were replaced with a single dark bronze coated 36-inch aluminum door with sidelights. There is a stone border on each side of the doorway and a stone pediment above. Between the top of doorway and pediment is a sign "Public Library."



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Streator Public Library

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When the Streator Public Library was constructed in 1902 almost all windows would open. The addition of air handling units and air conditioning has changed the ventilation requirements. Today windows not required for proper operation of the air handling equipment have been sealed or operating hardware has not been maintained. Almost all windows have aluminum storm windows. The second story windows in the stack area have wood storm sash with the same configuration as the existing window and installed inside the window. Windows on the first story east and south elevations have flat stone lintels with keystones. Above the windows on the second story east elevation are terra cotta keystones and a cornice with stringcourse. Windows on the first story north and west elevations have brick lintels. All windows have stone sills.

Starting with the front (east) side basement elevation, there are three windows 3 feet 8 inches by 3 feet 8 inches. These windows are bottom hinged and swing in. There are four large windows on the first floor, two on each side of the entryway. Each window is plate glass approximately 50 x 68 inches set in wood sash. The lower sash were designed to act as the bottom section of a double-hung window, but no longer open. The top section is 24 inches high with 24 panes of triangular shaped art glass. There are 20 windows of this type in the library. Four of the top sections have been converted to transoms and open with standard transom hardware. On each side of the entrance door and about three feet above the first floor are small, square wood windows protected with decorative wrought iron grills. Above these windows are brick panels and windows. These windows are 3 feet 8 inches by 2 feet 4 four inches with 12 triangular panes of art glass. These windows are bottom hinged and swing in. In the recessed entry at the second story level there are two fixed 12-pane units, 4 feet by 5 feet and two fixed 8-pane units, 2 feet by 5 feet. The eight-pane windows are centered above the front doorway. There are four additional second story windows outside the recess. These are 9-pane units, 4 feet by 5 feet. Two of the windows are fixed and two are bottom hinged that swing in.

The south elevation has a central three-bay extension to the south. Two stone pilasters with Ionic capitals divide the recessed three bays. The pilasters rise from the stone foundation at the first story to the cornice above the second story. On the south wall basement elevation are four double-hung windows 78 inches high and from 48 to 60 inches wide. The bottom of the windows is 2 feet 4 inches below grade. There are also storm windows and wire mesh for protection. There is one hopper window 50 inches by 46 inches. At the first story level are five large windows, with plate glass varying from 46

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Streator Public Library

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to 54 inches wide and 68 inches high. Three windows are located in the three-bay extension to the south with one window on each side of the extension. They are similar to the large windows on the east elevation. Four of these windows have metal awnings. At the second story south extension in the central bay is a twelve-pane window. On either side of this window are nine-pane windows. A nine-pane window is located on each side of the south extension.

The west elevation has a central five-bay extension to the west. The basement has five double-hung windows and two hopper units. The first story west extension has five large double-hung windows, similar to the first story windows on the south and east elevations. On either side of the west extension are single large double-hung windows. On the second story west extension are four, nine-pane windows with a central window opening that has been converted to a vent. On either side of the west extension are single nine-pane windows.

The north elevation has a central three-bay extension to the north. The north basement elevation originally had four hopper windows. Three of these have been closed in leaving one unit 50 inches by 46 inches. There is also an outside concrete stairwell with a stairway from grade to the basement boiler room. The entrance to the boiler room is a pair of wood doors 30 inches by 96 inches. The first and second story windows are identical to the south elevation. The first story extension has three large double-hung windows. Single large windows are located on either side of the extension. Centered on the second story extension is a twelve-pane window. On either side of this window are nine-pane windows. A nine-pane window is located on either side of the north extension.

### Interior

Directly inside the east entrance is a 9 feet 6 inch by 5 feet 6 inch vestibule. There are two oak stairways from the vestibule to the basement. Stairs on the right (north) lead to the public rest rooms and furnace room in the basement. Stairs on the left (south) lead to storage areas in the basement. The vestibule is separated from the front hall by a pair of oak doors 30 inches by 84 inches. In the front hall are the stairs to the second floor. Stairs on each side of the front hall lead to a landing located directly above the vestibule, with a single stairway from the landing to the second floor. The stairways are oak with square newel posts and turned balusters. The hall floor is mosaic tile.

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Directly west of the hall is the rotunda (delivery room) which is 24 feet by 24 feet with four identical openings 21 feet 2 inches wide by 11 feet high. To support the walls and floors above there are L-shaped piers at each corner with two steel columns in each wall. Steel columns are enclosed inside 15 inch diameter plaster columns. The columns have Ionic capitals. Above the columns and pilasters is a series of plaster moldings with egg and dart molding and fretwork patterns. A smooth plaster wall runs above these moldings. Above is a plaster cornice with egg and dart molding and dentils. Three large murals are located on the second story rotunda. On the north wall is William Shakespeare surrounded by characters from his plays. On the west wall is Henry Wadsworth Longfellow surrounded with characters from his work "Song of Hiawatha". On the south wall Socrates is teaching some of his students. The oil paintings were painted by Gustav Alfred Fuchs and installed in 1905. The east wall is open with a metal and wood railing separating the rotunda from the second story stair hall. The base of the dome is encircled by stud lighting. Above the stud lighting are dentils and egg and dart moldings. The dome ceiling has coffered panels with bead and reel moldings and rosettes.

The circulation desk is near the west side of the rotunda. From the circulation desk the librarian can view the main entrance, the reference and adult reading room, and children's reading room. Directly behind the librarian are the first floor stacks and stairs to the stacks on the mezzanine level. The rotunda floor is carpeted.

North of the rotunda is the reference and adult reading room. This room is 25 feet 4 inches by 40 feet with a metal ceiling with coffered panels, plaster walls and carpet floor. A fireplace centered on the west wall is 8 feet wide, 4 feet 8 inches to top of the lower mantel and 9 feet 6 inches to top of the upper mantel. The hearth and facing are glazed brick with oak mantels and trim. A portrait of Andrew Carnegie is centered in the panel between the lower and upper mantel. Tables in the reading room date back to the original construction and are in excellent condition. East of the reference room is the 10 feet 10 inch by 12 feet 6 inch office of the head librarian.

South of the rotunda is the 25 feet by 40 feet children's reading room. The ceiling, wall and floor construction is the same as the reference room. A fireplace is centered on the west wall with the same dimensions and construction details as the fireplace in the reference room. A portion of this room is also a stack area for children's literature. East

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of the children's reading room is a 10 feet 10 inch by 12 feet 6 inch librarian's room, This room contains facilities for use of the library employees.

Directly behind the circulation desk are the first floor stacks. In 1968 a mezzanine floor was constructed just above the first floor stacks almost doubling the stack area. A book lift was also installed to move items from the first floor to the mezzanine. The mezzanine floor cuts through the existing first floor windows. To preserve the integrity of the exterior appearance, interior window wells 8 inches deep and the width of the window were constructed at each opening. A tubular steel railing with oak panels was installed around each opening. There is also a stairway from the first floor to the mezzanine with a solid oak railing and finished with a tubular steel top rail. To make the mezzanine more accessible two short flights of stairs and doors were installed connecting the mezzanine to the second floor high school room and magazine/meeting room. Plans for a mezzanine in the stacks area were included in the original blueprints for the building but was not built due to lack of funding. The mezzanine only extends over the stacks area.

The second story balcony landing leads to the high school room on the north side and a meeting room on the south. The high school room is 25 feet by 40 feet and is directly above the adult reference room. The room has a metal ceiling with coffered panels, plastered walls and vinyl tile floor. The walls are lined with shelving filled with books and reference materials to meet the needs of the high school student. A fireplace on the west wall, with the exception of a less detailed mantel, is almost identical to the one in the reference room below. This room contains non-fiction and classic books as well as magazines. Other uses of the room are for children's story hours, video tape and television facilities for community college students and tutoring. To the east of this room is a 10 feet 10 inch by 12 feet 6 inch cataloging room. Here books are received, cataloged and prepared for circulation.

Directly above the children's reading room is a large room 25 feet by 40 feet that has changed little since the construction of the library. Floors are covered with rolled cork, walls are plaster and ceilings are metal with coffered panels. With the exception of a gas heating unit the fireplace on the west wall is similar to one in the high school room. The room is used for storage of back issues of periodicals, as a general meeting room, and for the children's story hour. To the east is a small room with wood floors and

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plastered walls and ceilings. This room is used for storage of reference information and miscellaneous items pertaining to the early history of Streator.

Except for new toilet rooms with hallway and stairs to first floor, the basement is basically an unfinished storage area. The building uses steam heat that was originally generated with a hand fired coal furnace. This was later changed to a stoker fired unit and then to oil fired. About 1980 it was changed to gas heat that is currently in use.

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## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Streator Public Library in Streator, Illinois, is locally significant for Criterion A for education in providing library services to the citizens of Streator and the surrounding areas from 1903, the year the library opened, until 1946, the fifty year cut-off for the National Register of Historic Places. The Streator Public Library helped to contribute to the educational development of Streator's residents by providing books, materials, information and a meeting place. The Streator Public Library is also locally significant for Criterion A for social history in providing a centralized meeting place for fraternal, social, educational, and service groups during the period of significance. Meetings and events held at the library by these groups contributed to the social development of Streator's citizens who participated in these events. The Streator Public Library meets the requirements of the type "Carnegie Library" as defined in the approved Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Illinois Carnegie Libraries."

The Streator Public Library is a result of the generosity of Andrew Carnegie. Funds for the construction of libraries were provided by Carnegie during the years from 1898 to 1919 when there was an increased growth in the number of free public libraries and library service. However, the interest in books and a library was a great concern for the community of Streator long before the time of Mr. Carnegie.

To better understand the community of Streator it is important to examine its origins. As early as 1697, when traveling with the explorer La Salle, the Belgian missionary Louis Hennepin had noticed coal along the Illinois River. His book about America, published the same year, contained a map showing "charbon de terre" near the site of Ottawa. It is one of the first written records of the great northern Illinois coal field. The Indians that inhabited the area made little use of the coal. White settlers ignored it also as long as they had a good supply of wood. In the Streator region, however, the original timber began to give out in the 1850's and people had to consider other forms of fuel. Luckily, the early pioneers had settled over an extremely rich coal field.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1860's English, Welsh, and Scottish miners began to move into the Streator area to mine the coal. This increase in population encouraged a few entrepreneurs. Following the Civil War, samples of coal, which was being produced on a small scale, were sent to Worthy L. Streator, a physician and investor from Cleveland. Dr. Streator and a group of businessmen formed the Vermillion Coal Company. A Civil

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War veteran, Colonel Ralph Plumb, was hired to head their operations in Illinois. Col. Plumb came to the little town, then called Unionville, in January, 1866, with instructions to purchase and develop 4000 acres of coal lands.<sup>2</sup> For a number of years coal was king. In 1885, Streator produced more coal than any other town in the Midwest. Three thousand men worked in the twenty plus mines, digging out a million tons of coal a year.<sup>3</sup>

The decade following the close of the Civil War saw a vast proliferation of railroad construction in America. The coal industry brought the first railroad to Unionville in 1867. Unionville officially became Streator on November 26, 1867, being named after Dr. Streator. Before long, Streator had five major railroads radiating in all directions. It had become a rail center surpassed in the state only by Chicago, East St. Louis and Peoria. The Santa Fe Railroad had a branch line in addition to its main line, and the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad had two branches. This gave Streator a total of seven distinct rail lines.<sup>4</sup> The additions of the railroads brought more people to the community and fostered a need for a library.

On November 15, 1871, several men of the community held a public meeting at Park Presbyterian Church. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the formation of a library association. At that time a committee was appointed to draft a constitution for such an organization. A month later they presented a draft of the constitution for what was to become the Streator Library Association.

Officers were elected, including Samuel W. Plumb as president and C. F. Morse as librarian. Stock was sold for \$2.50 per share.<sup>5</sup> Donors of books were allowed to be credited with stock equal to the value of books donated. Each stockholder was to be assessed a fee of fifty cents per year as an additional source of revenue.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. F. D. Dalton offered the use of his room over the Streator Bank on South Bloomington Street as a place to house the newly formed library. The library was ready for use by the public in 1872. The hours of operation were from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. on Tuesdays and 3:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. on Saturdays.<sup>7</sup> After a while, the book case containing the books of the Library Association was moved to the side of Dr. Evans' desk in Gage and Haskell's Store. A later move was made to the office of Mr. H. N. Ryon.<sup>8</sup>

The Streator Library Association existed for only four years. When the association ended in 1875, there were approximately 236 books in the collection. For the next two

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years, Oscar and Charles Ryon assumed the duties of librarians and made books available to those who wanted to use them.

In 1876, Mrs. Mary LeRoy, wife of the owner of the Free Press, the local newspaper, proposed to a group of ladies that they form a society to purchase books for their use. Mrs. G. L. Richards called a meeting at her home, with the result being the formation of the Ladies Library Association.<sup>9</sup> Their constitution called for a \$1.00 per year membership fee that would entitle members to check out books. Mrs. Richards was elected president and Mrs. LeRoy was elected secretary. Mrs. LeRoy continued in the position for as long as the Ladies Library Association existed. She was later elected secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Streator Public Library when it became a reality.<sup>10</sup>

Ten women and six men were admitted as members of this second library association. Socials, concerts and other forms of entertainment were held every two weeks to raise money to purchase books and a bookcase. These items were placed in Hattenhauer's Drug Store. Miss Emma Woods served as the librarian.

In February of 1877, Dr. Evans called a meeting of the stockholders of the Streator Library Association. The members agreed to legally transfer their books, approximately 235, to the Ladies Library Association.<sup>11</sup> The new association rented Evans Hall for a year, then moved to Lomasney Hall, where they decorated and furnished a reading room. The small stage was used for evening entertainment, the May Day Festival, dances, and lectures to raise money to support the library. Additional books were purchased, and individual supporters added books to the collection.

When the Plumb Opera House block was built, Mrs. Ralph Plumb provided the front rooms over Hershey's Drug Store for the Ladies Library Association's use. Heat and rent were provided free of charge. At a later date, electricity was provided, and the room was decorated at no cost.<sup>12</sup> Over the next twenty-one years, the women of the community helped the library grow from 276 volumes to nearly 5000 volumes.<sup>13</sup>

In the 1880's clay and shale were discovered in the area. It was the ideal combination for making brick and tile. The clay was found near the surface of the ground and the shale bed laid only 6 to 15 feet below the ground surface and stretched for over 20,000 acres.<sup>14</sup> Also in the 1880's silica sand was discovered. This was a type of sand



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Streator Public Library

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which could produce a good quality glass product. The glass industry caught on rapidly. The first glass factory, the Window Glass Company, was opened in 1880.<sup>15</sup>

As the community continued to grow and its schools expanded, women in the community recognized a need for a free library. With support from various clubs and public-spirited citizens, the city was persuaded to pass an ordinance on September 22, 1898, which would tax property owners in order to provide funding for a free library.

As the need for an expanded public library grew, interested citizens explored the possibility of seeking aid from a well-known philanthropist. Andrew Carnegie's reputation for philanthropy flourished during the years 1898 to 1919, when he generously offered grants for building construction to any community that would provide a site and agree to tax itself for support.<sup>16</sup> Mr. Carnegie, lacking a formal education, felt access to books from private libraries provided him with an education. During what was called the "wholesale period" of Carnegie's endowment, Carnegie gave \$39,172,981 to 1,406 communities in the United States for the construction of buildings to be used exclusively as libraries. The majority of grants during this "wholesale period" were each \$10,000 or less, with the next largest frequency being between \$10,000 and \$20,000. Grants were made to communities in 46 states, with the majority going to towns in the Midwest.<sup>17</sup> Additional information on Illinois Carnegie libraries can be found in the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Illinois Carnegie Libraries," by Karen E. Schnell.

Andrew Carnegie was a personal friend of Col. Ralph Plumb, who had been instrumental in Streator's growth and development. Col. Plumb initiated correspondence with Andrew Carnegie and arranged the meeting regarding finances for a public library building to be built in Streator. Col. Plumb sent his nephew, Fawcett Plumb, to Washington and New York when Col. Plumb was not able to make the trip because of health reasons. He began his trip by securing letters from U. S. Senator Shelby Cullom in Washington and then went to New York to visit Carnegie at his home. He presented the letters, and soon Carnegie appeared. Plumb's encounter with Carnegie was brief and to the point. When Plumb explained his cause, Carnegie asked only a few questions as he looked over the data, and replied, "I believe you ought to have a \$25,000 building." "We asked for \$35,000," said Mr. Plumb. "You can have it," answered Mr. Carnegie. That 25 minute conference was the beginning of the creation of the library.<sup>18</sup> This figure of \$35,000 was considerably higher than most grants given during the "wholesale" period of library philanthropy.

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Streator Public Library

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When allotting the money, Carnegie set only two stipulations. They were that the city buy the building site and set aside a yearly sum to meet expenses. On March 11, 1901, the Streator City Council voted to build the library in the city park. A storm of public protest about the city park site led to a citywide election, and the proposal was defeated. The library board then chose the present site at 130 South Park Street. The city council voted \$6,000 for purchase of the lot and hired the Chicago architectural firm of Patton and Miller to design the library. They were known for their many library designs and are known to have designed at least 80 libraries, 17 of them in Illinois. Among these are the Danville Public Library and the Buffalo Township Public Library in Polo, Illinois, which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>19</sup>

Construction of the building began on May 2, 1902. The Streator Public Library opened at 9:00 A.M. on January 21, 1903. "The 'honor' of taking the first book belongs to James Brooks who, at 9:30 o'clock, was given the book, Roosevelt's 'New York'."<sup>20</sup> The dedication of the library was held on January 30, 1903.<sup>21</sup> "The new Library is handed over to the city with highly interesting ceremony. Due to Col. Ralph Plumb's failing health, he asked Mr. Murdock to read the speech he had prepared: 'The Meaning of the Gift'. The evening closed with a song by the Alpha Quartet. It was sung from the balcony and the vocal effect was wonderful. After the close of the exercises, there was a commingling of the crowd and exchange of congratulations on the success of an event that will be memorable in Streator's history."<sup>22</sup>

By 1912, the library had a collection of 16,000 volumes, including works of current literature as well as volumes on art, science, poetry, and philosophy. The city had appropriated \$3500 per year for its support. "An ever increasing demand on the library is from the pupils of the public schools, and every help and assistance is given by the purchase of reference and other needed books. It is also much used by young men preparing for mechanical occupations. There is a good reading room containing a plentiful supply of magazines, journals and daily papers, which is well patronized."<sup>23</sup>

Streator in 1912 was a booming prosperous city with 14 coal mines, 4 shale and brick factories making tile and brick that employed over 600 men, a bottle factory that employed 1800, and two glass companies. Its population was at 18,000. The community had seven school buildings.

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Streator Public Library

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The Streator Library, at its inception, served as a social institution for the community. Its role of providing services to meet the educational and cultural needs of the community was very evident. Books and services were made available to Streator residents, and space was provided for local clubs and organizations to meet. Throughout the years, various groups, including the Daughters of the American Revolution, American Red Cross, International Order of King's Daughters groups, Women's Christian Temperance Union, LaSalle County Home Bureau, and local study clubs have used the library for meetings.

In 1919, Mrs. H. W. Lukins founded "The Children's Hour" at the library. Story hours are still held today for children in the community. The library, through the years, has served as a storehouse for records of activities for various social clubs.

A young man named Reuben G. Soderstrom had come to Streator in 1900 at the age of twelve. After ending his formal education at the end of the seventh grade, he worked in a bottle plant and later as a printer's devil for the "Independent-Times" newspaper. During World War I he was elected to the state legislature where he became a champion of organized labor. Mr. Soderstrom was later elected president of the Illinois State Federation of Labor.<sup>24</sup> After leaving school, Soderstrom made the library his "haunt and habit."<sup>25</sup> He later credited the library with giving him an education.

The Streator Public Library continued to serve the educational needs of Streator's students, children, and adults during the period of significance. It also continued to host several social and community service groups' meetings. Approximately twenty years ago a massive cleanup of the library resulted in the removal of all of the historic records and reports of the Board of Directors for the library. All circulation figures and library activities reports were destroyed at the time.

On January 31, 1945, a fire occurred in the boiler room of the library, which burned the floor joists of the reference room. Extensive damage was caused by smoke and water, and the library was threatened with destruction before the fire was brought under control. "Among the prized records saved were newspaper files of the Times-Press, Free Press, and Independent-Times, representing the only chronology of the city's history and events of more than three score years."<sup>26</sup>

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Streator Public Library

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Because of the fire, a need was felt to microfilm the newspapers the library housed. In December of 1946, Delta Theta Tau, a local sorority, presented the library with a Recordak, and the Library now has microfilm of Streator's newspapers dating back to August of 1873.<sup>27</sup>

A High School Room was added in the place of a former library museum and was completed in 1958. A book drop was placed at the curb near the building in 1959, and a parking lot in the rear of the library was completed in 1960.<sup>28</sup>

The Historical Records Room was conceived and financed by the Streator Lion's Club. The idea came from the club's desire to make a major contribution toward protecting historical material at the library. The club planned and built shelving for the room, removed old plumbing, and refurbished the floor, walls and ceiling. The work was completed on May 1, 1964. The dedication ceremonies were held on June 18, 1964.<sup>29</sup> This room, located on the second floor, continues to serve as a storehouse for information on local history.

In 1968, the library joined the Starved Rock Library System. In mid 1993, the library joined the Heritage Trails Library System, to which it still belongs. In the early 1970's, Anne Ryon, a good patron of the Streator Public Library, passed away, leaving the library a beautiful old grandfather's clock and \$40,000. The funds were used to construct a mezzanine over the stacks behind the circulation desk.<sup>30</sup> Plans for a mezzanine over the stacks area were in the original blueprints for the building but it was not built due to lack of funding.

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Streator Public Library

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### ENDNOTES

1. Angle, Paula, Biography in Black - A History of Streator, Illinois. (Streator, Illinois: Weber Company, 1962), p. 23.
2. *Ibid*, p. 24-8.
3. *Ibid*. p. 54.
4. 125 Years - A Celebration - Streator, Illinois 1868 - 1993. p. 15.
5. Historical Centennial Program: 1868 - 1968, Streator, Illinois, June 29 - July 7, 1968, p. 59.
6. Streator Times Press, January 20, 1945, p. 8.
7. The Streator Monitor, February 10, 1872.
8. Adalyn E. Tiffany, "Streator Public Library, Bits and Pieces of Streatoes History", p. 1.
9. *Ibid*, p. 2.
10. *Ibid*.
11. Streator Times Press, January 20, 1945, p. 8.
12. *Ibid*.
13. Raymond Bial and Linda LaPuma Bial,, The Carnegie Library in Illinois, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p. 73.
14. Angle, p. 41.
15. *Ibid*, p. 43.
16. Barry Sears, "On the Trail of Carnegie Libraries,": Antiques & Collecting, Vol. 98 (February, 1994), p. 24.
17. Abigail A. Van Slyck, "The Utmost Amount of Effective Accommodation: Andrew Carnegie and the Reform of the American Library,": The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, (December, 1991), p. 360.
18. Streator Times Press, January 24, 1978.
19. "Buffalo Township Public Library", National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form, June, 1995.
20. 125 Years - A Celebration - Streator, Illinois 1868 - 1993, p. 79.
21. J. E. Williams, The Story of Streator, p. 44.
22. 125 Years - A Celebration - Streator, Illinois 1868 - 1993, p. 79.
23. Williams, p. 44.
24. Angle, p. 120.
25. 125 Years - A Celebration - Streator, Illinois 1868 - 1993, p. 9.
26. Streator Times Press, January 31, 1945, p. 8.

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Streator Public Library

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27. Streator Times Press, January 24, 1978.
28. Ibid.
29. Streator Times Press, Centennial Edition, June 24, 1968.
30. Streator Times Press, January 24, 1978.

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Streator Public Library

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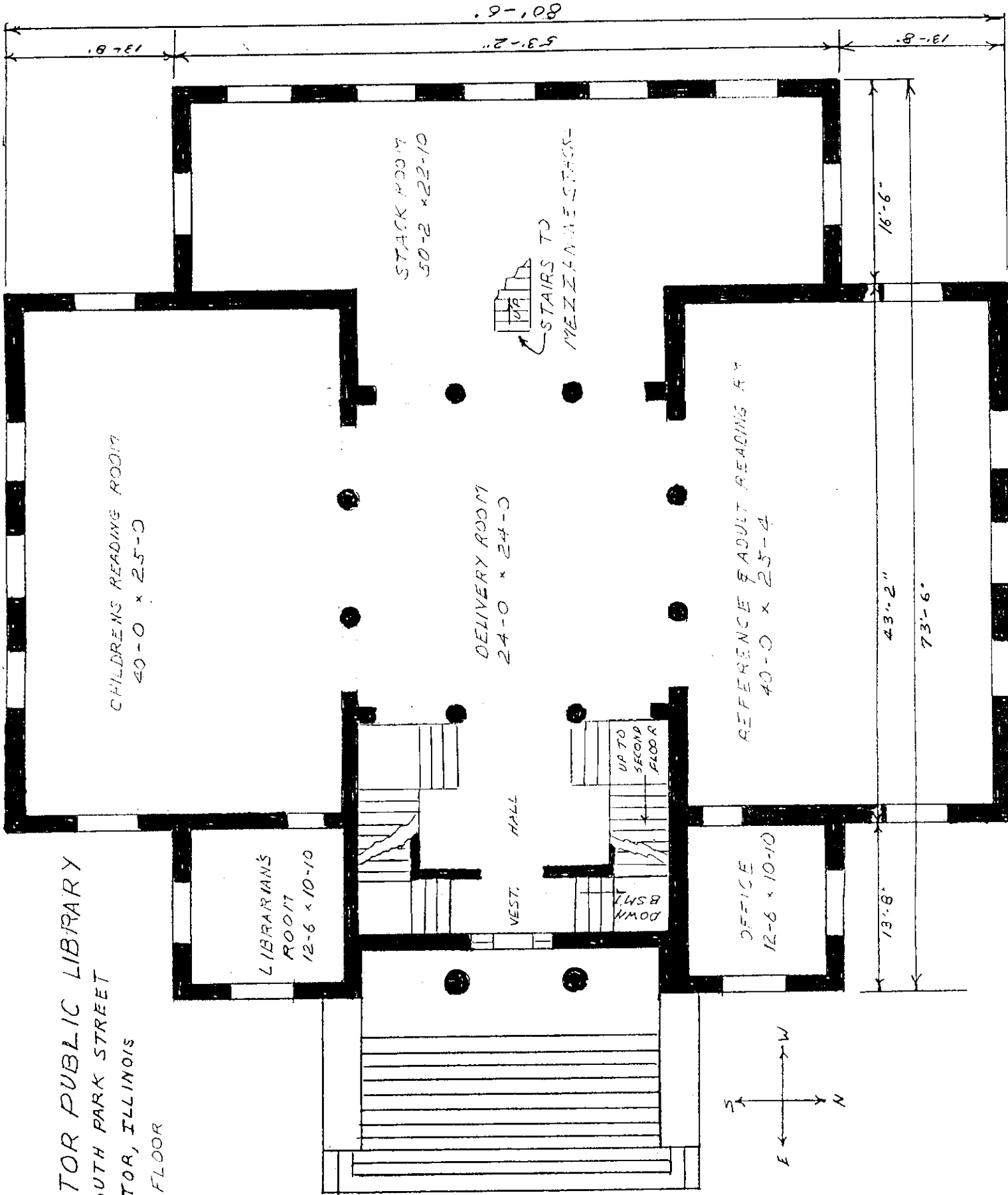
### 10. Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Streator Public Library are described as follows. Lots 16 and 17, Block 22, in the Original Town of Streator, in LaSalle County, Illinois.

### Boundary Justification

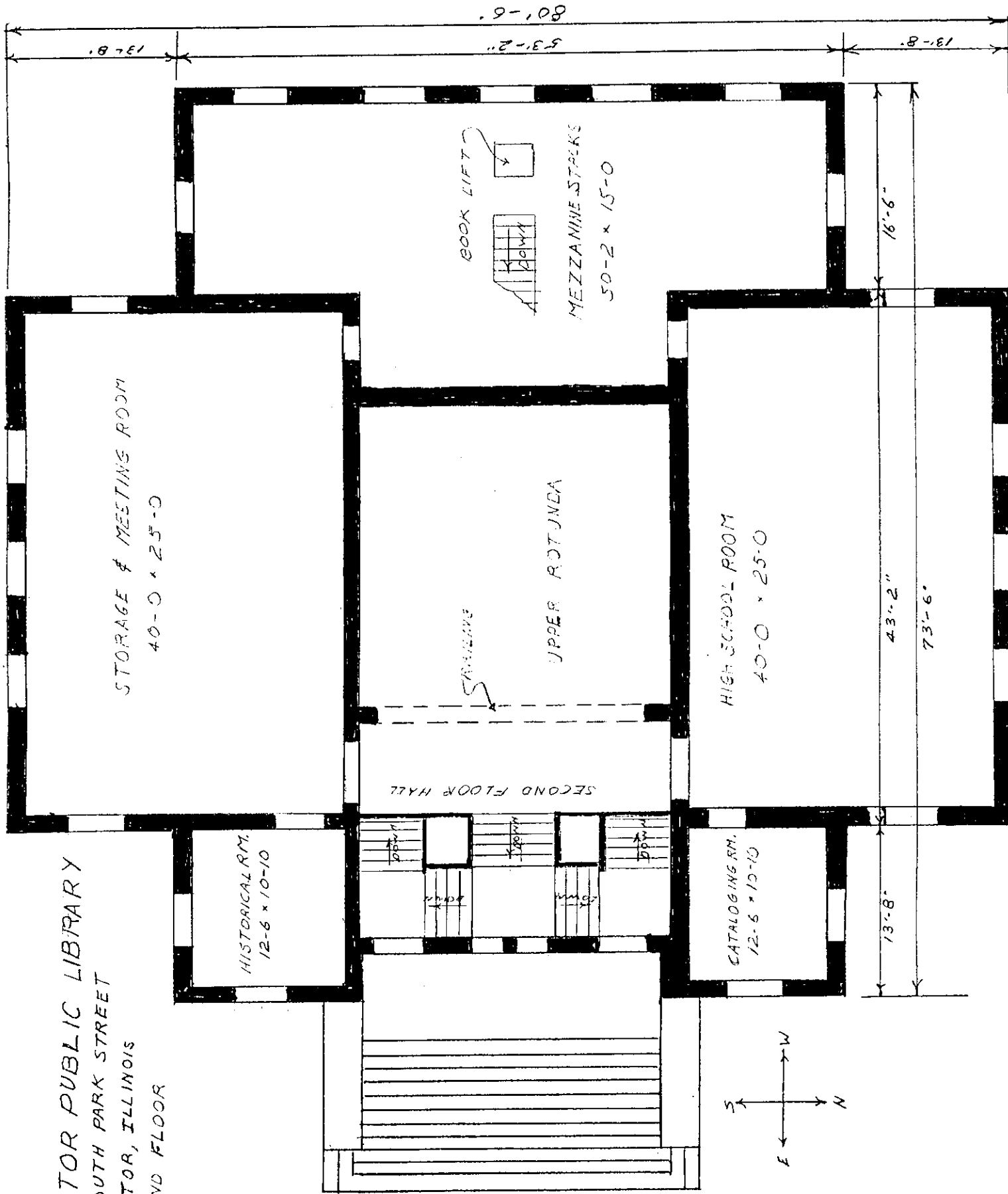
The boundary includes the building and lots historically associated with the Streator Public Library and that maintain historic integrity.

STREATOR PUBLIC LIBRARY  
 130 SOUTH PARK STREET  
 STREATOR, ILLINOIS  
 FIRST FLOOR





STREATOR PUBLIC LIBRARY  
 130 SOUTH PARK STREET  
 STREATOR, ILLINOIS  
 SECOND FLOOR





# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO:

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to announce actions on the following properties for the National Register of Historic Places.

For further information contact Edson Beall via voice  
(202) 343-1572, fax (202) 343-1836 or E-mail: [edson\\_beall@nps.gov](mailto:edson_beall@nps.gov)

Visit our web site at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/nrhome.html>

MAY 10 1996

WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 4/29/96 THROUGH 5/03/96

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL, Action, Date, Multiple Name

ARKANSAS, ARKANSAS COUNTY, St. Charles Battle Monument, Jct. of Arkansas St. and Broadway, St. Charles, 96000505, LISTED, 5/03/96 (Civil War Commemorative Sculpture MPS)

ARKANSAS, BENTON COUNTY, Grand Army of the Republic Memorial, Southern end of Twin Springs Park, E of jct. of AR 43 and Twin Springs St., Siloam Springs, 96000506, LISTED, 5/03/96 (Civil War Commemorative Sculpture MPS)

ARKANSAS, CHICOT COUNTY, Lake Village Confederate Monument, Lakeshore Dr. median, between Main and Jackson Sts., Lake Village, 96000509, LISTED, 5/03/96 (Civil War Commemorative Sculpture MPS)

ARKANSAS, CLARK COUNTY, Arkadelphia Confederate Monument, Courthouse Lawn, near SE of jct. of 6th and Caddo Sts., Arkadelphia, 96000507, LISTED, 5/03/96 (Civil War Commemorative Sculpture MPS)

ARKANSAS, INDEPENDENCE COUNTY, Batesville Confederate Monument, NE corner of Courthouse Lawn, jct. of S. Broad St. and W. Main St., Batesville, 96000504, LISTED, 5/03/96 (Civil War Commemorative Sculpture MPS)

ARKANSAS, LONOKE COUNTY, Camp Nelson Confederate Cemetery, Rye St., approximately 1 mi. NW of jct. of AR 321 and AR 319, Cabot, 96000503, LISTED, 5/03/96 (Civil War Commemorative Sculpture MPS)

ARKANSAS, LONOKE COUNTY, Lonoke Confederate Monument, Courthouse Lawn, near jct. of 3rd and Center Sts., Lonoke, 96000508, LISTED, 5/03/96 (Civil War Commemorative Sculpture MPS)

ARKANSAS, PHILLIPS COUNTY, Helena Confederate Cemetery, SW corner of Maple Hill Cemetery, approximately .5 mi. N of jct. of Poplar and Adams Sts., Helena, 96000501, LISTED, 5/03/96 (Civil War Commemorative Sculpture MPS)

ARKANSAS, POPE COUNTY, Confederate Mothers Memorial Park, Jct. of AR 326 and S. Glenwood Ave., Russellville, 96000500, LISTED, 5/03/96 (Civil War Commemorative Sculpture MPS)

ARKANSAS, PULASKI COUNTY, Little Rock Confederate Memorial, Little Rock National Cemetery, jct. of 21st and Barber Sts., Little Rock, 96000499, LISTED, 5/03/96 (Civil War Commemorative Sculpture MPS)

ARKANSAS, PULASKI COUNTY, Minnesota Monument, 2523 Confederate Blvd., Little Rock, 96000498, LISTED, 5/03/96 (Civil War Commemorative Sculpture MPS)

ARKANSAS, WHITE COUNTY, Grand Army of the Republic Memorial, Evergreen Cemetery, approximately .25 mi. S of jct. of AR 367 and AR 371, Judsonia, 96000502, LISTED, 5/03/96 (Civil War Commemorative Sculpture MPS)

FLORIDA, OKALOOSA COUNTY, World War II JB--2 Launch Site, Address Restricted, Fort Walton Beach vicinity, 96000395, LISTED, 4/19/96

FLORIDA, OKALOOSA COUNTY, World War II JB--2 Mobile Launch Site, Address Restricted, Fort Walton Beach vicinity, 96000394, LISTED, 4/17/96

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, 7th District Police Station, 943--949 W. Maxwell St., Chicago, 96000515, LISTED, 5/02/96

ILLINOIS, IROQUOIS COUNTY, St. Mary's Church, 308 St. Charles Ave., Beaverville, 96000514, LISTED, 5/02/96

ILLINOIS, LA SALLE COUNTY, Streator Public Library, 130 S. Park St., Streator, 96000512, LISTED, 5/02/96 (Illinois Carnegie Libraries MPS)

ILLINOIS, MADISON COUNTY, Emmert--Zippel House, 3279 Maryville Rd., 2mi. N of IL 162, Granite City, 96000511, LISTED, 5/02/96

ILLINOIS, OGLE COUNTY, McGrath, John, House, 403 W. Mason St., Polo, 96000513, LISTED, 5/02/96

IOWA, WASHINGTON COUNTY, Pilotburg Church, 1874 155th St., Wellman, 96000517, LISTED, 5/02/96

MARYLAND, WORCESTER COUNTY, Clarke, Littleton T., House, 407 2nd St., Pocomoke City, 96000519, LISTED, 5/02/96

NORTH DAKOTA, EMMONS COUNTY, Willows Hotel, 112 S. Broadway, Linton, 96000522, LISTED, 5/02/96

SOUTH CAROLINA, LEE COUNTY, St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Bradford Springs, Bradford Springs Rd., approximately 6 mi. N of Dalzell, Dalzell vicinity, 96000406, LISTED, 4/17/96

SOUTH CAROLINA, RICHLAND COUNTY, Siloam School, 1331 Congaree Rd., Eastover vicinity, 96000382, LISTED, 4/15/96 (African--American Primary and Secondary School Buildings MPS)

SOUTH CAROLINA, RICHLAND COUNTY, St. Phillip School, 4350 McCords Ferry Rd., Eastover vicinity, 96000383, LISTED, 4/19/96 (African--American Primary and Secondary School Buildings MPS)

SOUTH CAROLINA, SUMTER COUNTY, O'Donnell House, 120 E. Liberty St., Sumter, 96000407, LISTED, 4/25/96

UTAH, SUMMIT COUNTY, Glenwood Cemetery, Silver King Dr., approximately .5 mi. N of Park City Ski Resort, Park City, 96000436, LISTED, 5/01/96

14

Survey Use Only

- Archaeology
- Architecture
- History

1. Name of Site:

Common:

Streator Public Library

Historic:

Historic:

LS-14-51  
201046

2. Location of site:

Street and Number

Township

Section

Corner Park & Ridge  
City or Town

Zip Code

Bruce  
Range T3/N  
R3E

25  
Section  
SW

Streator  
County:

61364

LaSalle

3. Classification

Category: (check one)

Integrity: (check one)

- District
- Site
- Building
- Structure

- Altered
- Unaltered

Position: (check one)

- Moved
- Original site

4. Ownership:

Status:

- Public
- Private

- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Preservation work in progress

Access to the public:

- Yes
- Restricted
- Unrestricted
- No

Present Use: (check one or more)

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Government
- Industrial
- Military
- Museum
- Park
- Private Residence
- Religious
- Scientific
- Transportation
- Other (specify)

5. Owner of property:

Owner's name

Phone Number

City of Streator

Street and Number

City or Town

Streator

State

Illinois

County

LaSalle

Zip Code

61364

REPOSITORY

6. Descriptions:  
Condition:

Excellent    Good    Fair    Deteriorated    Ruins    Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation under way?    Yes    No  
If yes, give a brief description on separate sheet, and attach hereto.

7. Historical themes: (check one or more of the following)

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological site      | (pre-Columbian)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological site      | (post-Columbian to 1573) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French influence         | (1673-1780)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois frontier        | (1780-1818)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois early           | (1818-1850)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois middle          | (1850-1900)              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois late | (1900-present)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Famous people            | (give names and dates)   |

Specific date of site:

Areas of significance: (check one or more)

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (pre-historic) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (historic)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication  | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning      |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)     |

Brief statement of significance: (Include all names and dates: Built 1901  
On attached sheet.

8. Form prepared by:

Name and Title: Mary Christopherson

Date: 5-17-71

Organization: County Historical Society (LaSalle County)

Street and Number: Box 577

City or Town: Ottawa

County: LaSalle

Zip Code: 61350

Phone Number: 434-0188

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for references for a particular site.

When filling out the survey form, please list according to the following example any published references to the site for which the form is being completed.

If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly reduce the survey's task.

Bibliography Form.

Roberts, Robert B., Of Whales and Men, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1954.

Attach sheet and list Bibliography

Nomination Sheet in LaSalle County Historical Soc. Folder

The Streator Public Library is built of local brick and Indian's limestone, a gift of Andrew Carnegie in 1901, Securred through the effort of Col. Ralph Plumb, one of the City's founders, a personal friend of Mr. Carnegie. A local artist, Alfred Fuchs, painted 3 murals on the walls.

