

4. Have students determine what activities take place in your county courthouse. Who works there? What materials are stored there? Is the building ever used for social and civic occasions?
5. Ask students to find other public buildings in your community (for example, banks, jail, city hall). How do these buildings compare with the courthouse in your county? Do they share a similar architectural style? Are they older or more modern?

Enrichment Activities

1. Ask students to find photographs of county courthouses throughout the state and compare the various styles. Have them create an architectural timeline or group buildings according to similar architectural styles.
2. Have students survey public buildings in your community. What styles are most often used? Are they similar to the one used for the courthouse?

Libraries

Libraries have existed since America's colonial days, but the libraries were not always free or open to the public. Not until about a hundred years ago did libraries begin to be built in great numbers in separate, public buildings.

A major factor in the rapid increase in the number of libraries was the philanthropy of one man, steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. His donation of more than forty million dollars resulted in the construction of 1,679 new library buildings in both large and small communities. Carnegie's decision to support library construction developed out of his own love of reading. His schooling was cut short when he was eleven and his father lost the family textile business. His family moved from Scotland to Allegheny, Pennsylvania, just outside of Pittsburgh, where Andrew started working as a messenger boy in a textile factory. He loved to read and frequently borrowed books from a wealthy man's personal library.

Some years later, Carnegie began working for the Pennsylvania Railroad, eventually rising to the position of superintendent. He invested his money in a number of industries, including locomotives, oil, iron, and steel. By the 1870s he had created the Carnegie Steel Company, which he sold in 1901 for \$250 million. He then retired and devoted the remainder of his life to philanthropy. He believed that wealthy men should live moderately and give away the bulk of their riches to benefit the welfare and happiness of common people, particularly in such areas as universities, libraries, and public parks. When Carnegie died in 1919 at age eighty-four, he had given away nearly \$390 million to charity. Carnegie regarded all education as a means of improving people's lives. Libraries, he believed, played an important role in helping Americans build brighter futures.

Because the libraries were meant to be permanent public buildings, Carnegie's advisers suggested that a "dignified" architectural style be adopted. This factor explains the Carnegie libraries' common use of classical architectural elements, such as the Sparta Free Library's columns. Carnegie's foundation was intimately involved in all aspects of design and maintained design approval for all of the libraries; consequently, he played a central role in the development of a standard plan and efficient layout for virtually all American public libraries. He introduced the ideas of open access to book stacks, central circulation desks, and fireplaces. Carnegie libraries characteristically had high ceilings,

second-level public areas, and spacious interior rooms with natural lighting and ventilation. The most telling feature remains the tall flight of front steps leading from the street.

Today public libraries are seen as a necessary civic service, functioning not only as a tool for education but also as an important element of a community's self-image. In many smaller communities, a Carnegie library was the community's sole architect-designed building, which enhanced the building's historic and architectural prominence. Between 1901 and 1915, sixty-three such public libraries were built in sixty Wisconsin communities. Today, thirty-seven of the original buildings still serve as libraries, while many others have been converted into offices, museums, chambers of commerce, and restaurants. The fact that so many of Wisconsin's library buildings still stand attests to their enduring value both as libraries and as physical demonstrations of community participation in a cultural movement of national scope and importance.



T. B. Scott Free Library

Location: Merrill, Lincoln County

Architects: Louis Ward Claude and Edward Starck

Date: 1911

Photo credit: Paul Jakubovich

Background

Designed by Louis Ward Claude and Edward Starck, a Madison architectural firm specializing in library design,

the Scott Free Library is the largest and most elaborate of the Prairie School (see Glossary) libraries. All the elements of Prairie design are found in this library: a low hip roof (see Glossary) made of red tile; wide overhanging eaves that cast a deep shadow along the top of the building; ornament below the roof; and windows grouped in threes. True to the Prairie School ideal, the low-slung horizontal lines suggest the flat open plains of the Midwest. Andrew Carnegie and Thomas B. Scott, a local lumber magnate for whom the building is named, funded construction of the library.

Sparta Free Library

Location: Sparta, Monroe County

Architects: Gustave Stoltze and Hugo Schick

Date: 1902

Photo credit: James Monroe

Background

The Sparta Free Library was built in 1902 with a twelve-thousand-dollar grant from the Carnegie Foundation.

La Crosse architects Gustave Stoltze and Hugo Schick

designed the building in similar scale and plan to other small, turn-of-the-century Carnegie libraries.

The crisp contrast of brick walls with stone arched openings are elements of classical design. The characteristic flight of steps created a greater sense of grandeur for a small building and symbolically expressed the elevating power of knowledge.



Explorations with Students

1. Have students compare and contrast the Sparta Free Library and the Scott Free Library by listing their similarities and differences.
2. What is the style of the library (libraries) in your community? Ask students to think about the similarities to and differences from the two libraries discussed here. If there is an original Carnegie library in your community, is it now used for something else? If so, why was a new library built?
3. Ask students to research what influences in Andrew Carnegie's life may have shaped his generosity with his money.
4. Ask students to consider how a library from their parents' or their grandparents' generation would differ from today's libraries. Have them interview members of their family to learn more about libraries of the past.

Enrichment Activity

Ask students to research the local library or libraries and draw pictures or take photographs of the buildings and place them on a timeline.

Schools

In the 1800s, traditionally designed schoolhouses emphasized the importance of fresh air, space, and light. Typically twenty-five by thirty-five feet, classrooms had expansive windows and high ceilings. One-room schoolhouses and urban schools alike had adjacent playgrounds and athletic fields that set them apart from other buildings in the community.

The earliest schoolhouses were built of local materials such as logs, sod, and planks. These structures rarely survived. As pioneer communities grew, so did the size and composition of their schoolhouses. Made of wood, stone, or brick, they were built to last. Their designs often resembled those of other rural communal buildings, such as meeting houses, small churches, and town halls.

From the late 1800s through the early 1900s, school designs began to reflect popular architectural styles. Urban schools were usually large and adopted styles such as Spanish Colonial Revival or Romanesque Revival (see Glossary) that were appropriate for larger public structures.

After World War II, school design mirrored the ranch-style residences in the suburban locations in which new schools were built. Yet the basic interior setting—size, large windows, high ceilings, and open settings—remained unchanged until the late 1960s, when the then-popular open-space schools eliminated walls, corridors, and windows.

Rural schools are still in use but are rare. Today, Wisconsin has only a single one-room school still in operation, on Madeline Island in Bayfield County. But many rural school buildings have been preserved as houses, museums, shops, and community centers. A few, like Stony Hill School, survive as educational museums, preserving and interpreting the historical legacy of one-room schools for a predominantly urban and suburban audience. Many older urban schools now serve as school administration offices, storage facilities, shopping centers, apartments, and condominiums.