

II. THE HISTORY OF PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDINGS AND CARNEGIE LIBRARY ARCHITECTURE.

The architectural history of public library buildings began in the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century. Before this time, the majority of libraries were private collections, contained in homes or buildings not specifically designed as libraries. As book collections grew, so did the need for larger spaces and eventually buildings to contain these materials. After 1850, public library buildings became a fashionable cause for philanthropists:

The Astor and Lenox bequests in New York, the Peabody and Enoch Pratt gifts in Baltimore, the Rush bequest in Philadelphia, and the Newberry endowment in Chicago, as well as the many contributions for the library buildings in small towns and cities, created an environment that influenced Andrew Carnegie to launch his library building program during the 1890s and into the first decades of the twentieth century.¹

Many wealthy Americans engaged architects to design libraries, as did cities and smaller towns interested in their cultural development.

One of the earliest and the most influential architects of small library design in America was Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-86). Richardson received his formal architectural training at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris between 1859-62. During this time, he worked with the French architect Henri Labrouste who designed the Ste.-Genevieve Library, regarded as the finest of its day and remaining a standard in library design. Richardson's education and exposure to library design in France prepared him in designing five small library buildings in America. These five buildings--Winn Memorial Library, Woburn, Massachusetts, (1877); Oliver Ames Free Library, North Easton, Massachusetts, (1877); Crane Memorial Library, Quincy, Massachusetts, (1880); Billings Memorial Library, Burlington, Vermont, (1883); and the Converse Memorial

¹Donald E. Oehlerts, Book and Blueprints (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 69.

Library, Malden, Massachusetts, (1883)--remain important in library design because interior spaces were compartmentalized i.e. intended for specific uses such as reading rooms, stack area, and central reception.

Richardson's arrangement of interior spaces and the overall form of his libraries probably served as models for many Carnegie library architects. In particular, Richardson's interior spaces were roughly configured along a longitudinal and latitudinal axis. The importance of the librarian's desk is emphasized by its location at the intersection of the two axes, as in the Winn Memorial library. In almost all of Georgia's Carnegie libraries, the librarian's desk was situated at the building's cross axis. It is likely that architects of Carnegie libraries referred to Richardson's libraries and were aware of their interior arrangement.

Following the construction of Richardson's library buildings, library architecture expanded both in size and quantity. Important library buildings such as the Lenox Library, New York City, (1877) and the Peabody Library, Baltimore, Maryland, (1878) advanced library design. However, few other buildings contributed to library design

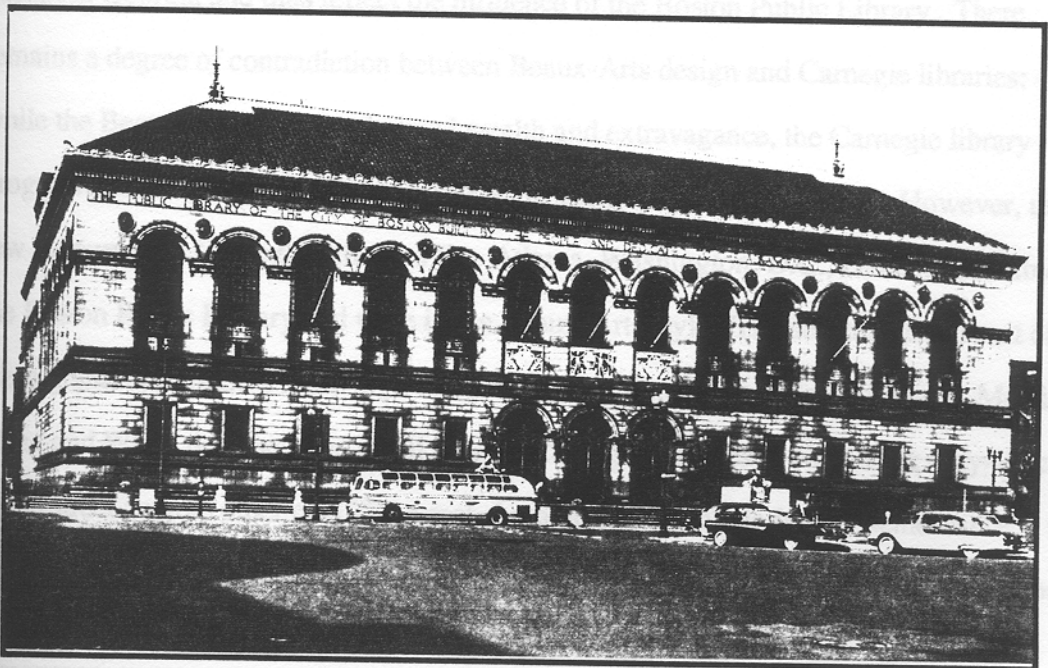


Fig. 2. McKim, Mead, and White. Boston Public Library, 1887-95.

more than McKim, Mead and White's Boston Public Library (1887-95). Charles McKim had worked in Richardson's office and was the partner primarily responsible for the Boston library's design. The building was monumental in character, of immense size, and capable of holding 700,000 volumes--equal to the Library of Congress.¹⁸ It also incorporated decorative elements created by such prestigious artist of the day as Augustus Saint-Gaudens, John Singer Sargent, and Daniel Chester French. Indeed McKim tried to weave form and function together, creating a magnificent cloth, although the end result was a garment best suited for an elegant evening, not everyday wear.

The Boston Public Library eventually cost over \$2 million to construct. It was considered extravagant by many and was publicly criticized. While libraries of this magnitude were not the norm in Georgia, certain Beaux-Arts elements were included in Georgia libraries. Specifically, the characteristic star-shaped mullion windows are found in many of Georgia's Carnegie libraries. Additionally, decorative exterior wall surfaces were included on some Georgia libraries, particularly the main library in Atlanta. The Atlanta, Savannah, and Macon libraries serve as high-style examples of Beaux-Arts design in Georgia and thus reflect the influence of the Boston Public Library. There remains a degree of contradiction between Beaux-Arts design and Carnegie libraries; while the Beaux-Arts style symbolized wealth and extravagance, the Carnegie library program encouraged economy in architectural design and ornamentation. However, the few monumental Carnegie Libraries (i.e. Atlanta, Washington, D.C., Dallas), resembled the Boston Public Library and were in the Beaux-Arts style. The substantial amount of these grants supported a more high-style library building. Interestingly enough, McKim, Mead and White designed two small, branch Carnegie libraries in New York City--one on 135th street and the other on 125th street--both of which include Italian Renaissance elements reflecting Michelozzo's Palazzos. They did not contain the level of elaboration

¹⁸William H. Jordy, American Buildings and Their Architects (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 328.

of their other works, but demonstrate the firm's spectrum of influence in terms of Beaux-Arts design.

The influence of McKim, Mead and White on late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century architecture in the United States was tremendous. The firm had more building commissions than any other between 1870-1920.¹⁹ Their influence on American architecture included a preference for classical forms, the "classicism" preferred among east-coast architects generally. The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago affirmed McKim, Mead and White's classical values in architectural design, seen in their Palace of Fine Arts building: "McKim, Mead and White sought to create an urban environment out of the common language of classicism which had been used to express ideals of grandeur, stability and joy in most civilization from the Greeks onwards."²⁰ It was the only permanent building included in the Exposition and its effects permeated public building design well into the twentieth century.

Georgia's Carnegie libraries do not fall within one specific style. Instead they typically include elements of numerous styles--Beaux-Arts, Neoclassical, Italian Renaissance and Colonial Revival. Beaux-Arts remains the most common style because it is a style that allows the inclusion of various classical traditions. However, most of Georgia's Carnegie Libraries are not pure examples of any of these, but are loosely derived from one or more stylistic traditions, primarily ancient classical and the Renaissance classical tradition.

The use of more than one style in a design is termed eclecticism. An eclectic building generally includes a combination of architectural styles. Therefore to categorize a Carnegie library within one architectural style is imprecise, because most are comprised of a blend of architectural styles and their respective elements. A stylistic description of a

¹⁹David Watkin, A History of Western Architecture (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 457.

²⁰Ibid., 458.

Carnegie library should most often include a description of its various architectural features.

Thus determining a Carnegie library's style can be problematic. Many elements derive from different architectural styles of the same era, particularly Beaux-Arts and Italian Renaissance. However, there are useful distinctions that can help determine a Carnegie's predominant style. Carnegie libraries that include Beaux-Arts and Neoclassical elements are identified by exterior surface decoration, such as a cartouche or festoon; star-muntined windows, either above entrances on exterior window sashes; or paired columns or pilasters, either of the Ionic or Corinthian order. Elements defining Italian Renaissance design include: an arcaded or colonnaded entrance or portico; Palladian or Fanlight windows, either at entrances or on exterior wall surfaces; and, in rare cases, projecting side wings. These two styles share many cross-over architectural elements, including quoins, pedimented windows with consoles, rusticated masonry, and roof-line balustrades. These common elements blur the distinction between the two styles, potentially creating confusion in their identification. However, identifying essential elements that are not shared will assist in clarifying a Carnegie library's architectural style.

Another common architectural style found among Georgia's Carnegie libraries is the Neoclassical style. These buildings are distinguished by their projecting portico, including classical columns (usually Ionic or Composite) and a front-gabled pediment. The portico will always project beyond the building's wall surface and visually appear self-supporting. Typically, the portico contains a full entablature, which is not always continuous along the building's central block, and emphasizes the portico's independence.

Confusion in identifying the Neoclassical style arises when a Carnegie's full-height columns are not free-standing. Many Carnegie libraries include an entrance characterized by a projecting block which is differentiated from the primary wall surface only by its

extension, not materials. As a result, the portico loses its light, airy quality and is articulated as part of the building's central block. The columns themselves are visually related to the portico's wall surface, almost contained within the wall. This use originated in ancient Greek architecture--columns 'ranged with a wall' are termed *in antis*. The purpose of this arrangement was to distinguish between two areas of space: the *naos*, or the temple's central, interior chamber; and the *pronaos*, or entrance area. In many Carnegie libraries, the entrance, or vestibule, and central area are interrelated in this manner. Such buildings are more precisely associated with ancient Greek or "Ancient Classical"²¹ tradition than with Neoclassical style.

Carnegie libraries of this type appear more as a Greek temple form, with a flat-roofed portico usually continuous with the central block. Unless these libraries contain trademark elements of the Beaux-Arts or Italian Renaissance style, they should be termed "Classic Greek," as a subtype of the Neoclassical style. The identifying element will be either Doric or Ionic portico columns *in antis*, "ranging" with the portico's primary wall surface.

A small number of Carnegie libraries may be identified with the Colonial Revival style. In Georgia, these libraries were constructed after 1914. They strongly reflect the Georgian and Federal style as well as earlier colonial buildings. Typically, they include side-gabled roofs where parapeted ends extend above the roof line, often including a chimney stack. Fanlights are sometimes found within the gable-end's wall surface, most often above the entrance. Quoins are typically expressed with a secondary masonry material (e.g. sandstone or limestone) or through rusticated masonry. It is not unusual for window lintels to be articulated with keystones. There can be confusion in associating Colonial Revival Carnegie libraries with the Italian Renaissance style because they share common influences. The Georgian style was based, in part, on Italian

²¹Virginia & Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A.Knopf, 1991), 5.

Renaissance forms and motifs that later inspired the Colonial Revival. Nevertheless, the listed elements should help identify Carnegie libraries which are true Colonial Revival buildings.

Nationally, there were a number of exceptional architects who contributed to Carnegie library design and who influenced Bertram's preferences. Of these, the most influential was the New York architect Edward Tilton, whose architectural training began as a draftsman for McKim, Mead and White and continued at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Tilton's apprenticeship with McKim, Mead and White continued the legacy of a mentor architect in library design, as McKim had worked for Richardson and Richardson for Labrouste. Tilton sustained his professional interest in library design throughout his career, designing some twenty-seven libraries.²² He also communicated with librarians across the country, acting as an architectural consultant.

Tilton's relationship with William Brett, an influential librarian and the director of the Cleveland, Ohio, Library, aided the architect's career. Brett was highly regarded by Bertram and the two communicated regularly regarding libraries, especially their design. In regards to a Cleveland library, "William Brett wrote Bertram that he would rather have Tilton do the Cleveland building than any other architect."²³ Brett's trust in Tilton eventually lead Bertram to consult the architect on Carnegie library design.

In an article published in December 1927, Tilton described his preferences for library design:

The design of a library involves the hygienic accommodation of the greatest number of readers; the housing of the maximum number of books; and the architectural expression of the building's purpose.²⁴ . An economical library plan devotes minimum spaces to lobbies, corridors, stairways and such "circulation," and the maximum areas to the library proper.²⁵

²²Oehlerts, 80-81.

²³Ibid., 74.

²⁴Edward L. Tilton, "Library Planning," *Architectural Forum*, XLVII, no. 6 (December 1927): 497.

²⁵Ibid., 498.

Tilton's ideas sound very much like descriptions of Carnegie libraries, with their emphasis on functionality. It is easy to see why Tilton's architecture appealed to Bertram's sensibilities. However, this relationship was uncommon. Most architects irritated Bertram and he relied more on the advice of librarians when possible.

Throughout his correspondence, Bertram typically refused to respond to architect's questions and requests concerning drawings. These communications were considered distractions, too technical and specific--indeed, secondary in establishing a library. Tilton was one of the few to break this barrier and communicate freely with Bertram.

Tilton consequently designed many Carnegie libraries. One example, the Miles Park Branch in Cleveland (1906), illustrates Tilton's exclusion of unnecessary interior area. The interior is dominated by the second floor "delivery room" and its flanking stack

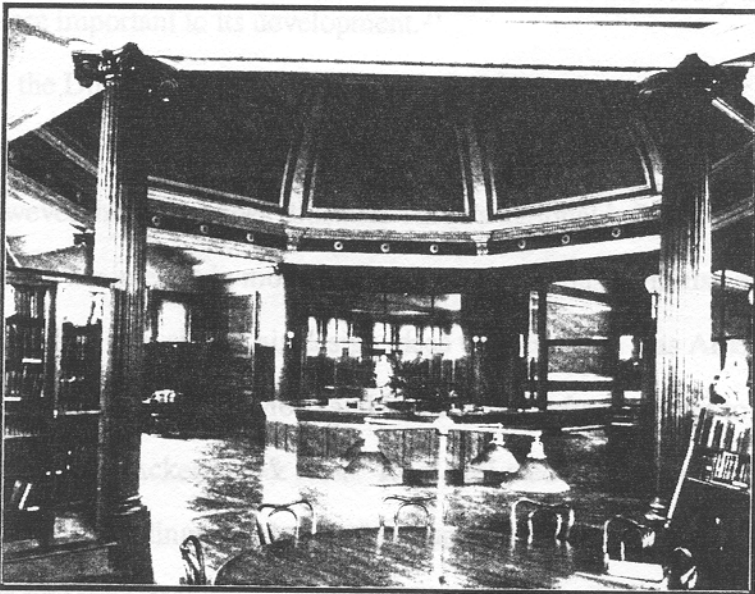


Fig. 3. Edward Tilton, Miles Park Carnegie Library, Cleveland, Ohio, 1904-06.

and reading rooms. The delivery area is the trademark of most Carnegie libraries. In Bertram's "Notes on Library Buildings [sic]" the central delivery desk is similarly found on every plan. Tilton describes the delivery desk in metaphoric terms:

The delivery room is the heart of a small library; its pulsations vitalize every part. To minimize the personnel required, the control must be centralized by locating the

delivery (or charging) counter where it commands readers, book shelves, and entrances.²⁶

The importance of the delivery area and desk cannot be overemphasized. It is the symbolic heart of all Carnegie libraries and Tilton played a large part in promoting its inclusion. Many of Tilton's libraries survive today. Not all of these are Carnegie libraries, but all are similar in design. The Pack Memorial Library (1925) in Asheville, North Carolina, and the Emory University Library (1927) in Atlanta, Georgia, are two remaining examples of Tilton's libraries located in the South. Although later designs, they illustrate many of the architect's design preferences. Tilton's particular interest in southern libraries is evident in one of his published articles:

Librarians in the southern states tell me that they have there many Carnegie buildings designed by northern architects who were unfamiliar with the necessities of a summer climate. Discomfort results for both the staff of the library and its users--and both are important to its development.²⁷

He also wrote the Dublin, Georgia, library board offering his services for the design of their Carnegie library, although--for whatever reason--he was not commissioned to design it. However, his effort does illustrate Tilton's national influence on Carnegie library design and his interest in modest as well as prestigious commissions.

Another architect who shared his design ideas with Bertram was Albert Ross. Like Tilton, Ross worked for McKim, Mead and White as a draftsman prior to establishing his own architectural firm, Ackerman & Ross. Ross designed seven Carnegie libraries that were highly stylized buildings, as close to "monumental" as the Carnegie program allowed. Ross preferred highly ornamented buildings in the Beaux-Arts style. His tendency towards flair caused problems with Bertram. Ross's New Rochelle, New York, Carnegie library is a case in point. The design included a dome, which pushed the building over its \$60 thousand budget.²⁸ It was always unacceptable for a building to

²⁶Ibid., 499.

²⁷Ibid., 508.

²⁸Oehlerts, 66-67.

exceed its budget, especially for features that were considered unnecessary. Carnegie himself insisted that his philanthropy must be conducted like a business, and rarely approved cost overruns. Ross's differences with Bertram concerning the design of the New Rochelle library probably affected the architect's professional relationship with the Carnegie Corporation in general.

Luckily, this incident occurred after Ross had already successfully designed three important Carnegie libraries in the south. For the city of Nashville, Carnegie offered one-

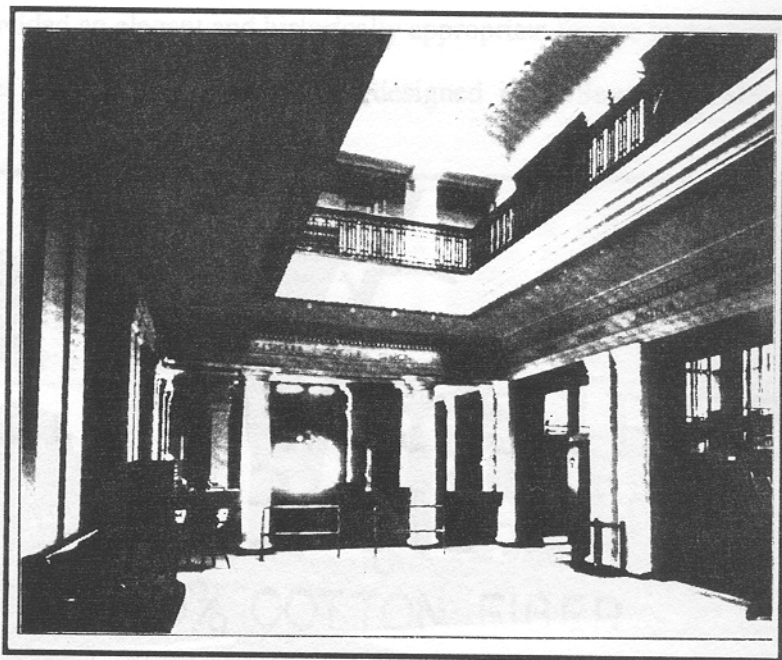


Fig 4. Albert Ross. Nashville Carnegie Library interior, 1904.

hundred thousand dollars for construction of the library, which eventually opened to the public on September 19, 1904.²⁹ The building included elaborate Beaux-Arts detailing and an interior space designed for efficiency:

A large central delivery room, which opens from a handsome main hall, is arranged for free access to the shelves and equipped with turnstiles and delivery desk. To the left of the entrance is the reading room, and opening from this a newspaper and magazine room. On the right are the reference room, the librarian's office, and cataloguer's room. The art gallery, know as Howard Memorial Hall, is on the third

²⁹Theodore Wesley Koch, *A Book of Carnegie Libraries* (White Plains: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1917), 112-113.

floor, as are also rooms for club meetings, study and the like. The basement provides a splendid children's room, a staff rest room, unpacking and storage rooms.³⁰

It also included decorative features, such as the names of writers, scientists, and composers along an interior frieze. Additionally, the interior contained an atrium lighted by a second story skylight, a feature generally not agreeable to librarians: "A skylight is not recommended; it usually leaks, cannot be kept clean, and makes the delivery room too hot for comfort during summer months."³¹ However impractical, the skylight Ross included provided an elegant and historically appropriate feature in the Nashville library.

The other two Carnegie libraries Ross designed in the South were alike in their form.

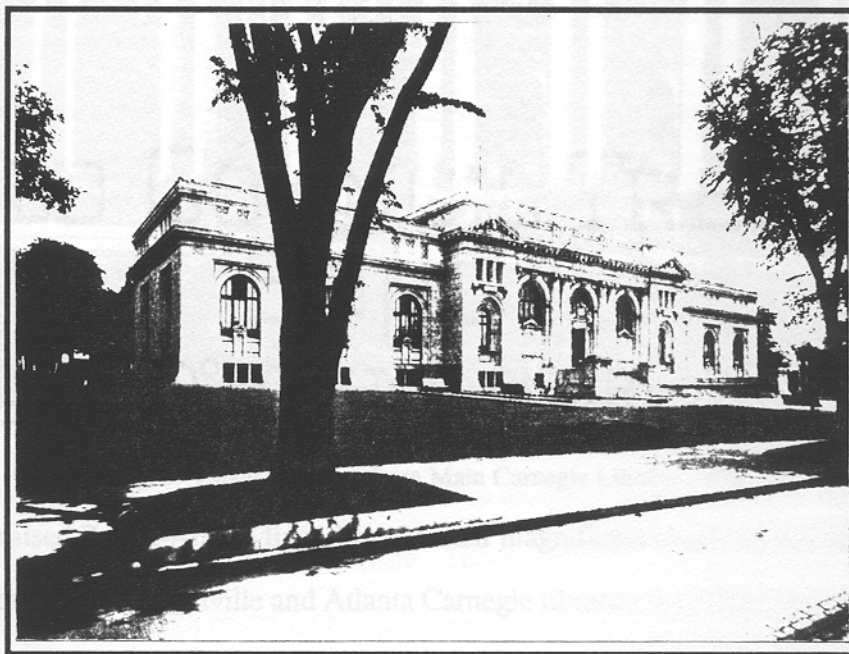


Fig. 5. Albert Ross. Washington, D.C. Carnegie Library, 1900-02.

The commission for a Washington, D.C., Carnegie library was awarded to Ackerman & Ross on July 18, 1899 from a competition of twenty-four design submissions."³² The library was dedicated on Jan. 7, 1903 when President Theodore Roosevelt addressed the

³⁰Ibid..

³¹Cornelia Marvin, *Small Library Buildings* (Boston: A. L. A. Publishing Board, 1908), 15.

³²Koch, 101.

dedication gathering, expressing his "profound appreciation of what is emphatically a gift of wisdom, a gift to do the utmost possible benefit to all of the people of this country."³³

The library was Beaux-Arts in style, with lateral wings containing children's and adult reading rooms. Its facade resembled the Atlanta Carnegie library Ackerman & Ross had designed in 1899. Both main facades contained engaged, paired columns and arched windows. Both buildings were monumental in terms of their size and decorative features. Architecturally, they were unusual Carnegie libraries because of their

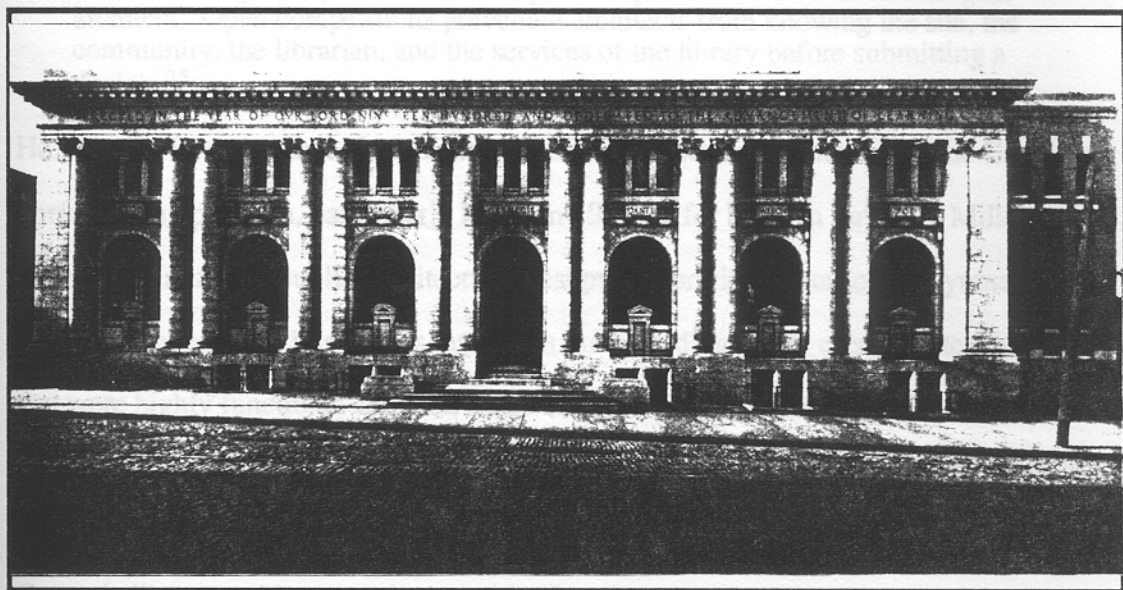


Fig. 6. Albert Ross. Atlanta Main Carnegie Library, 1902.

uncompromised Beaux-Arts styling. Despite their magnificent character and architectural significance, both the Nashville and Atlanta Carnegie libraries were later destroyed for construction of new library facilities.

Many other significant architects designed Carnegie libraries. Most notable were Carrère & Hastings, who were responsible for Carnegie branches in New York. They also designed the New York Public Library (1897-1911). Another architect who communicated with Bertram was Normand Patton. Patton was associated with four

³³Koch, 102.

different firms, all based in Chicago. He was prolific in designing both libraries and academic buildings, primarily in midwestern states. Like Tilton, Patton was involved with librarians and contributed information regarding library design: "Patton was one of the first architects to participate in library conferences and submit articles to the library journals."³⁴ Patton's involvement with the library profession perhaps enabled him to better understand the importance of the relationship between the architect and the community:

Patton was especially critical of the open competition method of selecting an architect. Open competitions prevented architects from knowing the site, the community, the librarian, and the services of the library before submitting a design.³⁵

He was also fortunate that his architectural career fell within the heyday of the Carnegie library giving program, particularly between 1901-12 for his firm Patton & Miller. Patton specialized in public architecture, designing libraries, dormitories, gymnasiums, and other college buildings. His interest in how buildings were used resulted in designs that were highly functional and well-received--especially his libraries. Most of his libraries were in the Beaux-Arts style, although some designed in Iowa were Tudor.³⁶ Patton's contributions to small library design and development distinguish him as a Carnegie library architect, particularly his "function dictates design" approach.

In Georgia, there were several architects who designed more than one Carnegie library and were influential within the state. Thomas Henry Morgan (1857-1940) was responsible for the design of the Dublin Library and the Georgia Institute of Technology Library in Atlanta Carnegie libraries. Morgan was associated with two firms: the first, Bruce & Morgan (1882-1904) was responsible for the Dublin design (1904); the second, Morgan & Dillon (1904-1930) for the Georgia Tech library (1907). Morgan founded the architectural journal Southern Architects and Builders News, was very active within the

³⁴Oehlerts, 67.

³⁵Oehlerts, 67.

³⁶Koch, plate 93, 95.

architectural profession, and was often referred to as the "Dean of Atlanta Architecture." During his forty-eight year career, Morgan designed many prominent public buildings throughout Georgia: "The large body of work produced by him and his partners set a standard of up-to-date styling and basic quality that strongly influenced the built environment of Atlanta and appeared throughout Georgia"³⁷ While many of Morgan's buildings have been destroyed, his two Carnegie libraries remain although not used as libraries.

Another important Georgia architect was Edward Choate (1866-1929), who designed three Carnegie libraries. Choate attended the University of Georgia and later designed several important buildings in Athens--the Michael Brothers mansions (1902/ demolished) and Winnie Davis Memorial Hall (1902). It is interesting to note that while Choate designed Winnie Davis Memorial Hall, he did not design Athens' Carnegie library located adjacent to his building and constructed in 1910. Choate was a member of the firm DeFord Smith, Cyril P. Smith and Choate of Augusta and later, after 1909, of Atlanta. He designed the second-largest number of Carnegie libraries in Georgia.

The most prolific of the architectural firms designing Carnegie libraries in Georgia was Thomas Lockwood, Jr. & Sr. Thomas Sr. came to Georgia from New Jersey and established a practice with his brother Frank in Columbus in 1892. In 1900, this partnership was dissolved and Thomas Jr. then entered a partnership with his father, which lasted until the latter's death in 1919. Their firm designed primarily public buildings including churches, theaters, and courthouses. Of their six Carnegie library designs, all were constructed between 1906 and 1910. The Albany and Montezuma Carnegie libraries were built within a year of each other and are almost identical buildings. Designs for libraries in Americus and Macon are distinctly different from each other although both represent two-story examples. The Albany and Montezuma libraries

³⁷Kenneth Coleman and Charles Stephen Gurr, eds., Dictionary of Georgia Biography (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), 727.

illustrate the importance of identifying the architects of Carnegie libraries. The similarities in architectural elements and features between the two libraries can cross reference each other. That is, the alterations of Montezuma's window sashes can be referenced to those of Albany, which are historic and were probably similar, if not identical, to those of Montezuma. Although historic photographs would verify these similarities, the identity of Carnegie architects can be extremely helpful in determining the character of original features as well as guiding restoration efforts.

The remaining architects of Georgia's Carnegie libraries are equally significant. While this group did not design more than one library each, their influence on Georgia's architecture is often dramatic. In particular, architects such as P.E. Dennis, James Golucke, and Hyman Witcover designed buildings other than Carnegie libraries that are architecturally significant. For example, Witcover, who designed the Savannah Carnegie library, also designed such important Savannah buildings as City Hall (1905), the Montgomery Street Synagogue (1908), Masonic Temple (1912) and the Henry Street School addition (1910). All of these buildings significantly contribute to Savannah's historic character, and establish Witcover's importance as an architect. Furthermore, they reinforce the significance of the Carnegie library because it is part of this architect's collective works.

While the name of each library's architect is important, each library's individual stylistic features and overall character reveal their architectural importance. Also, the history and details of each building grant contribute to our understanding of each library's social and cultural history. A close examination of each Carnegie library in Georgia reveals the nature of these historic resources and their contributions to state and local history.