

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SENT TO DC  
6-30-94

# 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 an 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 El Paso Public Library

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 149 West First Street  not for publication

city or town El Paso  vicinity

state Illinois code IL county Woodford code 203 zip code 61738

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 L. Atch, SHPO 6-29-94  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
State of 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 the 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 the 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**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

Illinois Carnegie Libraries

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education / Library

Social / Meeting Hall

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education / Library

Social / Meeting Hall

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian - Romanesque

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Stone

roof Asphalt

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.)

- 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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or 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

Period of Significance

1907 - 1944

Significant Dates

1907

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Moratz, Paul O., Architect

Reichel, Joseph A., Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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 of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

UTM grid for Zone 16, Easting 329570, Northing 4511590

UTM grid for Zone, Easting, Northing

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 Marilyn R. Swanson

organization date April 25, 1994

street & number P.O. Box 282 (51 N. Adams) telephone 309-527-2629

city or town El Paso state IL zip code 61738

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name City of El Paso, Ron Mool, Mayor

street & number 52 North Elm telephone

city or town El Paso state Illinois zip code 61738

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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El Paso Public Library

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## 7. Narrative Description

The El Paso Public Library was designed by Architect Paul O. Moratz, of Bloomington, IL. It was built in 1906-07 by Joseph A. Reichel of El Paso, IL. It is situated on the southeast side of Jefferson Square in El Paso, Illinois, at 149 West First Street. This park is locally referred to as Jefferson Park, or Library Park, but shows on the plat of the town as Jefferson Square. Jefferson Square, a city block in area, is located one block north of Front Street, the main business street. Diagonally to the southeast is the Woodford County Bank, a modern attractive building. To the south is the Mahaffey-Betts Insurance and Real Estate Office. Residences line First Street on the south, Sycamore Street to the west, Second Street to the north and Elm Street on the east. All of these residences face Jefferson Square. One or two houses may date to near the time of construction of the library. Some are of more modern construction. Diagonally to the northwest is the Jefferson Park School, which houses grades K-4. Across the park to the north, in the middle of the block, is the El Paso Christian Church.

The design of the building is Richardsonian Romanesque. It is a rectangular bearing wall structure with a wood frame hip roof. The foundation is brick. The exterior walls are rusticated Bedford stone in a buff color. The original slate roof has been replaced with asphalt shingles. It is a one story building with a basement. The main floor is raised above grade approximately four feet. The base of the building projects at this height and is further delineated by a belt course of dressed stone and a sill. The smooth horizontal banding continues with a wide band at the window sill height and a narrower band between the main windows and clerestory windows.

A fireplace and chimney are situated along the east wall of the building. The chimney is original, however, decorative corbeling at the top has been removed.

The main entrance on the south elevation is flanked by semi-circular turrets projecting out from the main building. The turrets extend above the eave line of the main building and are connected by a segmental arch which provides for a massive covered entrance. Above the arch, the eave is decorated with wood dentils. The main roof soffit is decorated by the exposed rafter tails. The fenestration is in groups of three on either side of the turrets. The tall, narrow windows are the original double-hung wood sash with aluminum storm units installed at a later date. Several basement windows have been blocked with stone to match the original.

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El Paso Public Library

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### Narrative Description (continued)

The east elevation has two groups of three windows on the first story, and two basement windows.

There are eight windows along the north elevation's first story. The basement level of the north elevation has a covered entry, and three windows.

The west elevation has four windows on the first story. Also on the west side of the building is a small one-story addition of white stone and a shed roof. This was added in 1967 to allow direct access into the basement.

Other than the basement windows and west addition, the exterior is remarkably unchanged from the original. Even the downspouts, while not original, are in the same locations.

The interior of the building is highlighted by the original wood circulation desk flanked by massive ionic wood columns. The wood window sills and chair rail are all original as well. Some of the baseboard has been painted, but most have the original wood finish. In front of the desk at the top of the entrance stairs, the ceiling is vaulted from the large wood columns and pilasters flanking the stairs. On either side of this area are large reading rooms. The east room houses a fireplace. Stenciling at the cornice height in the reading rooms has been painted over.

The jambs between the windows have a semi-circular shape that reflects the turrets of the main building. The heads and the outside jambs of the banks of windows have also been softened with a circular shape.

The original floor has been tiled and carpeted. According to the present librarian, Mary Byerly, the steps leading to the main floor of the library are of oak. This was observed during repairs necessitated by asphalt tiles coming up under the carpeting.

In 1946, a general refurbishing of the main floor was undertaken. At this time, the fireplace was redone. A heavy wood mantel was removed and replaced with a red marble slab. The opening to the fireplace was changed from an arch opening to a square one. The fireplace is probably functional but has not been used in many years. At this time the main floor interior was painted, and hanging fluorescent lights were installed.

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El Paso Public Library

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### Narrative Description (continued)

In March of 1967, it was decided by the Library Board to proceed with plans for remodeling the west basement room into a children's room. Contracts were drawn. The librarian, Mildred Burster, suggested that it be called a memorial room so that donations could be accepted. At this time the outside entrance on the west was added to allow access to the basement room. On August 27, 1967, the Children's Memorial Room was dedicated.

In 1973, to celebrate the 100th Birthday Celebration of the library, the citizens of El Paso took on the renovation of the library. Both the main floor and the basement were included. This was a community project, but Federal Revenue Sharing Funds were also used. In the basement, new heating and air conditioning units were installed, and placed so the maximum space could be utilized. Ceilings were lowered so that ducts could be hidden, and new fluorescent lights were installed. A small kitchen was incorporated into the space next to the heating unit and the utility closet. New plumbing fixtures were installed in the bathroom. Two very large oak tables with chairs in the east basement room make the areas quite suitable for meetings, special programs or for those doing historical research, as the old newspapers, files and such are stored in this room. New carpeting was installed on both levels.

Upstairs, repainting was done; wood columns and circulation desk were refinished; new shades for the windows were added. Ceilings on this level were lowered with the exception of the vaulted areas in front of the circulation desk. Acoustic tile was used, and new fluorescent fixtures were installed. A five-globed Gothic style fixture was hung in the vaulted area.

Structurally, except for the west basement entrance, the north at-grade entrance, and the blocked-in basement windows, the El Paso Public Library appears the same as when it was built in 1906-1907. (1-2-3)

According to James A. Miller, Superintendent of El Paso Community Unit School District #375, the non-contributing object on the property is a bell from the Jefferson Park School. This school was erected in 1897, and demolished in November 1976. The bell is placed on a small block structure of white bricks and is located to the southeast of the library.

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El Paso Public Library

## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The El Paso Public Library is locally significant for Criterion A for education in providing library services to the citizens of El Paso from 1907, the year the library opened, until 1944, the fifty year cut-off for the National Register of Historic Places. It is also significant for social history, in that it provided a meeting place for different social groups and organizations. The El Paso Public Library was a place to meet; and had materials, books and information that helped contribute to the social and educational development of El Paso residents. The El Paso Public Library meets the registration requirements of the property type "Carnegie Library" as defined in the approved Multiple Property Documentation Form, Illinois Carnegie Libraries.

The El Paso Public Library was constructed in 1906-07 with a grant of \$6,000.00 from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation. (4) It also came about because of the dedication and perseverance of a group of ladies who felt that El Paso needed a "real" library. For a discussion about Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy please see the Multiple Property Documentation form for "Illinois Carnegie Libraries".

Dedication of the building was held on February 22, 1907. (5) Small hatchets were given out to honor the occasion, and postal cards were sold. (6) The postal cards show the library from a southwest to northeast view. Construction materials can be seen around the building. The postal cards refer to the library as the El Paso Free Public Library, but in correspondence it was called the El Paso Public Library. (7)

The growth of the railroads in the mid 1800s was the factor in the establishment of El Paso, Illinois. Town sites were laid out every seven or eight miles along the right of way. In the summer of 1852, two businessmen from Washington, Illinois, discovered an unentered half section of land. These men were George L. Gibson and James H. Wathen. Gibson took the east quarter, and Wathen the west. Releases were purchased when they discovered that four soldiers from the War of 1812 were entitled to patent the land should they care to do so. The patents for the land were issued by President Franklin Pierce to Gibson on April 15, 1852, and to Wathen on May 5, 1852. The Illinois Central Railroad had staked a two hundred foot right of way through this land by mid-summer of 1852. This divided the future city of El Paso from east to west; by 1857 the Peoria and Oquawka Railroad was running from west to east, which divided the town from north to south. A name for this town had not yet been determined, and the final name was decided by drawing straws. Both men had decided that it would not be named for either of them. Mr. Gibson won the draw, and he decided to name the town El Paso. He had visited California, and returned to Illinois by way of the Rio Grande Pass in Texas, and fancied the name "El Paso".



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El Paso Public Library

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## Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

By 1869, there were approximately 65 business establishments and professional offices in the community. (8)

On February 8, 1873, a group of ladies met; and, after several such meetings formed the Ladies' Library Association. There is evidence, in the minutes taken at those meetings, that there had been another library association in El Paso. There are three references to that fact. The first is on February 15, 1873, "on the report of the committee on the transfer of books". The second is on March 8, 1873, "a vote of thanks was returned to the shareholders of the old library, and also the committee for their services". The third reference is on March 15, 1873, "The committee on the transfer of books from the old library were authorized to make satisfactory arrangements with certain persons who as shareholders in the Old Library have as yet refused to donate their interest in the same to this Association".

The Ladies Library Association appointed a committee to visit the Bloomington, Illinois, library to learn all they could in regard to the selection and purchase of books for the new library. A constitution was drawn up and shares in the "Association" were sold at \$3.00 each, many by house-to-house canvassing. Included in the written constitution was stated: "that no one was allowed to hold more than one share"; "that the shares were not transferrable"; and "that each share holder was to be taxed \$1.00 per year thereafter". There was a provision in this constitution that people could subscribe monthly, quarterly, or yearly, with a fee set for each term.

In the beginning, those who served as librarians were not paid. It was not until September 1875 that they were paid for their services as librarian.

The first library room was opened on Saturday afternoon, May 17, 1873, and was located in the basement of what was then called the new Eagle Block Building, or the Journal Building. This is on the northwest corner of Front and Central Streets, and is at present the location of the American Dairy Association of Illinois. The first room space was donated.

Money for the library was raised by holding "Strawberry Festivals", "New England Suppers", and by arranging for lecturers on different subjects. Donations were also accepted from other organizations.

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El Paso Public Library

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### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

During these early years, the ladies moved the library several times, though, as far as can be determined, within the same building. Their room was located in the basement, on the second floor, and the room at the rear, but it is not known in what order. They were searching for the best location, and the least amount of rent, if any. They were also buying new books, sending old ones out for repair or rebinding, and they wanted their room to be fitted "comfortably" and "tastefully".

In September, 1892, a revised catalogue of the Ladies' Library was issued. One thousand, six hundred and seventy-four titles were listed. (9)

At the meeting on February 1, 1894, the matter of insurance coverage on the books was discussed. On May 17, 1874, it was decided to carry insurance for a period of one year. (10)

On July 19, 1894, a fire destroyed the Eagle Block Building, along with every other building on the block, except one. Included in the destruction was the room used by the Association for their library. They were able to save only their records and a clock. Insurance coverage was for \$500.00. Damage was estimated at \$2,000.00. (11)

The Association immediately began the process of rebuilding their library. Space was donated to them and on August 11, 1894, they announced in the El Paso Journal, that the library would open on the following Saturday.

Sometime in 1901, the Association moved to a room at 42 N. Central. They were now at the same location as when they opened the library in 1873, though not in the same room. The Eagle Block Building was rebuilt after the fire of 1894, but to two stories, instead of the three as it was originally.

On May 16, 1901, discussion was begun as to what needed to be done in order to turn the library over to the city. This continued for a period of several years.

In May, 1902, a request was made of Mr. F.B. Stitt that he contact the Mayor about turning the library over to the city. Mr. Stitt's reply, in June of 1902, was that the Mayor, Mr. Kerr, refused to listen to the library's petition. In May of 1904, a motion was made to the effect that the library be turned over to the city as soon as the city was ready to accept it. (12)

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El Paso Public Library

## Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

It is not known exactly when Carnegie was contacted. But one of the first contacts had to have been made in September 1904, as reference to this time was made in two subsequent letters to Carnegie. (13)

In the April 8, 1905 issue of the El Paso Journal, many letters were printed from residents of other communities who had received grants for a library, or who were in process of obtaining a grant from Carnegie. The editor, Mr. George W. Curtiss, attempted to explain that the amount of the grant for the library was based on the town's ability to raise the necessary amount of taxes based on the assessed valuation. On March 25, 1905, another article appeared in the El Paso Journal, again explaining the terms of Mr. Carnegie's donation.

In the El Paso Journal of April 22, 1905, the results of the city's general election were published. In addition to the vote for the library tax, the citizens also voted on candidates for mayor, treasurer, attorney, and aldermen. The library vote passed by a majority of 186 votes. (14)

On May 1, 1905, a resolution was passed by the city council, that a tax of 2 mills on the dollar, on the taxable property within the city, would be levied beginning June 1, 1905. On the 8th of May, this resolution became Ordinance #34. (15) (16)

Between May 16, 1905, and April 5, 1906, sixteen letters were written between the library representatives and Mr. James Bertram, personal secretary to Mr. Carnegie. On April 2, 1906, the City again drew up a resolution stating that the City of El Paso would support a free public library building at a cost of not less than \$600.00 per year, based on Mr. Carnegie's offer of \$6,000.00, to the city for a library. In the letter of April 5, 1906, Mr. Bertram wrote, "Mr. Carnegie has now instructed his Cashier, Mr. R.A. Franks, Home Trust Co., Hoboken, N.J. to make arrangements about payment on your Library Building, as work progresses, to the extent of Six Thousand Dollars".(17)

Proposals for bids were published, and after receiving only four, the library board chose the lowest bidder, Mr. Joseph A. Reichel, of El Paso. His bid was for \$5,865.00, as he was awarded the contract. Mr. Paul O. Moratz of Bloomington, Illinois was the architect. His plan closely followed the design of the Morgan Park Library in Chicago, Illinois, which some of the board members had inspected. (18) The Morgan Park Library was designed by Charles H. Frost.

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### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

Paul O. Moratz also was the architect most closely associated with the development of White Place in Bloomington, Illinois. (19)

When the Original Town of El Paso was laid out, both Mr. Wathen and Mr. Gibson donated one block of land for use as a park. Mr. Wathen's of the west was called Jefferson Square, and Mr. Gibson's on the east was called Franklin Square. Work of the library was delayed for a time when a question arose of the legality of building on land which has been donated for a park. According to the El Paso Journal of May 26, 1906, it was claimed that F.W. Tucker, one of the Wathen heirs, had stepped in and said that this could not be done. Mr. Tucker denied that he, or any of the other heirs, had any desire to interfere. The question of legality was put to the Attorney General of the State of Illinois; his decision was that it was legal to build a library in a city park. Construction was begun in June of 1906. (20)

Dedication of the library was held on February 22, 1907. Thirteen hundred books had been turned over to the new library by the Ladies' Library Association; five hundred new books had been ordered; and \$1,000.00 had been donated by the citizens of El Paso for more new books. (21)

Early in 1907, Sarah Arnold, a well-known artist, offered to paint a life sized portrait of Andrew Carnegie, provided that the Library Board pay for the materials used. They agreed. It was completed in June, 1907, and was hung above the fire place in the east room.(22) In 1935, a smaller portrait of Mr. Carnegie was presented to the library by the Carnegie Foundation. It is hung, just to the right, as you enter the library. (23)

A general cleaning and sprucing up was done in December 1933-January 1934. The city paid for the material used, and the work was done by the Civil Works Administration. (24)

The El Paso Public Library was short of funds on different occasions. But, the citizens of the town, the Community Club, and the American Legion, always seemed willing and eager to help.

In February 1943, the city council asked for an increase in revenue to help support the library. The voters approved by a margin of 613 to 221. (25)

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El Paso Public Library

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### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

Children's Book Week was celebrated in November 1929. (26) This "Book Week" celebration has continued into recent times, though in later years was referred to as "National Library Week". Exhibits have been held similar to the one during the week of December 12, 1935, which featured Bibles. (27) This was to honor the first printing of books, which had taken place in 1595.

Over these years, the librarians were always very conscientious in attending library meetings, workshops, and even being host for meetings, in order to stay abreast of the happenings, the news, and of how to make their library the best possible.

Even today, in 1994, the library is holding exhibits, art shows, and childrens programs, in order to keep the public aware that there is a library, and it is a vibrant place.

The El Paso Public Library is socially significant as well. The Grand Army of the Republic veterans used a room in the basement of the library for their meetings. (28) The library was also used as a collection point in the "Books for Soldiers" campaign during World War I. (29) During World War II, the library again become the center for collection books during the "Victory Books" campaign. The Red Cross also used a basement room for their meetings and in later years, during World War I, additional space was provided for them upstairs. (30) Any group may use the library premises, provided it meets during the library hours.

The El Paso Public Library has been, and is, socially significant as well as serving as an educational force since its establishment. It has continued the spirit that kept the Ladies' Library Association alive for so many years. And it has done so in a manner that the Ladies' would be proud.

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El Paso Public Library

## Endnotes

1. Basic architectural description by Martin Dudley.
2. El Paso Library Board Minutes.
3. Sum and Substance, Corn Belt Library System, April 1976.
4. Carnegie Correspondence for El Paso.
5. El Paso Journal, February 25, 1907.
6. El Paso Library Records.
7. Letter from J. F. Sturgeon, Secretary of the Board, El Paso Public Library to Sarah Arnold, February 9, 1907; El Paso Journal, article, "El Paso Public Library", April, 28, 1906.
8. El Paso Story, April 20, 1954. Written by Glenna Bonar Baker, Mildred Garber Burster, Ethel Moore Eft, Cassell C. Kingdon, and Glenn York Williamson.
9. Ladies' Library Association Catalogue.
10. Ladies' Library Association Minutes.
11. El Paso Journal, July 21, 1894.
12. Ladies' Library Association Minutes.
13. Carnegie Correspondence for El Paso.
14. El Paso Journal, April 22, 1905.
15. City of El Paso Records.
16. City of El Paso Records.
17. Carnegie Correspondence for El Paso.
18. El Paso Journal, May 19, 1906.
19. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form "White Place Historic District".

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## Endnotes

20. El Paso Journal May 26, 1906, and El Paso Journal, June 9, 1906.
21. El Paso Journal March 2, 1907.
22. See Footnote #7.
23. El Paso Public Library Files.
24. El Paso Journal, January 18, 1934.
25. El Paso Journal, April 22, 1943.
26. El Paso Journal, November 14, 1929.
27. El Paso Journal, December 12, 1935.
28. El Paso Journal, June 1, 1907; November 27, 1913; January 16, 1913.
29. El Paso Journal, August 30, 1917; July 25, 1918.
30. El Paso Journal, June 1, 1907; November 15, 1917; September 13, 1917.

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El Paso Public Library

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Carnegie Correspondence for El Paso.

City of El Paso - Records.

El Paso Journal, 1894-1994.

El Paso Public Library Board Minutes.

El Paso Public Library Records.

El Paso Story, by Glenna Bonar Baker, Mildred Garber Burster, Ethel Moore Eft, Cassell C. Kingdon, Glenn York Williamson. April 20, 1954.

Minutes of the Ladies' Library Association, 1873-1904.

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation For "Illinois Carnegie Libraries".

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form "White Place Historic District".

Sum and Substance, Corn Belt Library System, April 1976.



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El Paso Public Library

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### 10. Geographical Data

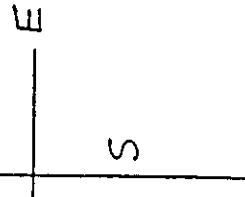
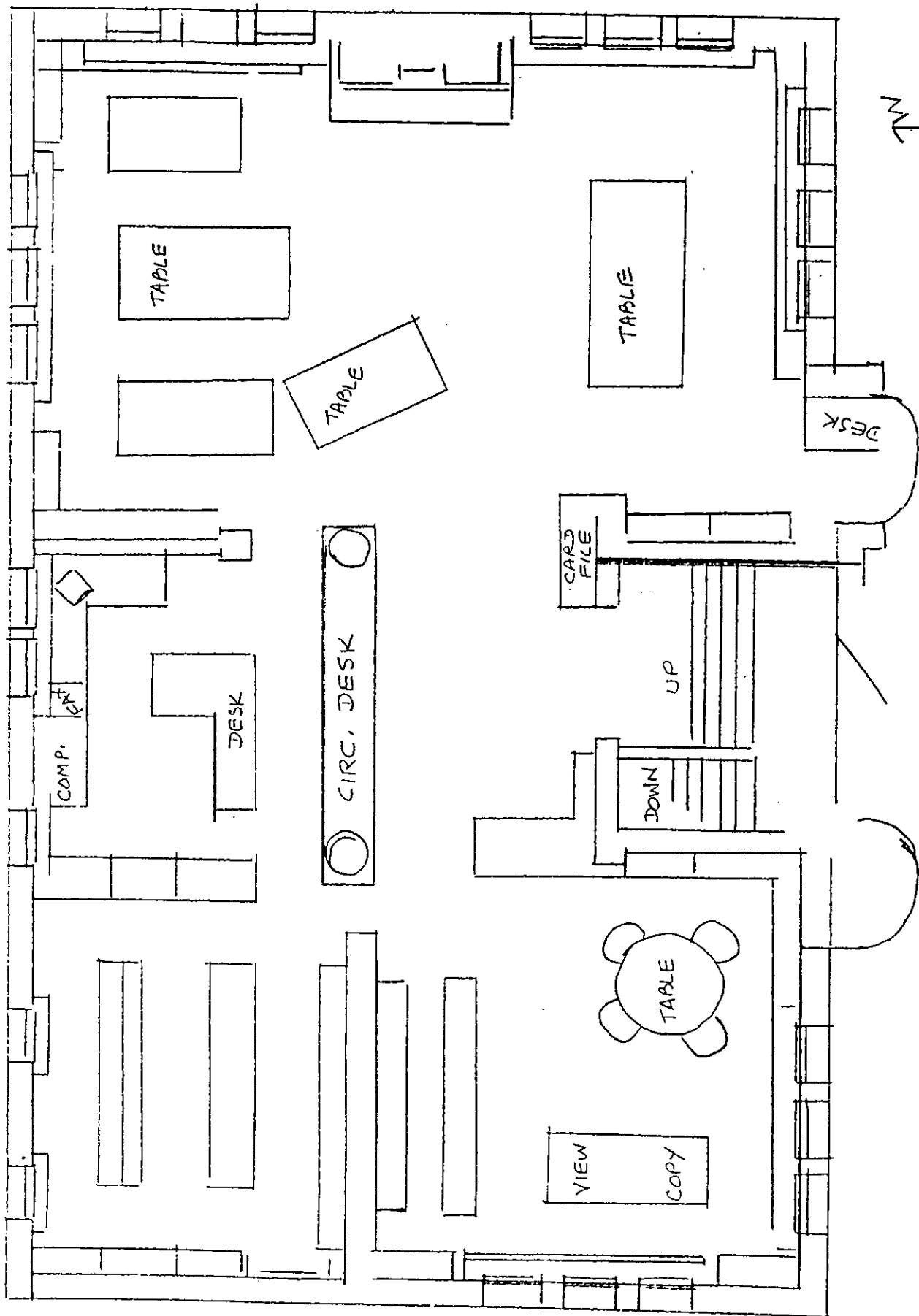
#### Verbal Boundary Description

The El Paso Public Library is located in Jefferson Square in the City of El Paso, County of Woodford, in the State of Illinois.

Beginning at a point at the northwest corner of the junction of North Elm Street and West First Street proceeding west 150 feet along the north curblineline of West First Street. Then proceed north 150 feet. Then proceed east 150 feet to the west curblineline of North Elm Street. Then proceed south 150 feet along the west curblineline of North Elm Street to the point of beginning.

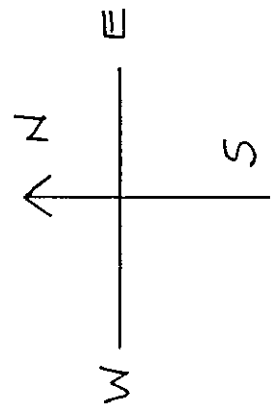
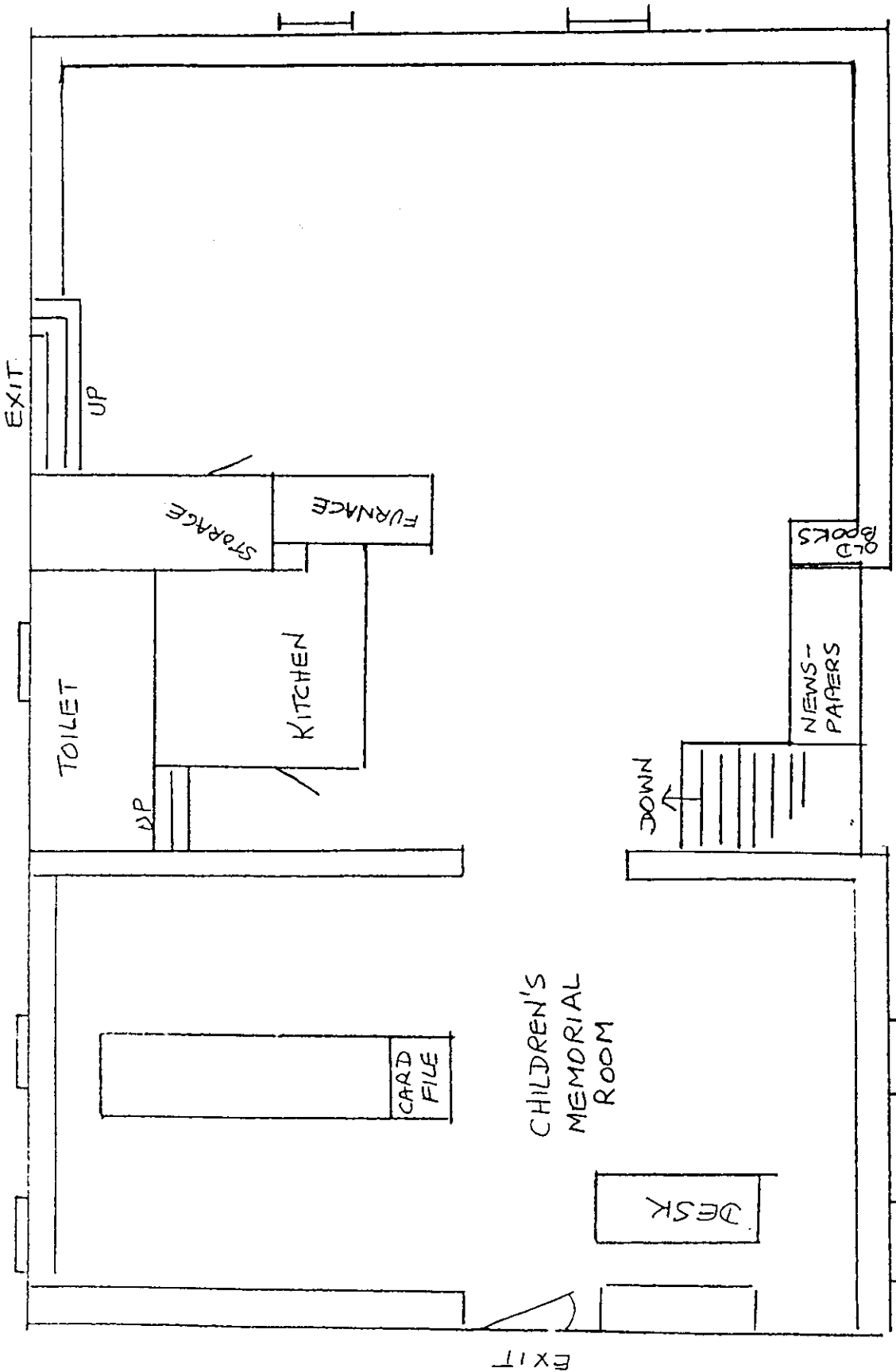
#### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the library building and surrounding area that have historically been part of the El Paso Public Library and that maintain historic integrity. The parcels to the north and west of the library in Jefferson Square have been developed with the additions of Jefferson Park School and a modern bandstand.



EL PASO PUBLIC LIBRARY  
 EL PASO 11L.  
 MAIN FLOOR

NOT  
 TO  
 SCALE



EL PASO PUBLIC LIBRARY  
 EL PASO, IL.  
 BASEMENT LEVEL

NOT  
 TO  
 SCALE

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**SENT TO D.C.**

10-4-00

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 3, 4 Page 1

**El Paso Public Library - Amendment**

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 L. Wheeler / SHPO 9-24-00  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
State of 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 official/Title Date

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

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

**El Paso Public Library - Amendment**

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The El Paso Public Library meets Criterion C for architecture for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It is an outstanding local representative of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, as defined in the Illinois Carnegie Libraries Multiple Property Documentation form. (see Section F, Property Type, p.1) It is an excellent example of a small Carnegie library constructed in Illinois in 1906. Also, it is the only Carnegie library in Illinois built in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The public library is an important building in El Paso, contributing to the community's City Beautiful movement. The only Richardsonian Romanesque style building in town, the library helps convey the sober, responsible image that communities of the period desired. Its location in Jefferson Park, one block from the main street which faces the rail line, is further evidence of the contribution the library building made to the City Beautiful plan. Integrity of design has been maintained, with only a small addition on the west side to allow access into the basement, an at-grade entrance on the rear (north), and the blocking of several, small basement windows with stone during a remodeling of the basement in 1967.

The architect of the El Paso library, Paul O. Moratz, designed more Carnegie libraries in Illinois than any other architect. (see Illinois Carnegie Libraries MPD; Section E, Historic Context Related to Architecture, Carnegie Libraries in Illinois -Architects) In a letter from Moratz to El Paso Library Board member F. B. Stitt dated April 17, 1905, the architect stated that he had sent a floor plan and photographs of a building "suitable for your site." He noted that the only change would be from an octagonal rotunda to a square. He suggested a high basement to accommodate such services as rest rooms and a boiler. Moratz also volunteered to come to El Paso saying, "I am sure I can give you a large amount of information in reference to library work. We are now at work on five library buildings, and I have furnished designs for Carnegie libraries in all parts of the country and will gladly give you the benefit of my past experience." Moratz also said that he could send other designs if necessary.<sup>1</sup>

At a meeting of the El Paso City Council held on December 5, 1905, Moratz was invited to attend the next board meeting "in order that we make get (sic) some of his ideas in regard to plans for a building."<sup>2</sup> Moratz was present at the El Paso Library Board meeting on December 18, 1905, "to talk over with the Board as to the nature of the building we desired to erect. After examinations of proposed plans and nature of the structure that would be suitable, it was moved

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**El Paso Public Library - Amendment**

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... that we decide to make our Library Building of Stone, Romaness (sic) style of architecture with slate roof." The motion passed unanimously.<sup>3</sup>

On May 19, 1906, the El Paso *Journal* reported that the contract to construct the library had been awarded to the lowest bidder, Joseph A. Reichel of El Paso, for \$5,365. The report stated:

The work will be under the supervision of Paul O. Moratz, the Bloomington architect, who drew the plans after the design of the Morgan Park, Ill., library building which some of the board of directors had inspected. The only change made from the Morgan Park structure is practically one of conformation to fit the lesser amount of money to be expended here.<sup>4</sup> Moratz was paid \$300 for his work in El Paso.<sup>5</sup>

The George C. Walker Library in Morgan Park, Illinois, now a branch of the Chicago Public Library, was designed by Charles Frost in 1890. Frost is best known for his designs of train stations, including those in Rockford, Winnetka, Geneva and Wheaton. During his association with Henry Ives Cobb, the firm of Frost and Cobb designed the Newberry Library (1887) and a number of buildings at the University of Chicago, including the Walker Museum (1893), also donated by George C. Walker. Frost and Cobb designs for the Custodial Building for Feeble Minded Children (1890) in Lincoln, Illinois, and the Old Chicago Historical Society Building (1892) both feature Richardsonian Romanesque architecture very similar to the design of the Walker Library. The 1972 nomination to the National Register for the Old Chicago Historical Society Building states, "It is an important example of how a prominent Chicago architect adapted the Richardsonian Romanesque style for a public building." The segmental arched entrance which Frost incorporated at the entrance to these buildings is similar to the entrance on the Winn Memorial Library, Woburn, Massachusetts; Austin Hall, Harvard University; and Trinity Church Rectory, Boston.

As the buildings designed by Frost featuring this entrance design were larger than the El Paso Library, some were multi-storied, Moratz had to adapt the design to the scale of the El Paso library. Further simplification was required as the Morgan Park library has a five bay front, with wings on either side of the main entrance, a feature not present on the El Paso library, which has three bays. Moratz incorporated the segmental arch supported by twin semi-circular towers at the entrance, but added three small windows above the arch, which

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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**El Paso Public Library - Amendment**

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allow light into the rotunda. The rock faced stone used at El Paso is regularly coursed, rather than the irregularly laid up stone used in the Walker Library. The Morgan Park library's segmental arch is constructed of contrasting masonry which further accents the arch. This contrast is absent at El Paso. Although the Walker library has arched windows topped by contrasting masonry lintels, there are three double hung windows on either side of the entrance at El Paso which are in keeping with the scale of the building. Whether these changes were made for economic reasons is not documented, however they were probably the "change made from the Morgan Park structure ... practically one of conformation to fit the lesser amount of money to be expended here."<sup>6</sup> The budget for the El Paso library was \$6,000.

The El Paso Public Library reflects its Richardsonian Romanesque origins in its rock faced stone construction. The building's most important feature is its entrance bay, a segmental arch spanning the doorway between twin semi-circular towers which project from the building. Although it is this entrance which was borrowed from the Frost designs, it is clearly based on Richardson's earlier designs. Despite the Richardsonian Romanesque entrance, the massing of the El Paso library is consistent with other Classical Revival libraries designed by Paul Moratz.

The interior of the El Paso Library is representative of Moratz's library designs. (see Illinois Carnegie Libraries MPD; Section E, Historic Context Related to Architecture, Carnegie Libraries in Illinois -Architects) The original double, wooden front doors were replaced by a single aluminum door with side-light in the 1950's. Inside the front door is a staircase to the basement with its original woodwork and stairs up to an opening. The original wooden interior doors were removed in the 1950's. The square rotunda features a delivery desk, flanked by wooden Ionic columns facing the front door opening. The entrances to the two reading rooms on either side of the delivery room are defined by arches supported by square wooden columns. The integrity of the interior is well maintained. Original features such as the oak delivery desk, the wooden columns and the original woodwork are still in place. The primary modification on the main floor was a redesign of the fireplace in 1946. The ceilings in the reading rooms were lowered and the light fixtures replaced in 1974. Other changes on the main floor have been limited to new shelving, painting, and floor coverings.

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**El Paso Public Library - Amendment**

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ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Paul O. Moratz to F. B. Stitt, Esq., 17 April, 1905, Archives, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Illinois.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes, El Paso City Council, 5 December, 1905, El Paso, Illinois, Archives, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Illinois.

<sup>3</sup>Minutes, El Paso Library Board, 18 December, 1905, El Paso, Illinois, Archives, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Illinois.

<sup>4</sup>"Contract Let", El Paso Journal, 19 May, 1906.

<sup>5</sup>Invoice, Paul O. Moratz to Library Board, El Paso Illinois, 31 December, 1906, Archives, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Illinois.

<sup>6</sup>"Contract Let", El Paso Journal, 19 May, 1906.



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National Park Service

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**El Paso Public Library - Amendment**

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AMENDMENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Minutes, El Paso Library Board, 18 December, 1905, El Paso, Illinois, Archives, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Illinois.

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**El Paso Public Library - Amendment**

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Paul O. Moratz to F. B. Stitt, Esq., 17 April, 1905, Archives, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Illinois.

Roth, Leland M. A Concise History of American Architecture. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980.

Van Slyck, Abigail A. Free to All: Carnegie Libraries and American Culture. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

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Withey, Henry F. and Withey, Elsie Rathburn. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc, 1970; reprint ed., Detroit: Omnigraphics, 1996.



# United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. Box 37127

Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO:

RECEIVED

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. For further information call 202/343-9542.

SEP 2 1994

Preservation Services

AUG 26 1994

WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 8/15/94 THROUGH 8/19/94

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

- ALABAMA, CALHOUN COUNTY, Southern Railway Passenger Station and Freight Depot, 126 W. 4th St., Anniston, 94000795, OWNER OBJECTION, 8/11/94
- ARIZONA, PINAL COUNTY, Magma Hotel, 100--130 Main St., Superior, 94000981, NOMINATION, 8/19/94
- ARIZONA, YAVAPAI COUNTY, Prescott Armory Historic District, Roughly bounded by E. Gurley, E. Willis, N. Arizona, E. Sheldon and N. Rush Sts., Prescott, 94000829, NOMINATION, 8/15/94
- ARKANSAS, CLEBURNE COUNTY, Dill School, AR 5/25 W side, N of Ida, Ida vicinity, 94000854, NOMINATION, 8/16/94 (Public School in the Ozarks MPS)
- ARKANSAS, CLEBURNE COUNTY, Woman's Community Club Band Shell, NE corner of Spring Park, Heber Springs, 94000849, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ARKANSAS, CLEVELAND COUNTY, Attwood--Hopson House, AR 8, N side, New Edinburg, 94000848, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ARKANSAS, CRAIGHEAD COUNTY, Nash--Reid--Hill House, 418 W. Matthews Ave., Jonesboro, 94000852, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ARKANSAS, GREENE COUNTY, Gulf Oil Company Service Station, Jct. of Main and S. Third Sts., SE corner, Paragould, 94000850, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ARKANSAS, INDEPENDENCE COUNTY, Bartlett--Kirk House, 910 College St., Batesville, 94000856, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ARKANSAS, LOGAN COUNTY, Chism, Dr. Stephen N., House, AR 23 E side, S of jct. with AR 217, Booneville vicinity, 94000853, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ARKANSAS, POPE COUNTY, Riggs--Hamilton American Legion Post No. 20, 215 N. Denver Ave., Russellville, 94000855, NOMINATION, 8/15/94
- ARKANSAS, PULASKI COUNTY, First Baptist Church, Jct. of 12th and Louisiana Sts., SW corner, Little Rock, 94000823, NOMINATION, 8/09/94
- ARKANSAS, RANDOLPH COUNTY, Hillyard Cabin, Old Burr Rd., W side, NE of Warm Springs, Warm Springs vicinity, 94000851, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- CALIFORNIA, CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, Danville Southern Pacific Railroad Depot, 355 Railroad Ave., Danville, 94000860, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- COLORADO, CONEJOS COUNTY, Palace Hotel, 429 Main St., Antonito, 94001013, NOMINATION, 8/19/94
- COLORADO, DENVER COUNTY, Lewis, A. T., New Building, 1531 Stout St., Denver, 94001006, NOMINATION, 8/19/94
- COLORADO, FREMONT COUNTY, Christ Episcopal Church, 802 Harrison Ave., Canon City, 94001011, NOMINATION, 8/19/94
- COLORADO, MESA COUNTY, Handy Chapel, 202 White Ave., Grand Junction, 94001012, NOMINATION, 8/19/94
- DELAWARE, NEW CASTLE COUNTY, Walnut Green School, Jct. of DE 82 and Owl's Nest Rd., Greenville vicinity, 94001014, NOMINATION, 8/19/94
- IDAHO, IDAHO COUNTY, Cold Meadows Guard Station, NE of McCall, Frank Church--River of No Return Wilderness, Payette NF, McCall vicinity, 94001017, NOMINATION, 8/19/94
- ILLINOIS, COLES COUNTY, Railway Express Agency Building, 1804 Western Ave., Mattoon, 94000974, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ILLINOIS, COLES COUNTY, Starr Hotel, 1913--1923 Western Ave., Mattoon, 94000975, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Edgewater Beach Apartments, 5555 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, 94000979, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ILLINOIS, GRUNDY COUNTY, Coleman Hardware Company Building, 100 Nettle St., Morris, 94000980, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ILLINOIS, KANE COUNTY, Arcada Theater Building, 105 E. Main St. and 1st Ave., St. Charles, 94000977, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ILLINOIS, KANE COUNTY, Elgin National Watch Company Observatory, 312 Watch St., Elgin, 94000976, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ILLINOIS, WILL COUNTY, Heck, John, House, 1225 S. Hamilton St., Lockport, 94000978, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- ILLINOIS, WOODFORD COUNTY, El Paso Public Library, 149 W. First St., El Paso, 94000972, NOMINATION, 8/16/94 (Illinois Carnegie Libraries MPS)
- ILLINOIS, WOODFORD COUNTY, Illinois Central Railroad and Toledo, Peoria, and Western Railroad Freight House, 8--10 E. Front St., El Paso, 94000973, NOMINATION, 8/16/94
- MARYLAND, CARROLL COUNTY, Union Bridge Historic District, Roughly bounded by Bellevue, E. Locust, Buttersburg Alley, Church, Whyte, W. Locust and the Western Maryland RR tracks, Union Bridge, 94000820, NOMINATION, 8/17/94
- MASSACHUSETTS, WORCESTER COUNTY, Grafton State Hospital, Jct. of Westborough Rd. and Green St., Grafton, 94000691, OWNER OBJECTION, 8/08/94 (Massachusetts State Hospitals MPS)
- MONTANA, BLAINE COUNTY, Dave's Texaco, 237 Pennsylvania St., Chinook, 94000862, NOMINATION, 8/16/94 (Roadside Architecture Along US 2 in Montana MPS)
- MONTANA, BLAINE COUNTY, Young Brothers Chevrolet Garage, 201 Pennsylvania St., Chinook, 94000867, NOMINATION, 8/16/94 (Roadside Architecture Along US 2 in Montana MPS)
- MONTANA, HILL COUNTY, Heltne Oil Company, 140 First St., Havre, 94000865, NOMINATION, 8/16/94 (Roadside Architecture Along US 2 in Montana MPS)

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

W0-H-6

20115

1. Name of site:

Common El Paso Public Library (Carnegie)

Historic

2. Location:

Street and number

NW cor of First and Elm

City or Town

El Paso  
County

Zip Code

61738

Township

Range

Section

1/4 Section

3. Classification:

Category (check one)

( ) District (x) Building  
( ) Site ( ) Structure

Integrity (check one)

( ) Altered (x) Unaltered  
( ) Moved (x) Original Site

4. Ownership

( ) Private  
(x) Public

Status (check one)

(x) Occupied  
( ) Unoccupied  
( ) Preservation work in Progress

Access to Public

(x) Yes ( ) Restricted ( ) Unrestricted ( ) No

Present Use ( check one or more)

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

5. Ownership of Property

Owner's name

Street and number

Phone Number

City or Town

State

County

Zip Code

6. Description

Condition

(x) Excellent ( ) Good ( ) Fair ( ) Deteriorated ( ) Ruins ( ) Unexposed  
Is there a program of preservation underway? ( ) Yes (x) No

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

( ) Archaeological Site (Pre-Columbian)  
( ) Archaeological Site (Post-Columbian to 1673)  
( ) French Influence 1673-1780  
( ) Illinois Frontier (1780-1818)  
( ) Illinois Early (1818-1850)  
( ) Illinois Middle (1850-1900)  
(x) Illinois Late (1900-present)  
( ) Famous People (give names & dates)

REPOSITORY



8. **Specific Date:** Erected 1905

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

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

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates.) Use additional sheets if necessary. Carnegie contributed \$6,000 to this building.

9. Form prepared by:

Name and title: W. A. Gable Date: March 1973  
Survey of the Survey  
Organization: City of El Paso by Act 3  
Chapman, Illinois 61820  
Street and number: \_\_\_\_\_  
City or town: \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.

Baker, Glenna Bonar, Burster, Mildred Garber, Eft, Ethel Moore, Ringdon, Cassell C., and Williamson, Glenn Yerk, The El Paso Story: The Centennial Book of El Paso, Illinois. n.p.: no publisher given, 1954 (?), pp. 214-215.