

TRUSTEE **Talk**

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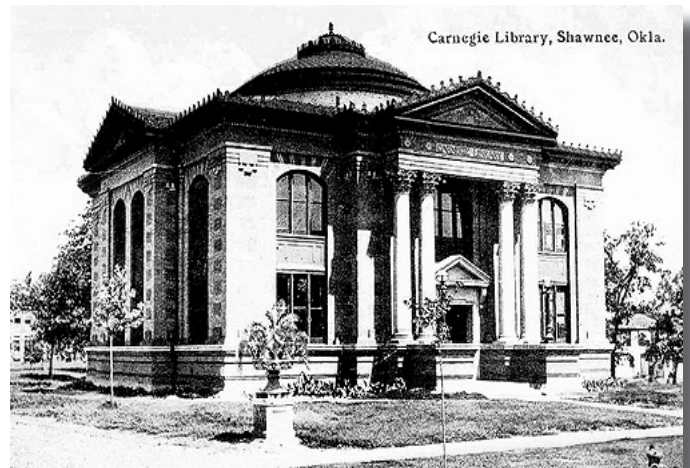
A publication for members of public library and library system boards written by the Office of Library Development in the Oklahoma Department of Libraries

Carnegie Libraries

Oklahoma Treasures

Andrew Carnegie had a tremendous impact on public library development in the United States. In 1896 there were 900 public libraries; by 1925 there were 3,873. Between 1889 and 1930, 1,679 public library buildings were built in 1,412 communities with funding by Andrew Carnegie and his Carnegie Corporation. In Oklahoma, \$493,500 in Carnegie funds paid for 24 public library buildings, including the first public library in the state of Oklahoma, and a library at the University of Oklahoma.

Andrew Carnegie paid for the building and its furnishings, but expected the local communities to provide the site (preferably near the center of town), to purchase the books, and to allocate in the city budget an annual amount for library operating expenses at least equal to 10% of Carnegie's original gift. This last stipulation proved to be a problem for some Oklahoma communities, and in 1917 the Carnegie Corporation suspended funding for Oklahoma's public libraries because 18% of the Oklahoma communities had failed to fully honor their pledges of support. In 1919, the Secretary of the Oklahoma Library Commission (a forerunner of ODL) personally interceded with the Carnegie Corporation and got funding restored. Two more libraries were then built, Miami in 1921 and Lawton in 1922, before the Carnegie Corporation stopped funding public library buildings.



Although many Carnegie libraries seem to have a similar style, Andrew Carnegie originally did not offer any rules or guidelines for the design of the building. However, after some communities designed buildings that he deemed too grandiose or impractical, he did offer these suggestions:

- An exterior style that complimented the local community.

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- One main floor to house books and resources and a comfortable reading area for both adults and children.
- A small vestibule entering into one large room, divided as necessary by bookshelves.
- Windows placed over wall-fastened stacks, and a central circulation desk that enabled one librarian to supervise the entire building.
- Fireplaces were discouraged because they used up valuable floor space that could be used for books.
- A basement lecture room, with room also for the heating plant.

Carnegie did not require his name on the building, but upon request did send a picture of himself to hang inside the front door. However, one reference source said that he did ask that the building design include a representation of the rays of the rising sun and the words "Let there be light."

Out of the 25 Carnegie library buildings built in Oklahoma, eight are still being used as public libraries, ten are still standing but are now used for other purposes, and seven have been demolished. Following are thumbnail sketches of each of the libraries.



Collinsville Public Library

Carnegie Buildings still used as Libraries

Collinsville Library

1223 Main, Collinsville, OK

Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 7,500

Opening Date of Library: 1917

Additions to the Building: Yes

Renovated in 1999-2000

At the turn of the century, a Mrs. Tyner borrowed a small collection of books from a Methodist church organization which she kept in her home and lent to other Collinsville readers. In 1904, the Shakespeare study club, called the Comedy of Errors, joined with Mrs. Tyner, one of its members, to begin working for a real public library. For thirteen years, the club collected books, cultivated public support and moved their small library from Mrs. Tyner's home to the First National Bank and then to city hall.

Finally in 1915, the Carnegie Corporation, through the influence of such prominent citizens as T. L. Steenrod, H. C. Bollman, Mrs. Colburn, Mrs. J. H. Stafford and others, gave \$7,500 for a library. When the building was completed, in 1917, the club turned over its 1,500 volumes to the new institution. Mrs. A. Nicodemus was the first librarian.

The Carnegie library building still serves the Collinsville community, and benefited from a 1999 renovation which helped to make the building larger and more accessible to the community.

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Library Development Office Has New Head

This May Susan McVey, director of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries, appointed Vicki Mohr to be head of the Office of Library Development.



Vicki Mohr

“Vicki brings both a high level of expertise and a broad understanding of Oklahoma’s public libraries to this very important position,” McVey said. “I am sure that she will do a wonderful job serving the directors, trustees and friends of Oklahoma’s libraries.”

The Office of Library Development has the responsibility for consulting with, training, and offering grant opportunities for Oklahoma’s public and institution libraries. As head, Mohr will supervise public library consultants, the Literacy Office and an administrative assistant. Library Development staff work closely with the Oklahoma Library Association, the Oklahoma Literacy Coalition, FOLIO, and numerous other groups to assist local libraries and literacy groups in providing the best service possible to their communities.

Having been a regional consultant at ODL for 14 years, Vicki is very familiar with all aspects

of Oklahoma’s public libraries. In addition, she founded and has supervised ODL’s Computer Lab that has offered technology training on everything from troubleshooting to software programs to Internet resources for library staff. In 2003 she worked with Susan McVey to write a grant to the Gates Foundation that secured funding for public libraries to upgrade their older computers and their telecommunication lines.

Fund raising and public relations are also interests of hers, and she is currently lead officer on an LSTA grant entitled “Presenting Your Message,” which enables directors to prepare and present PowerPoint talks about their library to local community groups.

Vicki is also a long time member of the Oklahoma Library Association and has served on numerous committees including the Sequoyah and legislative committees and the Public Library Division. Before coming to ODL, she worked at the Norman Public Library, part of the Pioneer Library System.

“My entire professional career has been spent in Oklahoma’s public libraries, and I have a deep affection and respect for the directors and staff,” said Mohr. “I look forward to helping ODL improve the services which we offer to Oklahoma’s libraries.”

Vicki looks forward to meeting many of you as she visits libraries in the coming months.

El Reno Carnegie Library

215 E. Wade, El Reno, OK

Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 12,500

Opening Date of Library: June 14, 1905

Additions to the Building: Yes

To the Athenaeum Club of El Reno belongs the credit of having sponsored the library movement in that city. As soon as they had obtained a pledge of support from the city in April, 1902, the club members concentrated their efforts on collecting books and applying for a Carnegie building. The city made an appropriation of \$360 a year, of which \$300 was paid to a librarian. Citizens donated books and subscribed money to the library fund, including J. N. Mitchum who donated the lot for the library and also contributed \$600.

News that Andrew Carnegie had granted the city \$12,500 for a library arrived on November 25, 1904. The building was completed on May 5, 1905 and dedicated on June 14, 1905. S. Wemyss Smith of Fort Worth, Texas, was the architect.



El Reno Carnegie Library

An addition to the building was later completed which increased the library's floor space. Some library tables, original to the building, are still in use.

Elk City Carnegie Library

221 W. Broadway, Elk City, OK

Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 10,000

Opening Date of Library: October 11, 1915

Additions to the Building: Yes

To celebrate the second anniversary of the historic meeting which marked the library's founding, the city held a banquet at which the Elk City Library Association asked the assistance of the Commercial Club in obtaining a Carnegie building. The result was a gift of \$10,000 from the Carnegie Corporation, awarded in April, 1914. Through the cooperation of the Library Association and Commercial Club, a site was bought, and on October 11, 1915, the new building was formally opened. A. A. Crowell was the architect.

The library was closed for five months in preparation for its move into the new building, and during that time so many benefits were given for it that the book collection increased from 85 to 1,881 volumes.

In recent years, an addition was added to the building which included an elevator to improve access and renovations to the children's area.

Hobart Public Library

200 S. Main, Hobart, OK

Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 9,000

Opening Date of Library: October 15, 1912

Additions to the Building: Yes – opened in 1987

On September 9, 1901, four weeks after the first settler arrived in Hobart, Mrs. George J. Russler and Mrs. Campbell called on the editor of the Hobart News to solicit subscriptions for a free library and reading room. With various fund raisers and programs, the library acquired 304 volumes. However, in 1903 an appeal was made to Andrew Carnegie for a building which was unsuccessful, and that may have been the reason this early library movement withered and died.

But ten years after the establishment of this first library, enthusiasm revived. Citizens donated dollars to buy a site, and this time the appeal by Judge Tolbert to the Carnegie Corporation did not fail. In 1911 Hobart was given \$9,000 for a building, which opened in 1912. The architect was William McCause, and



Hobart Public Library

the library board was able to save \$500 from the building fund to purchase books for the new library. The first books were circulated on October 15, 1912, with the Rev. J. A. Black serving as the first librarian.

In 1987 an addition was added to the library greatly increasing the amount of floor space and including an elevator for accessibility. The library board raised over \$400,000 to build the addition.

Frederick Public Library

Address of Carnegie Library: 200 E. Grand

Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 10,000

Opening Date of Library: February, 1916

Additions to the Building: No

Records show no previous existence for the Frederick library before it entered on its career as a Carnegie library in 1915. Awarded in 1914, the Carnegie gift of \$10,000 for a building was secured for the city by a library board whose members were Dr. J. Angus Gillis, chairman, W. E. Muller, S. J. Mathies, G. W. Howland and T. A. Gross. A. H. Krause was the architect, and the lot was donated by Cameron Lumber Company.

While the building was going up, civic organizations busied themselves with a series of book drives and money-raising entertainments to provide books for the new library, as a result of which 2,000 volumes were gathered and prepared for circulation. The plans for the library building were approved in April, 1915, and the library opened in February, 1916.

In 1935 and 1936 the library was redecorated, new furniture was purchased and the library grounds were landscaped.

Carnegie Libraries oklahoma Treasures

Perry Carnegie Library

302 N. 7th. Perry, OK

Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 10,000

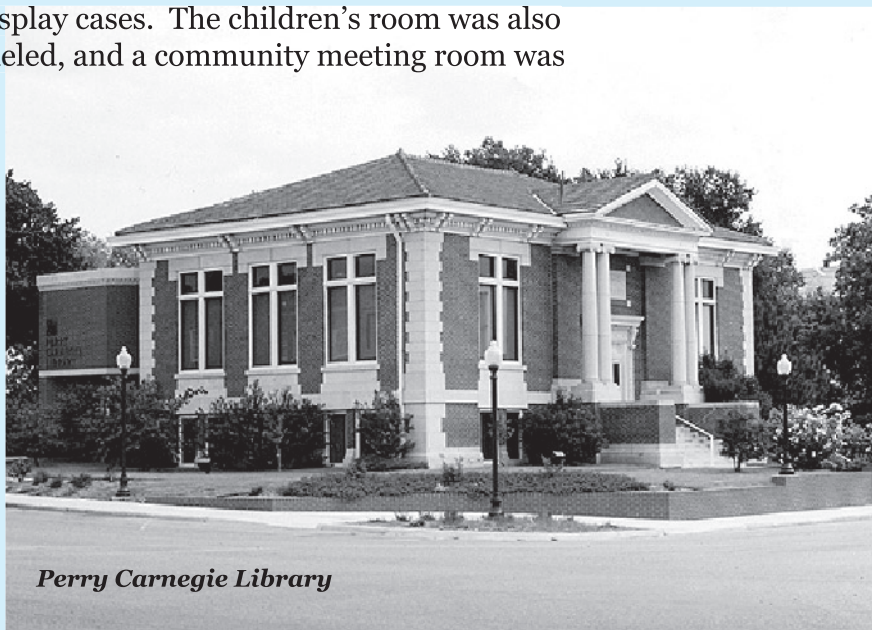
Opening Date of Library: 1908

Additions to the Building: Yes – dedicated in November, 1991

A woman who wouldn't turn down a dare obtained a Carnegie library for Perry. But the library already had some six years' history behind it, and had existed in a small way as a public library for two years before that historic day in 1908 when someone dared Mrs. H. L. Boyes to ask Andrew Carnegie to build Perry a library. She did so, and the result was a gift to the city of \$10,000.

Mrs. Boyes was commissioned to try to obtain a site for the library in 1907, and was successful within three months in getting the exact corner desired by the board. After this, the historic "dare" was made, and again Mrs. Boyes was successful in obtaining the Carnegie gift, after which she supervised the erection of the building and the removal of the books, and remained an active member of the board for many years after.

In 1991, a 1900 square foot addition was added to the north side of the library. The addition houses the elevator, foyer, rest rooms and display cases. The children's room was also remodeled, and a community meeting room was added



Perry Carnegie Library

Bartlett-Carnegie Public Library

27 W. Dewey, Sapulpa, OK

Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 25,000

Opening Date of Library: 1918

Additions to the Building: Yes – in 1969 and 1997

Sapulpa's first library was organized by the Ladies' Library Club in 1901 and housed at 116 S. Water. When oil began to flow, Sapulpa, as the scene of the first important oil development in Oklahoma, increased its population six-fold. In 1917, it applied for a Carnegie building. Mrs. Mary Whitaker, first president of the library board, headed the movement and received \$25,000 from the Carnegie Foundation. The city added \$10,000 to this amount to erect a \$35,000 building, which was finished in 1918.

When the library was ready, Sapulpa citizens furnished it by voluntary contributions. A tag



day enabled the Library Board to raise \$600 to furnish the main reading room. Mr. and Mrs. L. T. Jackson gave the furniture for the Children's Room and Judge and Mrs. D. A. McDougal furnished the office. Landscaping was done by the D.A. R. and Boy Scouts, and the D. A. R. also contributed a period room. A \$1,000 grand piano for the auditorium was the gift of the Symphony Club.

In 1997 the Edward E. and Helen Turner Bartlett Foundation provided funds to restore and expand the library. In addition to providing handicapped accessibility, the building was restored to reflect much of the original 1917 Carnegie construction.



Bartlett-Carnegie Public Library

Tahlequah Public Library

120 S. College, Tahlequah, OK

Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 10,000

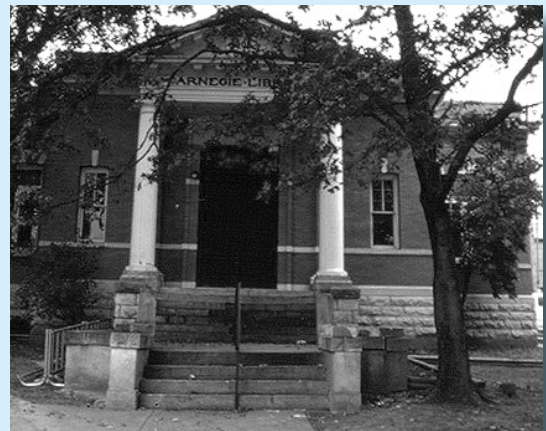
Opening Date of Library: 1907

Additions to the Building: Yes

Before the Carnegie library was built, forty citizens paid \$1.50 each to join the Western Library Association of Kansas City that sent 50 books every 8 months for the subscribers to read. These books were housed in a local drug store, whose managers acted as librarians.

In the latter part of 1904, Mrs. J. W. Reid, together with her father, Rev. Gilbert Thompson, and Mrs. J. A. Lawrence, began the initial work of interesting Andrew Carnegie in giving a library to the capital city of the Cherokees. At this time Tahlequah had only 1,800 population, which was below the average size of the towns to which libraries were granted, but its unusual history and circumstances led Mr. Carnegie to make a gift of \$10,000, in the hope that the library might be of service not only to Tahlequah but to the whole Cherokee nation. The building was completed in 1905, but not opened to the public until 1907.

An addition was added in 1978, greatly increasing the size of the library. Today, the addition houses the library's collections and offices, and the Carnegie building is used for meetings.



Tahlequah Public Library

Carnegie Libraries no Longer used as Libraries

Ardmore Public Library

500 Stanley, Ardmore, OK

Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 15,000

Opening Date of Library: October 1, 1906

Additions to the Building: A second story was removed.

Mrs. Hosea Townsend, wife of a U.S. District Judge, was so determined on a library for Ardmore that she actually took up the matter with Andrew Carnegie. Feeling though, as women were often made to feel at the turn of the century, that she was overstepping the mark by engaging in business affairs, she persuaded C. L. Anderson of the First National Bank to complete the negotiations. With his usual generosity toward communities in the sparsely settled territories, Mr. Carnegie gave \$15,000 for the library.

Ground was broken for the building in 1904. The mayor, R. W. Dick, was nearly as active on the library's behalf as were the members of the building committee, R. W. Randol, W. F. Whittington and W. A. Gilliam. Although the structure was completed in 1904, it was unoccupied for a year, during which time it suffered so much abuse that the city had to spend \$300 for repairs before the library could be opened. The formal opening was on October 1, 1906.

The building was remodeled in 1925, reopening on November 6, 1926, and was also repaired after a 1946 tornado hit Ardmore. The Carnegie building is currently being used as a meeting place by the Ardmore Garden Club.



Ardmore Public Library

Bartlesville Public Library

7th and Osage, Bartlesville, OK

Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 12,500

Opening Date of Library: March 15, 1913

From the time its library committee held its first meeting to discuss the possibilities of a library, November 21, 1908, to the date of the opening of a Carnegie building, March 15, 1913, the Tuesday Club labored with unflagging zeal. It did not establish any library of its own, but persuaded the city to appoint a library board with whom it worked hand in hand to obtain a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, then to obtain a site, and finally to assist in the establishment of the public library. The Carnegie gift of \$12,500 served to erect a building which was used for fifteen years.

In 1927 the library was moved to the north wing of the Civic Center, and in 1992 the library moved to its present location at 600 S. Johnstone. The Carnegie building now houses the offices of a Bartlesville law firm, after also serving as offices for the Bartlesville School District.

Cordell Public Library

115 E. 2nd St., Cordell, OK

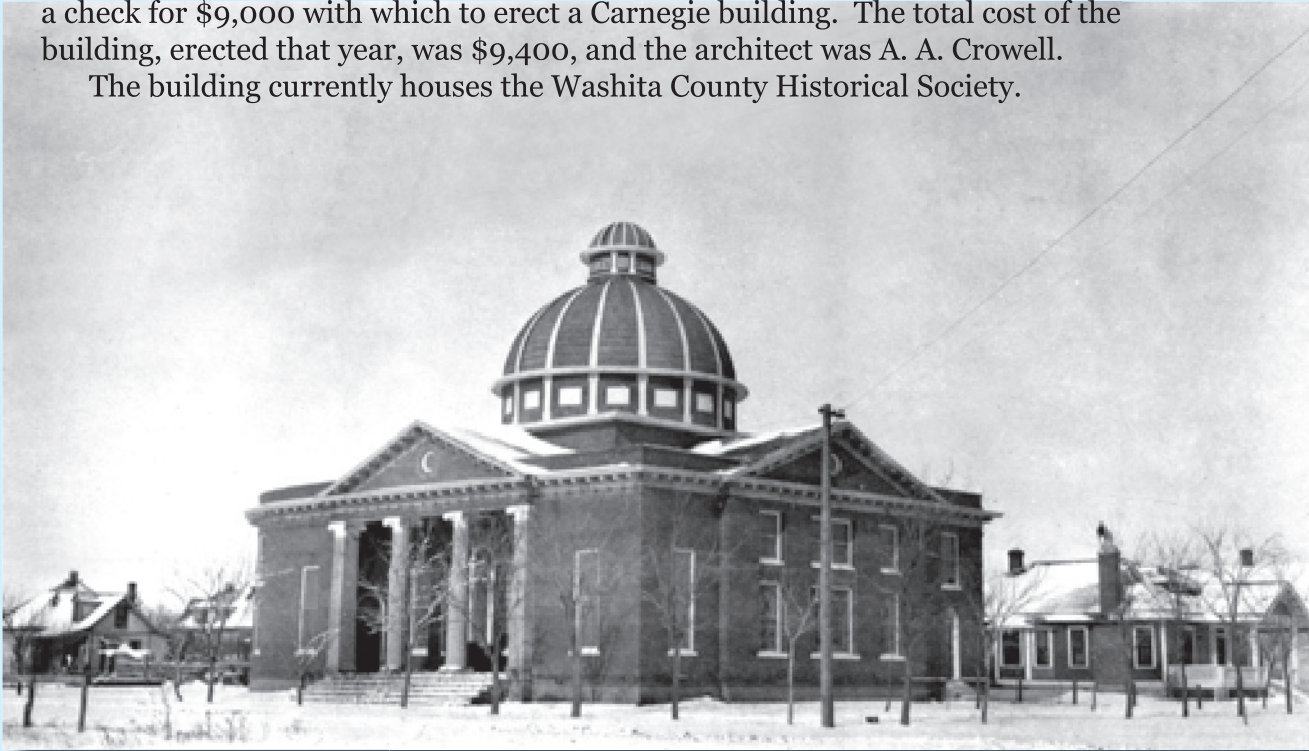
Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$9,000

Opening Date of Library: January 19, 1912

Additions to the Building: Unknown

When the city of Cordell decided in 1911 that it was time to establish a public library, it began at once by making application to the Carnegie Foundation. The movement was headed by four Cordell citizens, O. L. Hull, S. C. Burnett, A. M. Beets and J. A. Duff, whose negotiations were so successful that the city soon received a check for \$9,000 with which to erect a Carnegie building. The total cost of the building, erected that year, was \$9,400, and the architect was A. A. Crowell.

The building currently houses the Washita County Historical Society.



Cordell Public Library



Carnegie Libraries no Longer used as Libraries

Guthrie Public Library

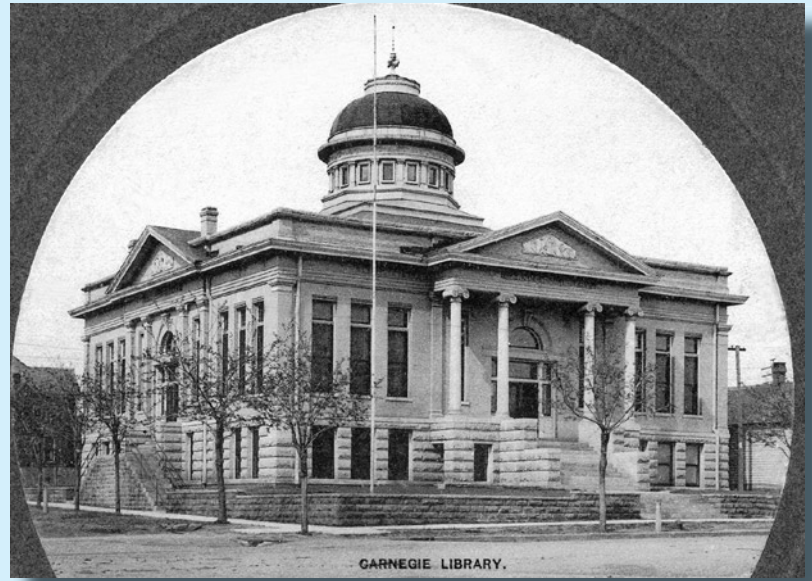
402 E. Oklahoma, Guthrie, OK

Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 26,000

Opening Date of Library: February, 1903

Additions to the Building: Yes

The Federated Women's Clubs of Guthrie organized Guthrie's first library, established a library board and began laying the groundwork to apply to Andrew Carnegie. R. W. Ramsey, a native of Andrew Carnegie's home town in Scotland, sent the appeal to Mr. Carnegie on behalf of the pioneer library. The iron magnate sent \$1,000 for books, whereupon the name of the library was changed to the Carnegie Circulating Library. Carnegie, perhaps further softened by this tribute, then gave \$25,000 for a building. By August, 1901, the city had taken over the City Federation of Women's Clubs' library and was busily planning the new building. \$10,000 was added to the Carnegie gift, making the total cost of the building \$35,000. The laying of the cornerstone took place on July 2, 1902, and the building was opened formally in February,



Guthrie Public Library

1903.

The building now houses the Oklahoma Territorial Museum and Carnegie Library.

University of Oklahoma

Norman, OK

OU's first library was housed in the administration building. However, in 1903 the administration building burned, and the library of 4,821 volumes was destroyed. OU applied to Andrew Carnegie, and he presented the University with \$30,000 for a new library building, the first time he had ever made such a gift to a state-supported school. The new structure, now the oldest on the campus, was ready for use by the end of 1904, and the books were moved in during the Christmas holidays.

In 1920 the library moved out of the Carnegie building. Situated on the north oval, the building has housed the College of Education and University High School. It now houses faculty from the College of Architecture.



Carnegie Building at OU