

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

14  
For HCRS use only

received

date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic CARNEGIE FREE LIBRARY OF CONNELLSVILLE

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number South Pittsburgh Street not for publication

city, town Connellsville vicinity of congressional district 22

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Fayette code 051

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Trustees, Carnegie Free Library

street & number 301 South Pittsburgh Street

city, town Connellsville vicinity of state Pennsylvania 15425

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fayette County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Uniontown state Pennsylvania

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Preservation has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 5-20-80  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

## 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The building is of Ohio buff stone (which caused delay in the construction because of inability to get the stone) with a terra cotta cornice and red Spanish tile roof (since replaced). The Daily News Supplement of Connellsville stated that it was Italian Renaissance in style. It is 92.2'x74.6' in size and fronts on Pittsburgh Street. The handsome arched main entrance is flanked by an equal number of windows on each side together with the same number of windows above them on the second floor. The main entrance is recessed in the bottom half of a two-story protuberance about a foot deep and a small window is on each side of the double doors. Above it are three windows and a decorated gable. Between the first and second floors is a ledge supporting stone Ionic-style columns placed between each window. It is two-storied with an eleven foot basement.

The interior consists of two full stories and a finished basement, the latter containing packing, storage and boiler rooms. The largest basement room is now used as a meeting place for the Kiwanis Club.

The first floor contains two large reading rooms, each 31 feet square, one now used as the children's room and the other as a reference room. These rooms are located on either side of a main delivery lobby, which is 23 feet square. A main hall runs from north to south through the building, back of which are two small rooms 21'x21' in size, one now used for a reading and periodical room and the other for a librarian's office and work room. Between these two rooms is the stack room which is open to the roof and of sufficient height to contain four tiers of stacks. The capacity of the stack area was enlarged in 1966 and 1975 with the new areas above and below the original and reached by steel stairs. So completely arranged was the first floor plan that through the plate glass

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

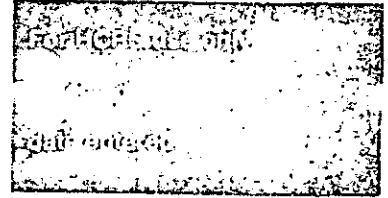
**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Carnegie Free Library of Connellsville, Fayette Co.

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2



partitions (since removed) of the rooms off the lobby, the librarian could view plainly all four reading rooms from the delivery desk, an advantage which, at the time of its opening no other library in the country possessed. Original

equipment included a turnstile on either side of the librarian's desk which necessitated that all persons entering or leaving the building pass in full view of the librarian. The turnstiles were connected with a foot-treadle at the librarian's desk, which enabled that official to secure the turnstiles during a momentary absence from duty.

The delivery lobby, halls and stock room contained tile floors which are still in use while the floors of the reading rooms were of hard wood. The ceilings were of frescoed plaster. The lobby is graced by a large semi-circular desk of oak which is unique. The stairway railings and newel posts are also of oak with ornamentation on the newel posts.

The second floor is reached by two stairways located on either side of the main floor. It consists of a Trustees room, an assembly hall of 250 seating capacity with a stage 18x38 feet in size. On the north side of the assembly room is a two-room suite occupied by a community women's group which includes a small kitchen.

On the south side of the assembly room is a small room occupied by the Connellsville Area Historical Society and to the east of it a small room used for storage. The original plans called the largest of these rooms a "museum." The building was to be heated by steam and lighted by electricity.

Side entrances with double doors are located on the south and north sides of the building, connected by six or so steps to the main lobby and a stairway to the basement.

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

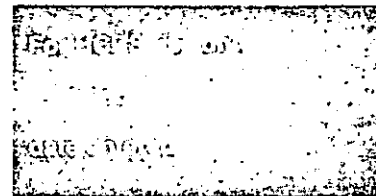
Carnegie Free Library of Connellsville, Fayette Co.  
Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

3



The many windows give the building a sense of airiness and light. In the matter of light, Mr. Carnegie requested "that there should be placed over the entrance to the libraries I build a representation of the rays of a rising sun and above "Let there Be Light." Connellsville complied with half of this request with a beautiful fanlight over the main entrance and a small narrow window on each side together with the many large windows of the building, but nowhere is evidence of the quotation. Perhaps the buildings many windows serve as evidence of his desire.

The building, "incredibly robust," when compared to modern buildings, sits atop a small grade overlooking a large portion of the town. It is in a park-like setting with a long, wide concrete walk, graduated with steps at intervals of its length, from Pittsburgh Street to its main door. It is near the heart of the business district but far enough away to preserve a serene, peaceful and green environment with its many lovely trees and shrubs. A bronze statue of one of Connellsville's heroes, Col. Wm. Crawford stands on the lawn. It was sculpted by Charles S. Kilpatrick and the tablet on its base was placed by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission in 1917. This lawn was the scene for many of the events of the Centennial Celebration in 1906 such as the reunion of old timers, a children's chorus and band concert, evening speeches and a vantage point for many viewing the huge parade.

# 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1901-3      **Builder/Architect** J. M. McCollum, Pittsburgh (Architect)  
 J. A. Nixon, Titusville (Builder)

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Mr. Carnegie never gave libraries. He gave money for the erection of library buildings. As a condition of the gift of funds for a building, the community receiving the gift agreed to maintain from tax funds a free public library. Connellsville Borough met this condition by resolution of its Town Council on April 14, 1899. Mr. Carnegie thought of these projects as free public libraries, not as "Carnegie" libraries and did not ask that his name be used in the designation of any building. It is believed that less than one-third of the 2,507 free public library buildings erected through his gifts were given his name. Connellsville saw fit to do so and called theirs "Carnegie Free Library." In 1907, the Carnegie Corporation discontinued the practice of making grants for the erection of library buildings, so Connellsville was fortunate in acting when it did.

Some parallels existed in the life of Andrew Carnegie and the citizens of Connellsville. A debating society was enjoyed by both and a small circulating library was available to both. Mr. Carnegie was an immigrant as were many of the Connellsville Area residents. Mr. Carnegie was a railroad man and Connellsville became known as a railroad town, at one time have five (5) active railroads. Of course, the best known commodities common and important to both were the world famous coal and coke of the region; the residents of Connellsville area producing it and Mr. Carnegie using it in his industrial empire resulting in an immense fortune. Connellsville benefited from the use of its raw materials in wealth of another sort--the riches of books and the wealth of knowledge through self-education.

After the citizens committee requested the gift of a library building, word was received from Mr. Carnegie as follows:

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

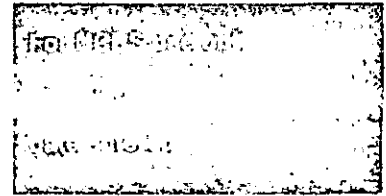
**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Carnegie Free Library of Connellsville, Fayette Co.

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2



"NEW YORK, N. Y., April 22nd 1899

Mr. J. C. McClenathan, Connellsville, Pa.

Dear Sir:--In reply to yours of the 19th, I will be pleased to give \$50,000.00 for the desired library building, provided a suitable site is furnished and the council agrees to grant a fund annually to maintain and operate the library.

I am sending a copy of this to President Frew of the Institute at Pittsburgh with whom you can communicate, as I sail next week.

Wishing you success in your efforts,

Yours very truly,  
ANDREW CARNEGIE"

A general meeting of the public was called and took the form of a jubilee to thank Mr. Carnegie. In its response to Mr. Carnegie, the Committee reiterated its guarantees of support. The Town Council, the School Board and the General Library Committee headed by Dr. McClenathan, met with in the week in Joint Session in Council Chambers. At this session, the three bodies agreed that the proper location for the proposed library building was the old cemetery in the hands of the School Board. The School Board was instructed to proceed to condemn the old "Connell Grave Yard (given to the town by Zachariah Connell, its founder) after which the land would be donated for the library on May 15, 1900. Two members of the Library Committee met with Mr. W. N. Frew (Mr. Carnegie's representative) who stated the site must first be obtained and a fund of \$4,000 to \$5,000 annually guaranteed by Town Council. The School Board engaged an attorney and the process of condemning the cemetery began. It took almost one year to condemn the ground, remove the bodies and reinterr them in Chestnut Hill Cemetery.

These actions caused a great deal of dissension in the community. Objections were raised to the cemetery's role in the project, many feeling that it was ghoulish to exhume the bodies. Expense was also involved as relatives were called upon to bear the expense of exhumation and reinterment. Objections were also raised to

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

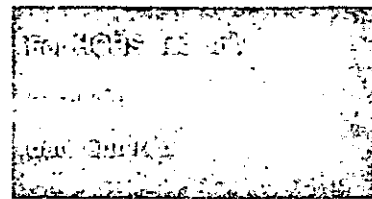
Free Library of Connellsville, Fayette County  
Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

3



the continuous additional taxes to be imposed by Town Council and School Board to maintain the library as per agreement. The first one mill of tax was levied by Town Council April 16, 1900. On April 18, 1900, the opponents of the Library wrote to Mr. Carnegie protesting "against burdening the town with a debt it can ill afford to incur under existing conditions." They attacked the parties in charge as having neither given any monies themselves or solicited voluntary contributions but obligated the Borough for maintenance by taxation and inviting litigation over use of cemetery grounds. The petition was turned down by Mr. Frew because Town Council, a tax-levying body, had approved the agreement and Town Council was elected by the citizens of Connellsville and therefore evidence that it had been accepted by the people. On Jan. 4, 1901, Mr. Frew directed the Board of Trustees to proceed to erect the library building after receiving the guarantee of maintenance from both the Town Council and the school board and having a title to the old cemetery. Opposition continued over the next several years, ending in a vote of the electors on February 16, 1904 to permit the Town Council to levy a tax for library purposes. The vote on the proposition was 767 for and 536 against.

The Library is a symbol of an era in local history when the community was thriving, rich, vibrant and reaching for the good life. Community leaders were reaching for the best for their citizens and one of the best was books for pleasure and self-improvement. The large immigrant population had little of the good life so a free library was especially important as a goal in their American Dream. Today, the population is no longer immigrant but it has a great similarity to the immigrant economically. The area is depressed and poor, filled with the elderly as the young move to more thriving communities.

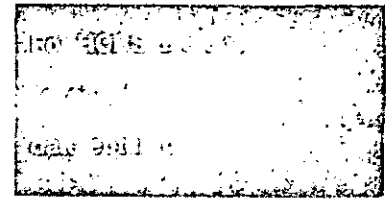
**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Carnegie Free Library of Connellsville, Fayette Co.  
Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4



The era in which the Library was built was unique in our history, spotlighting a rare and unusual man and the people and natural resources of an area who contributed mightily to the industrialization of a nation. Nationally, it was at the peak of an age when natural resources were so plentiful that they were used with abandon with no thought of depletion or conservation or methods. It is a symbol of the men who made gigantic fortunes and then had to spend a lifetime distributing them. Luckily for us, they felt that they must return some of the wealth to those impoverished backs who had helped amass it. The became big business in itself through the establishment of trusts and corporations, etc., and the people employed to administer them.

At the cornerstone laying, Colonel James E. Barnet, a graduate of Connellsville Schools, said "In laying the cornerstone of this building, you are not merely putting in place an inorganic block. You are laying the foundation of increased knowledge, happiness, enjoyment and improvement in your community. Within the walls to be erected, you and your sons and daughters and generations yet to come, can survey the whole horizon of human existence and achievement." It must be remembered that at this time, when compulsory education could be terminated at an early age, college educations were rare and limited to those of financial means. All others must be self-taught. The sons and daughters aforementioned have witnessed a steady growth. The Library opened with 2500 books and 60 periodicals. Today it has 51,415 volumes as well as 703 records, 184 reels of microfilm and a large paperback collection. It conducts a well-attended program of children's activities as well as offering the usual library services.



# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.569

Quadrangle name Connellsville, Pa.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

1	7	6	2	0	4	6	0	4	4	3	0	2	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carmel Caller

organization date

street & number 511 West Gibson Avenue telephone

city or town Connellsville state Pennsylvania 15425

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

### State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Ed Weintraub, Director date  
title Bureau for Historic Preservation

For HCRS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

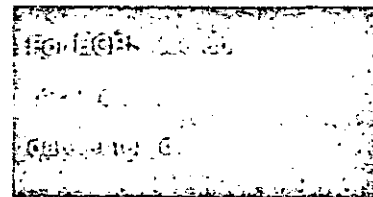
National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

Carnegie Free Library of Connellsville, Fayette Co.

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1



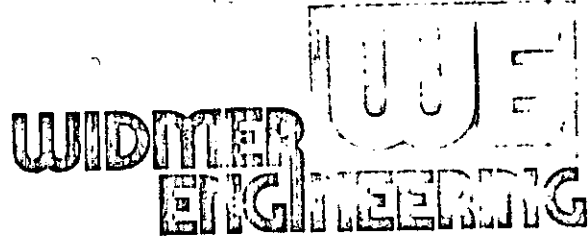
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Acknowledgement is made for time and gracious assistance from the following:

Miss Julia Allen, Librarian, Connellsville Carnegie Free Library  
Widmer Engineering, Brimstone Building, Connellsville, Pa. 15425  
Tax Collector's Office, City of Connellsville, Pa. 15425  
Mr. Joe E. Pinney, Connellsville, Pa. 15425

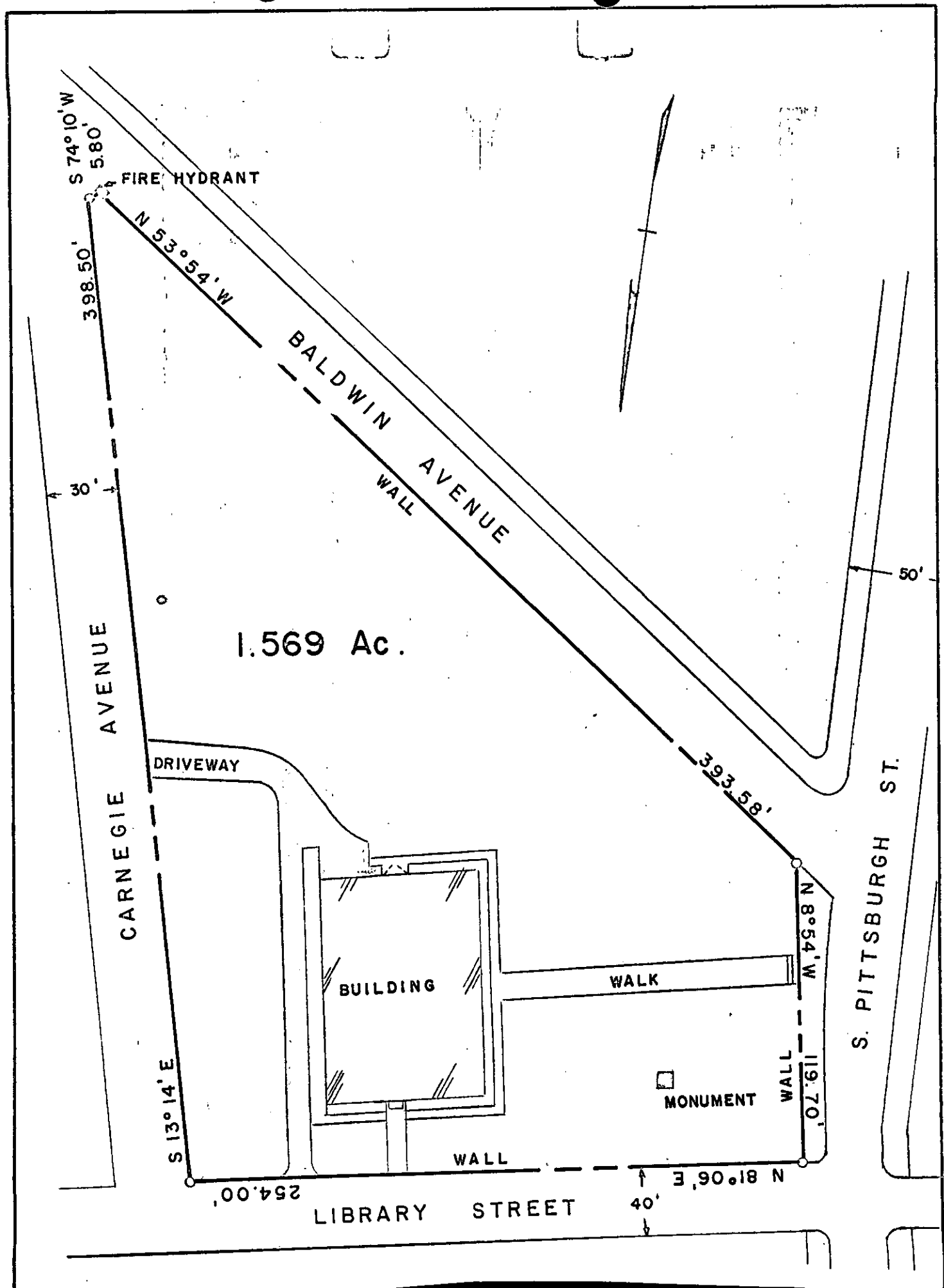
\*Dr. McClenathan was the community leader who spearheaded a drive and visited a number of leading citizens to assess and assure their interest in a library project. He then took up the matter with Town Council which resulted in a resolution on April 14, 1899 at a special meeting of Council for the purpose of considering the library proposition and pledging to furnish a proper site and guarantee its maintenance. He remained the leader of the Library Committee, meeting with Mr. Carnegie and Mr. Frew. He was successful in gaining an additional gift of \$18,000 from Mr. Carnegie (who rarely gave beyond the original gift) to acquire additional land



CARNEGIE FREE LIBRARY (Property Description)

All that certain piece or parcel of land situated in the City of Connellsville, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, more particularly bounded and described as follows :

Beginning at a point on the easterly side of Pittsburgh Street, at its intersection with Library Street; thence along the southerly side of Library Street, North  $81^{\circ} 06'$  East, a distance of 254.00 feet to a point on the westerly side of Carnegie Avenue, thence along the westerly side of Carnegie Avenue South  $13^{\circ} 14'$  East, a distance of 5.80 feet to a point on the northeasterly side of Baldwin Avenue, North  $53^{\circ} 54'$  West, a distance of 393.58 feet to a point at the northeasterly corner of Baldwin Avenue and Pittsburgh Street; thence along the easterly side of Pittsburgh Street, North  $8^{\circ} 54'$  West, a distance of 119.70 feet to a point, the place of beginning. Containing 1.569 Acres, according to a survey made by J. E. Hoenshel, C.E., September 10, 1931.



S 74° 10' W  
580'

FIRE HYDRANT

398.50'

N 53° 54' W

BALDWIN AVENUE  
WALL

1.569 Ac.

CARNEGIE AVENUE

DRIVEWAY

BUILDING

WALK

MONUMENT

WALL

393.58'

N 8° 54' W  
119.70'

S. PITTSBURGH ST.

S 13° 14' E

254.00'

LIBRARY STREET

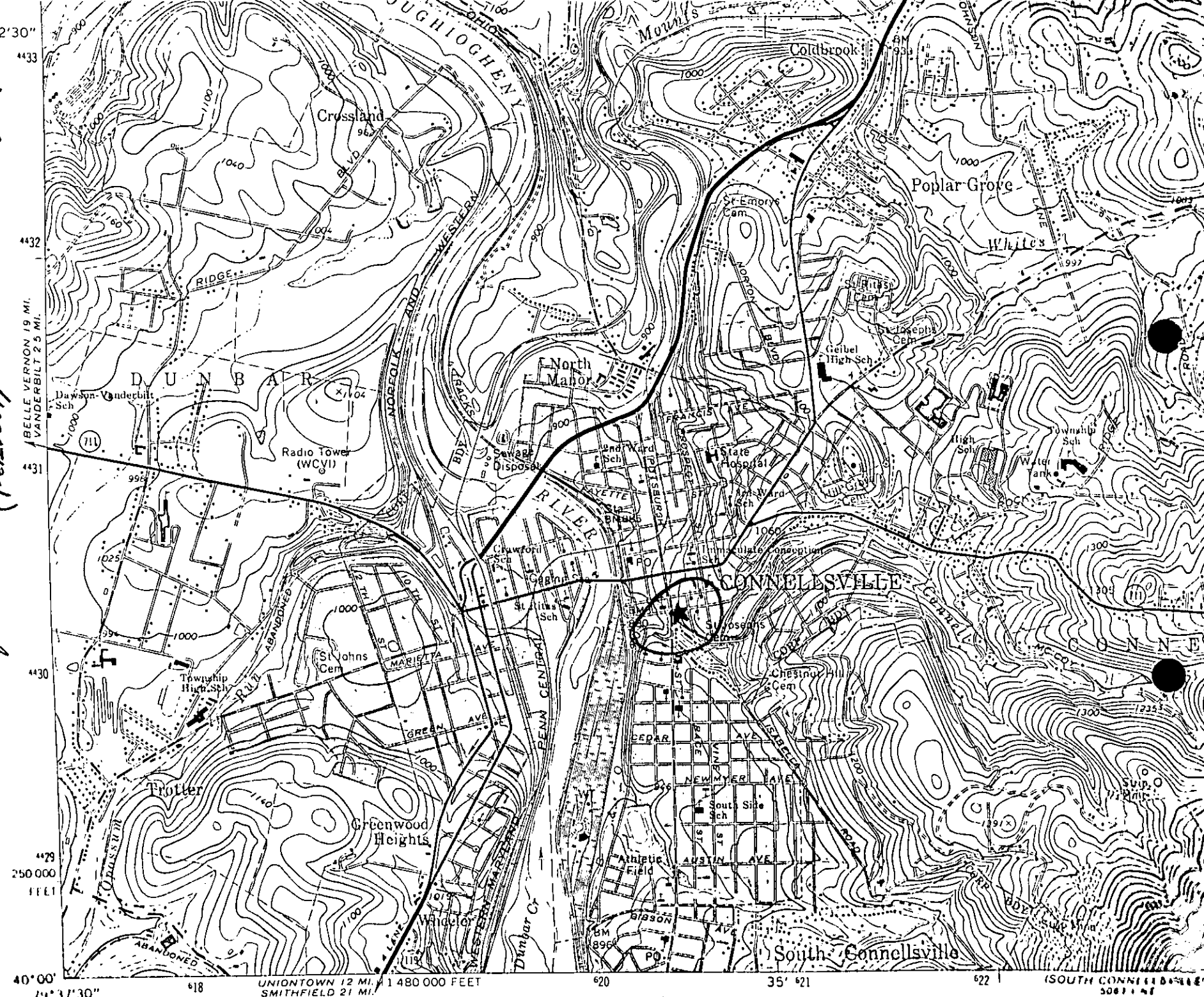
N 81° 06' E  
40'

50'

Latitude 79° 35' 22"  
Longitude 70° 38"

★ - *Calvese Free Library (Location)*

*Area - 1.569 acres*



40° 00' 19' 37' 30" 618 UNIONTOWN 12 MI. 1 480 000 FEET 620 35' 621 622 SOUTH CONNELLSVILLE 5081 441

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

*Sample*

SCALE 1:24,000