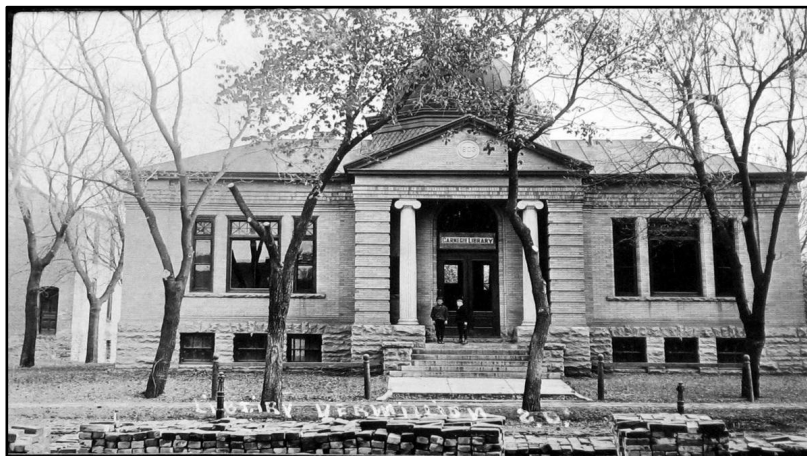
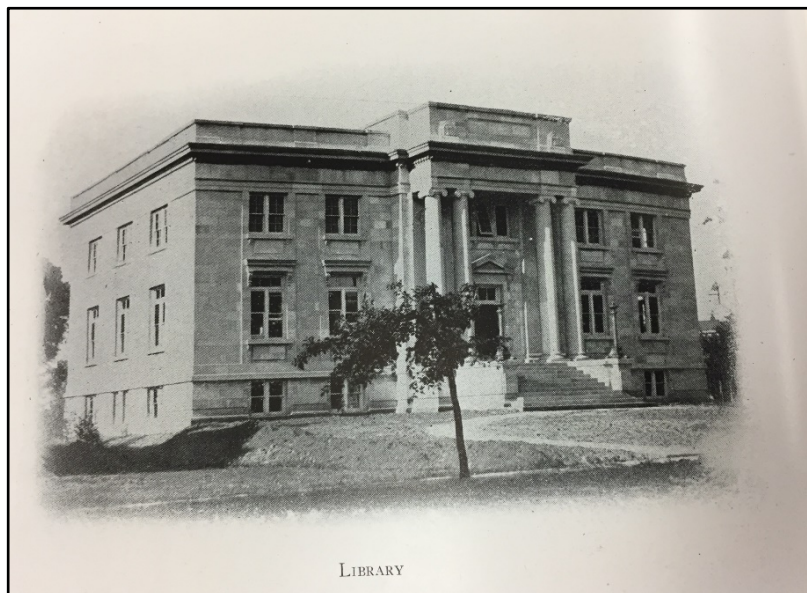


# A History of the Two Carnegie Libraries in Vermillion, South Dakota

By Evelyn H. Schlenker



Photographs courtesy of the Coyote Yearbook, 1912  
and the Clay County Historical Society

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## Prologue

When I arrived in Vermillion, South Dakota, in the hot summer of 1980, I knew little about the history of the libraries in the city. I had spent most of my life regularly going to libraries and consuming books, newspapers, and journal articles in New York, Rochester, and Buffalo, New York as well as Gainesville, Florida, but I never considered the stories behind these libraries or what would happen when library buildings ceased to function as libraries. When I came to Vermillion, the public library was located in a new building at 18 Church Street. The small and splendid brick structure with quartz accents directly to the north (12 Church Street) housed a law firm. If I had read more closely the engraved marble sign above the front door, I would have realized that it had been a “Carnegie Library.” Moreover, in the pediment above the door was a plaque inscribed “1903,” the date the building was constructed. What was happening in Vermillion in 1903? How did this wonderful building come to be?

As a new faculty member at the University of South Dakota Medical School I also spent hours at USD’s I.D. Weeks library reading the scientific literature. Moreover, I was aware of a two-story stone structure with beautiful ionic columns between I. D. Weeks and the medical school. The limestone-clad building housed the W. H. Over Museum, the Shrine to Music Museum collection, and an art gallery featuring the works of Oscar Howe, the celebrated Native American artist who taught at the university. If I would have looked more closely at the sign over the classical building’s entry way, I would have read “Carnegie Donation.” For many years now, I have been aware of these two historic former library buildings, and now I am able to tell their stories.

I could not have documented the course of the two Vermillion Carnegie Library buildings without the help of many individuals. Doris Peterson and Sarah Hanson-Pareek

from University of South Dakota Archives and Special Collections allowed me to access university files concerning the Carnegie building and its transformation to the W. H. Over Museum, as well as files from Presidents Garrett Droppers, Franklin Gault, I. D. Weeks and Joseph McFadden that illuminated their roles in the development of the building. Another file, that of Secretary of the University Charles Sloan was invaluable for insight into details of the building of the university library in 1910-1911. In addition, Michael Suing, Dr. Patricia Bornhofen, and Dr. Margaret Banks of the National Music Museum staff contributed important information and insights about the history of the university's Carnegie building and the development of the Shrine to Music, which now occupies the building as the National Music Museum. I would also like to thank Liz Almlie for her input concerning the National Register of Historic Places status of the USD Carnegie building, and Sandy Wolfswinkel in USD Facilities Management for the blueprints of the USD Carnegie Library building.

I am indebted to several people who helped me understand the history of the Vermillion Public Library. The current director, Daniel Burniston, supplied me with minutes from the library board meetings, as well as other information from the library archives. Stephen Ward's book *Drink, Dames, and Droppers: The Making of the Vermillion Public Library* was an excellent tome about the history of the Vermillion Carnegie library. I would also like to thank Michael Carlson for access to Vermillion City Council meeting minutes and José Dominguez for the blueprints of the Vermillion library expansion in 1936. I found additional pictures of both buildings at the Clay County Historical Society and documents chronicling the interactions between the Shrine to Music Museum and the W.H. Over Museum in archives at the W. H. Over Museum. Finally, I am grateful to have an excellent editor, Tim Schreiner, who constructively challenged several of my drafts to make the story complete and informative.

## Preface

Vermillion housed two Carnegie libraries in the early twentieth century. One was a public library that served the city of Vermillion and Clay County. The second was an academic library whose purpose was create a space for University of South Dakota (USD) students to study and learn. For the Vermillion Public Library to exist, support was required from the city and its citizens. The university library needed approval and funding from the state Board of Regents, which oversees higher education. Early in its history, the university library consisted of reading rooms in the rebuilt (following an 1893 fire) University Hall (now Old Main), which according to USD President Garrett Droppers, was totally inadequate for the growing student population. The purposes of this book are to discuss the many steps required to construct both libraries (and in the case of the university library, to enlarge it later to double its size), as well as to outline their use after the buildings no longer served as libraries.

The introduction of this book discusses the role of Carnegie and his foundation in the development of libraries across the country. The first section describes the city of Vermillion and the university in the early 1900s, and it explains why these buildings were relevant to the community and university. The next section is a short biography of then-prominent Sioux Falls architect Joseph Schwarz (also sometimes written as Schwartz), who designed both structures.

The third section deals specifically with the Vermillion Public Library: first, in 1903 and 1904 when the structure was built; and later, in the 1970s, when the building was considered inadequate to serve as a library and the city built a new library building directly south of the “old library.” The city of Vermillion, which owned the building, determined the fate of the old Carnegie library building with input from its

citizens. At times there were conflicting ideas what to do with the structure ranging from razing the building to an appreciation of the historical significance of the building that led to its placement on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. Since the late 1970s, the building has been leased from the city of Vermillion by law firms.

The fourth section deals with the building of university's Carnegie Library in 1910-1911 and in 1939-1940, the construction of an addition that doubled its size. About 25 years after the last renovation, the university deemed this enlarged structure inadequate to meet the growing needs of the much larger student body. In late 1967, USD constructed the I. D. Weeks Library further north on campus and then determined a new use for the old building.

The last section of the book covers the transition from the original university Carnegie library to museums. Initially, the W. H. Over Museum occupied the building. In 1966, the Over museum had been part of the University for more than 80 years. At that time, the university hired Professor of Music Arne Larson, who brought with him a rare collection of more than 1,200 instruments. Larson and the university needed a place to store and to display the instruments. Over the next 15 years, the collection of historic musical instruments and archival material grew under the direction of Arne Larson's son, André Larson, who was professor of music and the founding director of the Shrine to Music Museum. The development of the world-class Shrine led to the somewhat contentious ouster of the W. H. Over Museum from the building in the 1980s. Subsequently, significant remodeling of the building occurred to fit the increasing needs of the Shrine, renamed the National Music Museum in 2002.

Importantly, both Carnegie library buildings in Vermillion garnered support from the state of South Dakota, the city of Vermillion, and numerous generous donors. Both buildings also played significant roles in the cultural,

educational, and architectural history of Vermillion, the state of South Dakota, and beyond.





### Introduction: Carnegie Libraries

During the last years of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century, Andrew Carnegie's philanthropic mission was to donate money for the construction of libraries across the United States.<sup>1</sup> Carnegie, who had made his fortune in the steel industry in Pittsburgh, believed in the transformative educational ability of public libraries based on his own experiences growing up in Scotland. Most Carnegie-supported libraries in the United States were constructed between 1890 and 1916.

The Carnegie Foundation gave more than \$56 million to help construct 2,509 library buildings. Communities in South Dakota were the recipients of 25 public libraries<sup>2</sup> and two academic libraries, one affiliated with the University of South Dakota (USD) in Vermillion and the other affiliated with Yankton College, which closed its doors in 1988. Currently that building is part of the Federal prison system and is located in the Yankton College Historic District. Yankton and Vermillion also were among the towns that constructed public libraries.<sup>3</sup> In general, public libraries offered opportunities for patrons to educate themselves, as well as creating a safe community space to hold meetings and lectures.

Applications for library-building funds from the Carnegie Foundation included requirements that the cities have populations greater than 1,000 residents and that the cities be willing to donate 10 percent of the cost of the library per year to maintain the library.<sup>4</sup> Vermillion's population in 1900 consisted of more than 2,100 people, fitting one of the criteria needed to obtain funds. Moreover, it was assumed that fees and local donations would contribute to buying books, shelving, and furniture. In the case of the USD library, the Board of Regents was responsible for the 10 percent annual maintenance contribution.

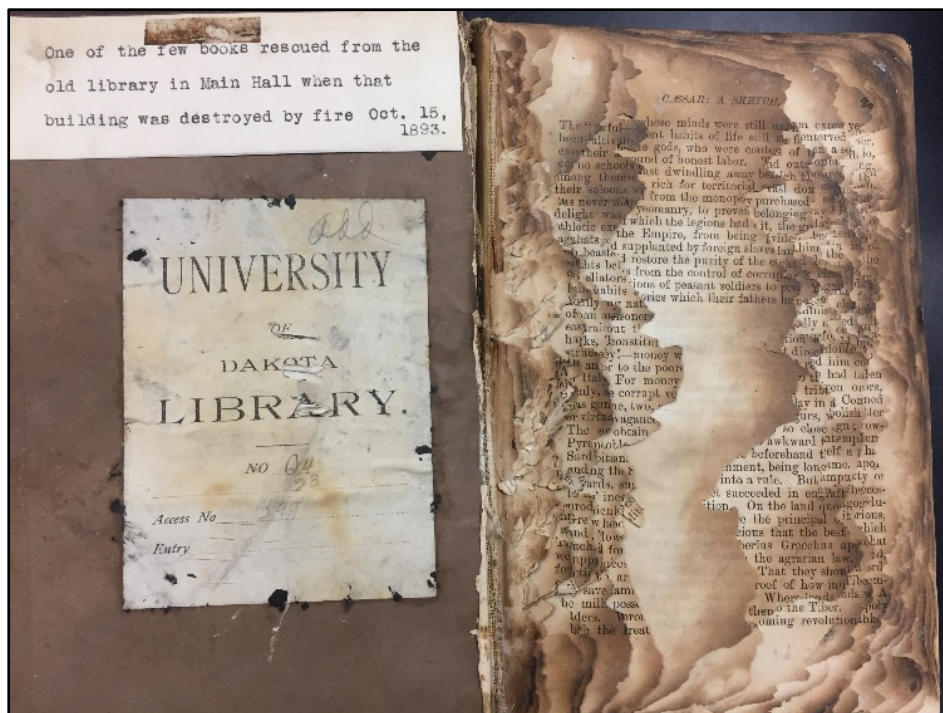
The gate keeper who reviewed the library building applications was Andrew Carnegie's personal secretary, James Bertram, a fellow Scot.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Bertram was

extremely critical about the building application contents and letters of support from city officials. So much so that many requests were denied. The reasons for denial included that Bertram thought that an existing library was adequate for the community, that the building could not house a state or historical society library, that the library was a subscription endeavor not a free library, that funds from local philanthropists were deemed adequate to fund a local library, or that the forms were not filled out properly.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the site chosen for the library within a community was critical; it had to be easily accessible to its patrons. In addition, communities were expected to hire an architect that was knowledgeable about constructing Carnegie libraries. To help in this endeavor, Bertram provided sample blueprints.<sup>7</sup> These criteria became the basis for the separate routes the city of Vermillion and the University of South Dakota took to build a public and academic library, respectively.

Vermillion and the University of South Dakota  
in the Early Twentieth Century

Established in 1859, Vermillion was a river town bounded by the Vermillion and Missouri Rivers to the east and south and by a bluff to the north.<sup>8</sup> By 1881 it was a thriving community of 600 people.<sup>9</sup> In late March and early April 1881 disaster struck in the form of mass river flooding and huge ice floes that destroyed three quarters of the town's buildings. As a consequence, citizens moved the town to higher ground on the bluff, where Vermillion was quickly rebuilt. In 1882, as part of its revival, citizens decided to build the University of Dakota (which was founded in 1862 by the territorial legislature) with the first classes held in the courthouse in 1882. By 1883 the University officially opened portions of University Hall, which was not fully completed until 1886. The architect of this structure was Wallace Dow, a prominent Sioux Falls architect.<sup>10</sup> The building housed reading rooms that comprised the library. In subsequent years several buildings were added to the campus including West Hall and East Hall, which were also designed by Dow.

In 1893 a massive fire consumed University Hall and most of its contents, as described in detail in an article published in the October 15, 1893, *Volante*, the student newspaper. Losses included much of contents in the library, laboratories, offices, and the University Museum. Although a few students were injured in the fire, no fatalities occurred. President Joseph Mauck, who was president from 1891 to 1897, wrote an open letter to students and published in the *Volante*, stating that while University Hall was being rebuilt, there would be no suspension of classes and that East and West Halls would have rooms cleared for recitation. Mauck stated in his letter that "a University consists more in the spirit of the men and women who comprise it than in the buildings and other material equipment." Within a month after of the fire, Vermillion residents had raised \$10,216.50 and Clay County issued bonds worth \$30,000 to rebuild.



University Hall burned library book. Note that the label states: "University of Dakota Library". Courtesy of USD Archives and Special Collections files titled "Old Main."

Dow was asked to design the new building. He changed the architectural style from Romanesque to Georgian Revival style of the former building. Parts of the older building were incorporated in the new building. The exterior was constructed of rose-colored Sioux quartzite with limestone accents. Dow also reused some of the stone of the Dakota Building that he designed for the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition (World's Fair).<sup>11</sup> USD President Mauck had purchased the Dakota Building for only \$76. The new University Hall was finished in 1895 and contained reading rooms and a library.

Less than a decade later, these library facilities were deemed inadequate for a growing university. The student population nearly doubled, from 290 in 1895 to 458.<sup>12</sup> The new president, Garrett Droppers, investigated sources of money to build a new library and contacted the Carnegie

Foundation. Droppers also needed the backing of the Board of Regents to ensure the annual 10 percent maintenance funds required by Carnegie.

By the early years of the twentieth century, Vermillion's population had tripled to more than 2,100 people and Clay County's population was well over 9,300 people.<sup>13</sup> The public library consisted of a reading room in the City Hall building on the southwest corner of Court and Main Streets. With the continued growth of the city of Vermillion and Clay County, local leaders considered a new library essential. With the help of local citizens, Droppers essentially led the effort to build both library buildings.



### *Biography of Joseph Schwarz, Architect*

Although the two original library buildings in Vermillion are quite different architecturally, the architect for both structures was Joseph Schwarz of Sioux Falls. Schwarz (aka “Schwartz”) made significant contributions to architecture in the Northern Plains.

Schwarz was born in New York City on February 22, 1858, and moved west with his family, first to La Crosse, Wisconsin, and then to Sioux Falls, Dakota Territory, in 1881. His background in contracting and carpentry was a boon in the rapidly growing city. Although Schwarz had no formal university training in architecture, he learned the trade through apprenticeship, which was common at that time. According to the Minnehaha Historical Society article,<sup>14</sup> his architectural influence in the region included South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska and Iowa mainly from 1887 to 1924.<sup>15</sup> (A partial list of buildings he designed is included later in this section.)

Throughout much of his career, Schwarz's main professional competitor was Wallace Dow; both architects became experts in masonry construction using the locally available Sioux quartzite for Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. Dow had arrived in town first and had the additional advantage of being Anglo-American, Protestant, and very well connected with many of the prominent politicians and businessmen in the territory. By contrast, Schwarz was a Catholic and a Democrat.

One of the greatest competitions between the two architects was bidding for the construction of the Minnehaha County Courthouse (now the Courthouse Museum) in 1890. Dow won the contract with a bid of \$80,000, whereas Schwarz bid \$100,000. (The building actually cost \$100,000 to construct.) After Dow retired in 1905, Schwarz's firm obtained an increased number of public commissions for

university and civic buildings as Sioux Falls and the region continued to grow.<sup>16</sup>

When Schwarz passed away on December 26, 1927, his obituary lauded his work without ever mentioning Dow.<sup>17</sup> The obituary stated that Schwarz had an excellent reputation as an architect who designed many of the prominent buildings in Sioux Falls and surrounding towns and cities. Schwarz had lived in Sioux Falls from 1881 until his death. The obituary included a list of his architectural accomplishments in Sioux Falls including: the Carpenter and Cataract Hotels; Masonic Temple; Carnegie Library; Cathedral School; Congregational, Baptist, and Presbyterian Churches; Manchester Biscuit Company plant; parts of Washington High School and South Dakota Penitentiary; as well as several residences. In surrounding areas, Schwarz designed the Moody County courthouse in Flandreau, South Dakota, and the Lyon County courthouse in Rock Rapids, Iowa. At USD, Schwarz designed the USD Law School building in 1908, the chemistry building in 1913, and the Carnegie Library in 1911. His obituary did not list the Vermillion Public Library or buildings he designed on the Augustana College and Sioux Falls College campuses. Many of his buildings are considered of great architectural merit and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>18</sup>





Donald Meeks' Master's thesis pointed out that the USD Law Library design (top) by Joseph Schwarz was based on Page Hall (bottom), then the law building at the Ohio State University.<sup>19</sup> Photo of Page Hall copyright Detroit Photographic Inc. and courtesy of Ohio State University.



*The Vermillion Carnegie Public Library: 12 Church Street*

City tax revenues and individual subscriptions supported the endeavor to secure Carnegie Foundation funding for a public library. In 1902, noting the inadequacy of the City Hall reading room library, a petition signed by 397 Vermillion voters requested that the city levy taxes amounting to 2 mills to purchase books and 3 mills to purchase a site for the proposed library.<sup>20</sup>

Residents established the Vermillion Public Library Association to help secure the funds for the construction site and the building. According to Vermillion City Council meeting minutes of January 15, 1903, the council agreed to appropriate \$1,000 annually to support the proposed library. By April 6, 1903, the city council passed a resolution forming a Building Committee of seven members whose task was to oversee construction of the new public library. The members, all prominent citizens of Vermillion, included L. T. Sweezy, J. L. Jolley, C. E. Prentis, USD President Garrett Droppers, E. C. Barton, C. J. Gunderson, and A. Helgeson.

After considering four possible sites, the committee agreed upon Block 26, Lots 11 and 12, which was close to downtown Vermillion and across the street from City Hall. According to city council meeting minutes of July 6, 1903, almost all of the \$1,185 needed to purchase the lots had been raised. By September 21, 1903,<sup>21</sup> the city again agreed to pay the \$1,000 stipulated by the Carnegie Foundation. The city selected Joseph Schwarz to design its new library. If there were other applicants for the contract, it was not clear from neither the Vermillion City Council nor Library Board meeting minutes.

A document found in the Vermillion public library archives illustrates Schwarz's details regarding library building dimensions including those of the reading room, children's room in the basement, delivery room, librarian's office, stack room, ladies' retiring room and toilets. Also

Cost of Carnegie Library at Vermilion 1903. Jos. Schwartz, Architect.	
First contract,	\$6835.00
Plumbing,	243.
Heating,	375.
Architect,	250.
Extras:	
Dome,	400.
Grading & Filling Lots,	150.
Added height of Basement,	105.
Better quality Brick,	103.90
Adamant Plaster,	150.
Oak finish,	300.
Stone Steps & Platform,	155.
Delivery Desk, Storm Doors & Screens,	250.
3 Oak Book Stacks,	80.
Concrete Coal & Furnace Room,	91.
Tile Floor,	209.70
Marble,	150.
Cement Walk,	37.30
Wiring & Light Fixtures,	112.30
Total,	\$10,000.
Dimensions of Building.	
Outside, over all except Vestibule,	59.X 40.
Childrens Room,	19.8 X 19.6½
Delivery Room,	12.2 X 17.
Reading Room,	19.8 X 19.6½
Stack Room,	17.9 X 27.6
Librarians Office,	10.3½ X 7.11½
Ladies Retiring Room & Toilet,	10.3½ x 7.11½
<i>Notes donated by City Building erected 1904</i>	

Costs of building and dimensions of the Vermillion Carnegie Public Library in 1903. Courtesy of the Vermillion Public Library Archives.

included is a detailed accounting of the costs totaling \$10,000. Construction began in 1903. The library was open to the public in April 1904.<sup>22</sup>

A description of the outside of the building indicates that the first floor of the library is raised off street level above a half-exposed basement. The brick building has a Sioux Falls granite façade outlining the basement windows. The central entrance bay projects in a portico beyond the front

façade with the door recessed and flanked by two Ionic stone columns. The main body of the building is approximately 40 feet by 59 feet. A metal, octagonal dome contains a skylight above the lobby. Windows in the front of the building are composed in three bays; the side bays containing two windows each. The side facades consist of two bay windows and the rear of the building contains one bay window. At the east side of the building, the stack room (now a lawyer's office) was illuminated by a large, three-part window. The Neo-Classical style of this building was evident in many Carnegie libraries built in the United States.<sup>23</sup>

In the late 1960s the first floor included a charging table, stacks, a reading room, and a porcelain water fountain, according to librarian Fern Kaufman. The basement housed the children's library, a maintenance room for the janitor and furnace, and a work room to prepare and mend books. A staircase on the first floor led to a small mezzanine that was used for storage.<sup>24</sup> Extensive research failed to turn up any photographs of the interior of the building when it actually functioned as a library.

The city library archives contain minutes of the Vermillion Library Board (formed after the original Vermillion Library Association disbanded) that ran the library and reported directly to the Vermillion City Council. Minutes of the library board meetings from 1904 to 1968 describe the struggle of the board to maintain the integrity of building. Many citations describe fixing the roof, shoring up the floors as the weight of the book stacks increased, installing a drinking fountain, and laying down a cork carpet to reduce the noise arising from the children's library in the basement. In addition, new entrances were constructed on the south and east sides of the building. The primary funds to support the library came from the city of Vermillion with additional money coming from donations and fees. Because residents of Clay County and the city of Vermillion used the library, the



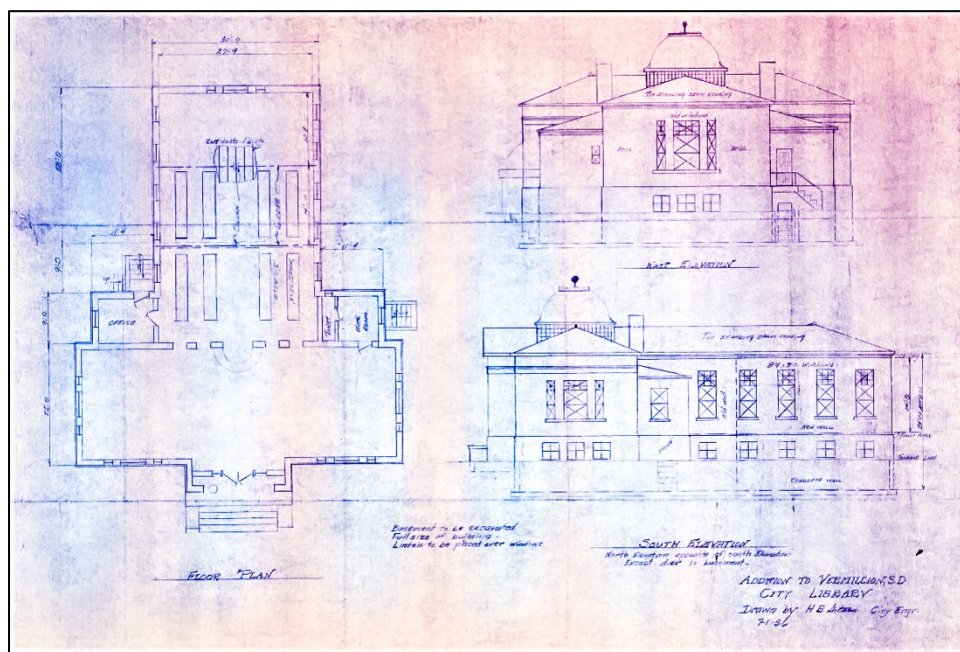


Undated photo showing architectural features of the Vermillion Public library. Courtesy of Jeanette Williams.

Vermillion Library Board requested funds from the Clay County Commission. Clay County Commissioners granted the money, as noted in the minutes from the meetings starting in 1926.

Over time, several library board meeting minutes mentioned the need to enlarge the building. The first time this was addressed was at the Vermillion Library Board meeting of August 3, 1924. Although no expansion materialized at that time, a building fund was established. At the October 29, 1935, meeting, the board contacted the Works Progress Administration (WPA) about the possibility of constructing an addition. A blueprint found in the current City Hall basement indicated that on July 1, 1936, Harold Benedict Gotaas,<sup>25</sup> Vermillion City Engineer and USD faculty member, created a blueprint for an expansion of the library with many of the same architectural characteristics featured in the original structure. According to Vermillion City Council minutes of August 3, 1936, Mr. M. L. Chaney, chairman of the library board, presented these plans to the

Vermillion City Council. This plan was to become part of a WPA application with the provision that the city would furnish the materials and the WPA would provide the funds for the labor. The possibility of extending the library was tabled according to the October 13, 1936 minutes and not addressed again for many decades.



Blueprint of the proposed extension of the Vermillion Public Library drawn by City Engineer H. B. Gotaas, July 1, 1936. Blueprint thanks to José Dominguez, current Vermillion City Engineer.

The possibility of expanding the library did not resurface again in the library board meeting minutes until 1958 and was reiterated in subsequent meeting minutes. By 1974 the Vermillion Library Board chose Bob Carmack, dean of USD libraries and a library board member, as head of a committee to investigate the construction of a new library building. It wasn't until 1977 that the city accrued adequate funds to build a new library. A letter in Vermillion Library Archives dated July 12, 1977, from Sara Engelhardt, representing the Carnegie Corporation of New York, to Robert Precoda, the Vermillion library director, stated that

the old library building could be used for purposes other than a library. Engelhardt concluded her letter as follows “Neither Mr. Carnegie’s heirs or the Carnegie Corporation has any legal standing in the issue of what becomes of the original library buildings. The gift was made to the town of Vermillion which provided a site and operating support for the library. All conditions for the gift were made. It is up to the town as to how the building should now be used.”

Stephen W. Ward’s book, *Women and Wine: The Making of the Vermillion Public Library in a Man’s World 1903-2003*,<sup>26</sup> describes in great detail the processes involved in garnering funds and the individuals involved in building the new library. The location for the replacement building was directly south of the now old library. Some of the furnishings and most of books from the old library were moved into the new library building.

An article by Linda Hurd in the *Vermillion Plain Talk* on October 19, 1978, described the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the Vermillion Public Library on Saturday, October 21, 1978. The article presented selected excerpts from Vermillion Library Board of Trustees meeting minutes including the loss of colored glass in the dome on January 4,

1923, and establishment of air conditioning in 1939. Of interest, the blueprint of the proposed expansion of the library in 1936 is not shown in Ward’s book nor the ultimate fate of the “old” library building owned by the city of Vermillion.

After the new library was established, an attempt to gather public input regarding suggestions about the uses or sale of “old” library building, the city placed an ad in the October 12, 1978 *Vermillion Plain Talk*.



According to the ad (shown at left), the deadline for suggestions was October 16, 1978.



At the October 16, 1978, Vermillion City Council meeting,<sup>27</sup> several organizations expressed an interest in occupying the old library building. Others, including notable USD professors Brent Froberg, Grace Beede, and Genevieve Turan expressed their views in letters to the council. Dr. John Little discussed a report compiled by four high school students about the Carnegie philanthropy, the history of the building, and a structural analysis of the building. The Vermillion Teen Center and the Vermillion Area Arts Council (VAAC) expressed great interest in using the building. Alderman Paul Hasse suggested that neither the land nor the building be sold, but instead could be rented to cover maintenance costs. By contrast, Alderwoman Judith Krueger reported that the Vermillion Library Board wanted both the land and building to be sold with proceeds going to help fund the new library. Following more discussion, the council passed a motion to allow the teen center and the VAAC to rent the building. However, only the teen center occupied the building for a year.

At the November 6, 1978, Vermillion City Council meeting,<sup>28</sup> Kris Bowers mentioned that the old library should be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Questions arose again concerning renting the building to the Teen Center.

At the June 28, 1979, Vermillion City Council meeting, Larry Nelson from the law firm, Mimick, Nelson and McCulloch (in existence from 1977-1990) proposed that the law firm lease the building. According to a July 5, 1979, *Vermillion Plain Talk* article, the city signed a lease with the law firm. The five-year agreement from July 1, 1979, to June 30, 1984, stipulated that rent would be \$350 per month, which included \$150 in cash and a possibility that \$200 could go toward improvements in the building. The city was obligated to make certain repairs, and the law firm paid for utilities. Subletting space in the building was allowed. Additionally, the law firm had right for be the first entity allowed to renew the lease.

Shortly after this agreement, Tom Vogel, chair of the Clay County Commission and an accountant in Vermillion, sued the city and the law firm stating that the lease agreement was illegal because it violated several sections of South Dakota Codified Law.<sup>29</sup> Vogel charged that the city did not call for or advertise bids for the building. He did acknowledge that the building was “historically significant.” The *Plain Talk* article outlining the lawsuit also pointed out that Vogel actually wanted to buy the building to house his accounting business. The suit brought by Vogel against the city of Vermillion and the law firm ultimately did not succeed<sup>30</sup>.

Subsequently, an article written by Frank H. Adams in 1980, described improvements that the law firm made to the old Carnegie library.<sup>31</sup> Law firm members and their friends worked to renovate the building. Nelson is quoted as saying that he estimated that about “350 hours of work” had been completed. Improvements included re-plastering the upstairs, repainting the interior of the building, and removing paint and residue from the woodwork. Other renovation activities included “replacing missing textured glass dividers between the foyer and other sections of the building, structural maintenance of the basement and replacing the floor in the north wing with a historically suitable covering.” Repairs to, or replacement of, windows were considered for a later date. Evident in a 1980 photograph of the building, when compared to earlier photos, is that the front door had been replaced. Since 1984, law firms have leased the building from the city of Vermillion. Currently, James McCulloch houses his law office in the old Carnegie building.

to adopt the Resolution of Intent  
date of May 2, 1983. See  
unanimously.

RESOLUTION OF INTENT  
TO  
LEASE MUNICIPALLY-OWNED PROPERTY

WHEREAS the City of Vermillion is the owner of the property known as the Vermillion Carnegie Library, more particularly described as follows:

Lots 11 and 12 in Block 26 of the Original Townsite of Vermillion, in the City of Vermillion, according to the plat of said Original Townsite of Vermillion as the same is recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds of Clay County, South Dakota;

And WHEREAS the Governing Body of said City intends to lease the premises to a private person, to-wit: the firm of Minick, Nelson and McCulloch, Attorneys at Law, a term of more than 120 days, ending on the 30th day of June, 2001, for a sum exceeding \$500.00 in value, pursuant to SDCL 15-12-5.2 on terms to be agreed upon by the parties;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the City of Vermillion that it does intend to lease said premises to a private person upon terms and conditions set forth in a proposed Lease and Agreement bearing date the 1st day of April, 1983, between the City of Vermillion and said Minick, Nelson & McCulloch, a copy of which Lease is now on file in the office of the Finance Officer of the City of Vermillion and may be inspected and copied by any person interested.

It is further RESOLVED that Monday, the 2nd day of May, 1983, at 7:30 o'clock P.M. at the Council meeting room in the Vermillion Public Library in the City of Vermillion, County of Clay, State of South Dakota, be and the same is fixed as the time and place for hearing upon this Resolution, when and where any interested person may appear and be heard and following said hearing, the Governing Body may proceed to authorize the Lease upon such terms and conditions as it determines best.

Be it further RESOLVED that the Finance Officer of the City of Vermillion shall give notice of said hearing upon this Resolution of Intent by causing a copy of this Resolution to be published in the Vermillion Plain Talk, a legal newspaper published in said City once at least ten days prior to the hearing.

Dated at Vermillion, South DAKOTA this 4th day of April, 1983.

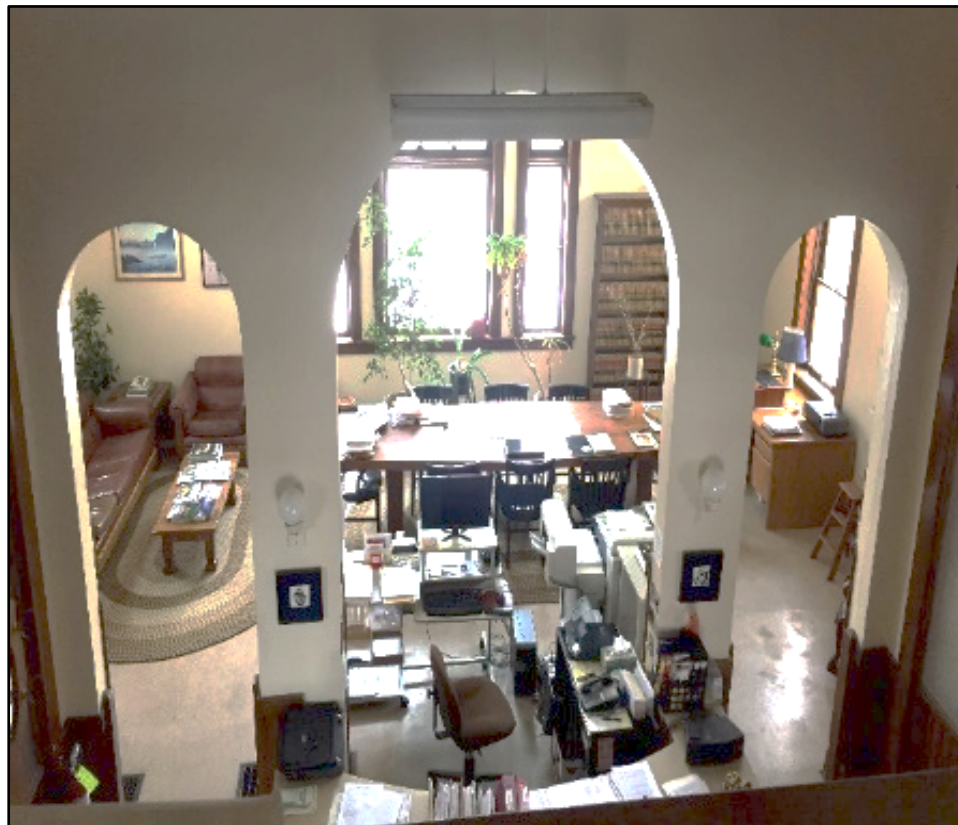
THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY  
OF VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA

By Merle L. Offerdahl  
Merle L. Offerdahl, Mayor

ATTEST:

By C. Joe Conroy  
C. Joe Conroy, Finance Officer

The resolution by the Vermillion City Council dated April 4, 1983, that reaffirmed the right of the Minick, Nelson and McCulloch law firm to lease the building.







The photographs on the previous page and this page depict the inside of the current building and the original water fountain. In the bottom picture on the previous page, note the difference in the front door and the boarded-up basement windows compared to the early photograph on the cover. Photos by Evelyn Schlenker.

The city and many residents of Vermillion saw the historical significance of the old library building and worked to have it recognized as noteworthy. In 1982, the building was part of the Clay County Historic Survey and on August 18, 1983, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places. An article published in the October 12, 1983, *Vermillion Plain Talk* announced the building's National Register designation along with that of the Clay County Courthouse that had been constructed in 1913.

At present the city of Vermillion owns the old Carnegie library building and leases it. An apparent change in the building's appearance is that the basement windows are boarded up to prevent vandalism. In an interview, McCulloch, the attorney who currently occupies the building, stated that there was some extensive water damage to the basement that needs to be repaired. He also noted that the city has contributed minimally to the upkeep of the structure.<sup>32</sup>

The old Vermillion Carnegie building still retains its historic significance and is an important contribution to the history and culture of Vermillion. Its National Register status is another impetus for the city to preserve the building. Its future purpose after law firms leave the building needs to be considered. Like the USD Carnegie library, it could be transformed into a museum.

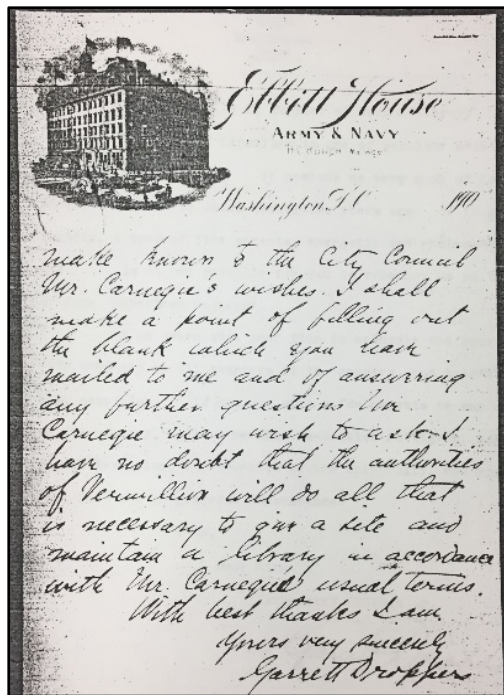
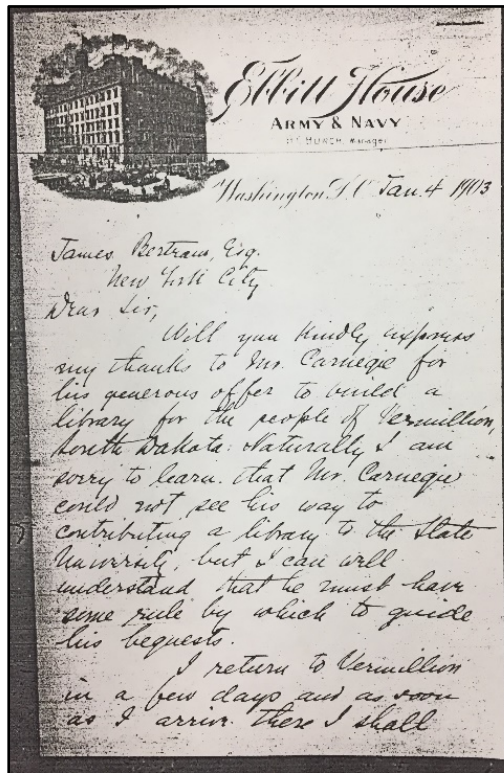
Of the 25 original Carnegie libraries constructed in South Dakota, eight have been demolished, 14 are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Brookings, Dallas, Dell Rapids, Canton, Lake Andes, Milbank, Rapid City,

Redfield, Sioux Falls, Sisseton, Tyndall, Vermillion, Watertown, and Yankton) and three are contributing buildings to a Historic District (Mitchell, Deadwood and Hot Springs). Only eight still function as libraries in their communities (Armour, Dallas, Deadwood, Dell Rapids, Madison, Redfield, Tyndall, and Wessington Springs).

*The University of South Dakota Carnegie Library:  
Original Building & First Addition*

By the turn of the twentieth century, the USD library in University Hall was no longer adequate to address the needs of a growing school. Garrett Droppers, the USD president from 1899-1906, had adamantly promoted building two Vermillion libraries in 1903, one at the University and a public library downtown. In his correspondence with the Carnegie organization, he suggested that the Carnegie Foundation grant funds to build the University library first and then the Vermillion Public library. According to Stephan Ward's book, *Women and Wine*, as well as correspondence found in the University of South Dakota Archives and Special Collections, the relationship between Droppers and Carnegie Foundation Secretary James Bertram was testy.<sup>33</sup> In reality, Droppers did not have the authority to ask for either library to be built. He was neither mayor of Vermillion, nor had the backing of the Board of Regents or legislative appropriations to support the yearly funds to keep up the library according to the 1906 application for a \$30,000 grant. The failure of the USD application may have also been related to Bertram's distain for Droppers apparent in correspondence and the lack of support from the South Dakota Board of Regents<sup>34</sup>.

According to USD Professor of History Herbert Schell, Droppers was an excellent teacher, well-liked by faculty and students, and instrumental in the development of the Law and Music Schools, as well as setting the stage for the formation of the Schools of Business, Engineering, and Medicine.<sup>35</sup> However, during his tenure as president, Droppers did not fit into the social and political environment of Vermillion. His politics leaned to the left and Droppers wrote opinions supporting his views that were published in newspapers.<sup>36</sup> He was seen as a "Socialist," which countered



A 1903 letter from President Garrett Drovers to James Bertram suggesting two Carnegie Libraries should be built in Vermillion. Courtesy of the Vermillion Public Library Archives.

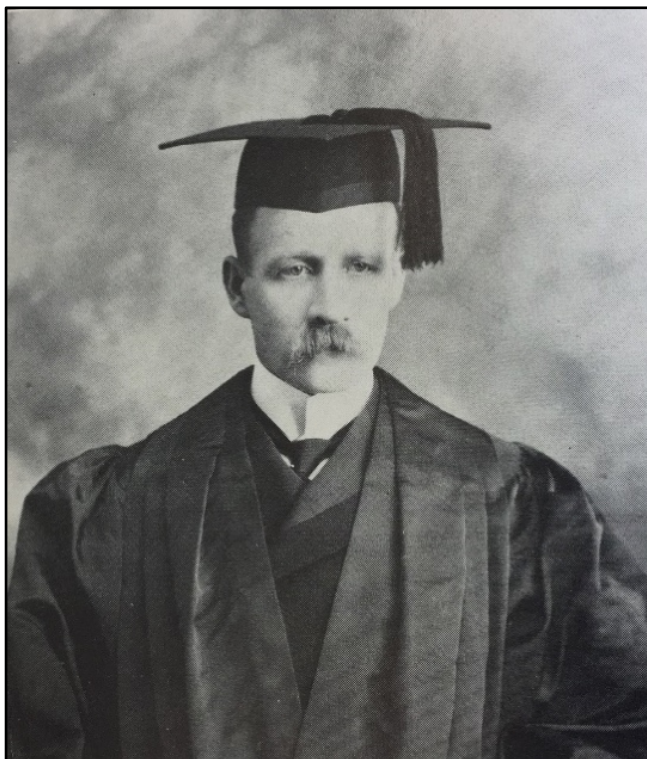


the political leanings of South Dakota at that time. Moreover, Droppers was a Unitarian, which was the most liberal Protestant denomination relative to the more conservative church goers in Vermillion. In addition, going against the strong, pervasive temperance movement of the times, he served wine at receptions in his home. Thus, he made enemies of individuals such as Elias Willey, editor of the *Dakota Republican* newspaper, Vermillion mayor W. C. Bryant, and two very prominent businessmen, M. D. Thompson and Darwin Inman. In 1903 this “town-gown” turmoil created such tension that, three clergymen and the men cited above petitioned Governor Charles N. Herried (1901-1905) to relieve President Droppers of his position. However, because of the very strong support of faculty, as well as the relatively unfounded nature of the complaints, President Droppers maintained his position.<sup>37</sup>

Others charged that Droppers and Dean C. M. Young had tried several years earlier to bribe a student, David Boot, to bring charges against Professors O. E. Hagan, James Todd, and Frank Merchant in exchange for granting Boots a degree. At a public hearing where Boots failed to appear, it was clear that President Droppers and Dean Young were innocent of the charges. Subsequently, Todd and Merchant resigned. Later, on February 2, 1905,<sup>38</sup> Droppers officially resigned his position, but because of very strong support from the faculty and student body, he remained as president of USD until June 30, 1906.<sup>39</sup>

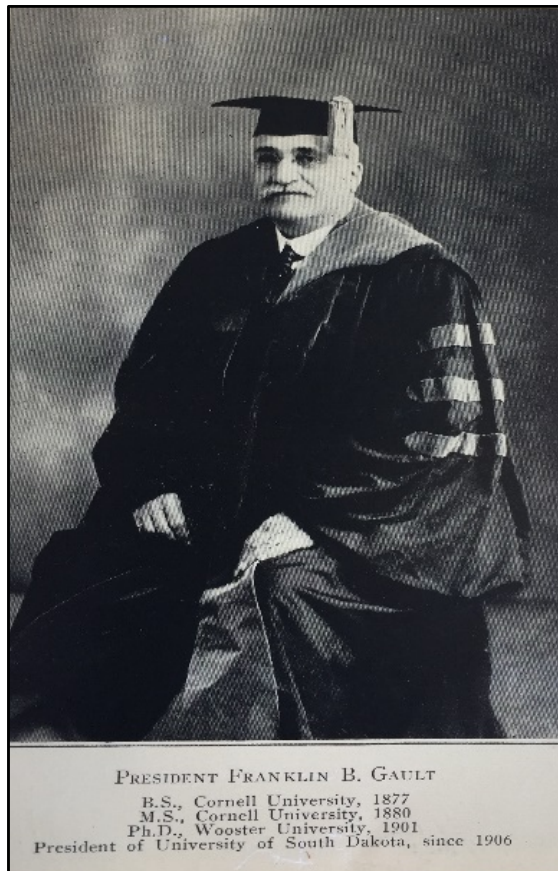
Another example of Dropper’s popularity with students and faculty occurred during the 1905 commencement, at the alumni banquet, where President Droppers was honored. “There Regent Spafford ostentatiously awarded an honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree upon Droppers, while the student body gave him a standing ovation and boisterous applause.”<sup>40</sup> According to USD historian Cedric Cummings, Droppers “appears to have been one of the institution’s more

capable presidents.<sup>41</sup> The same sentiments and more were voiced in a short biography of Droppers in 1905 in conjunction with that year's summer commencement exercises.<sup>42</sup> After leaving the University of South Dakota, Droppers went on to teach economics at the University of Chicago and then at Williams College. He was appointed ambassador to Greece by President Woodrow Wilson.<sup>43</sup>



President Garrett Droppers (1903 Coyote Yearbook).

Although Droppers laid the groundwork to obtain USD's Carnegie Library, he was unable to get the building constructed.<sup>44</sup> In 1909, Franklin Gault, the next president of USD (1906-1913),<sup>45</sup> attempted to increase funding for the proposed Carnegie library from \$30,000 to \$40,000, but met with resistance from Bertram. According to a Feb. 6, 1909, letter to Bertram from Gault found in Gault's files at USD Archives and Special Collections, Gault requested the



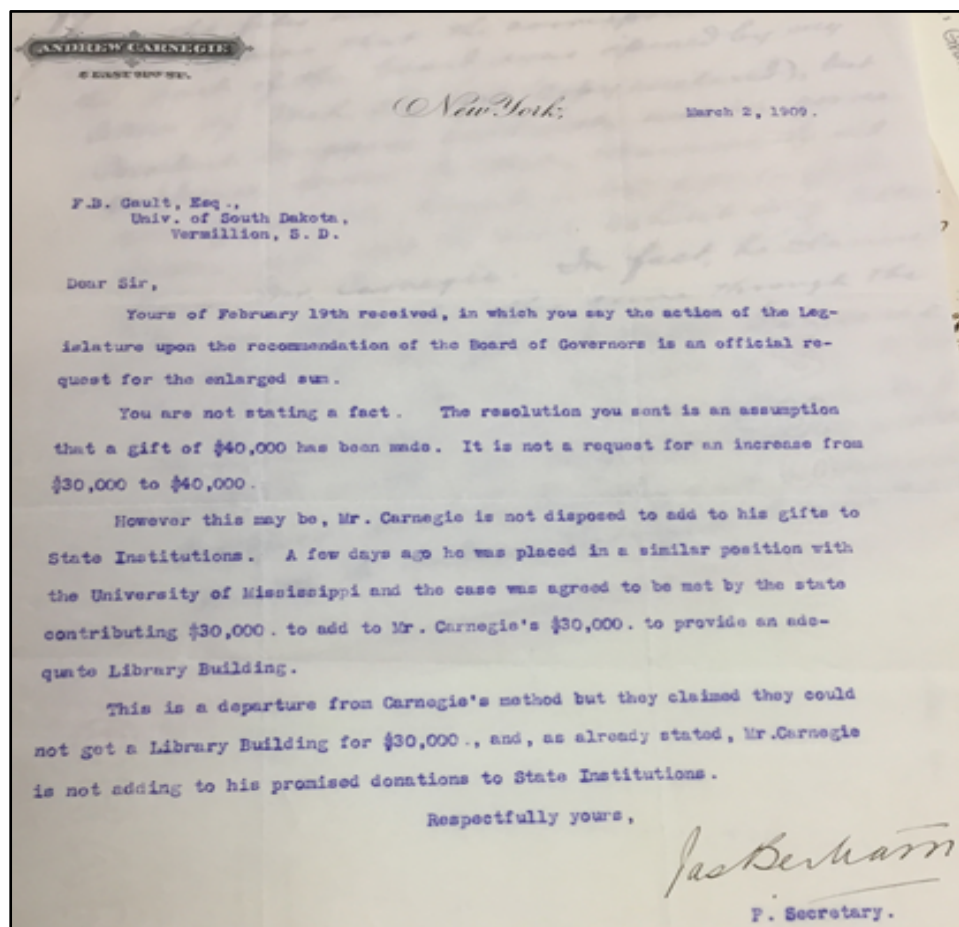
President Franklin Gault (1907 Coyote Yearbook).

\$10,000 increase. Bertram's response on February 16, 1909, reminded Gault that the original amount agreed upon in 1906 was for \$30,000 and additionally there was no pledge by the Board of Regents for funds to maintain the building, as stipulated by the Carnegie Foundation mandates.

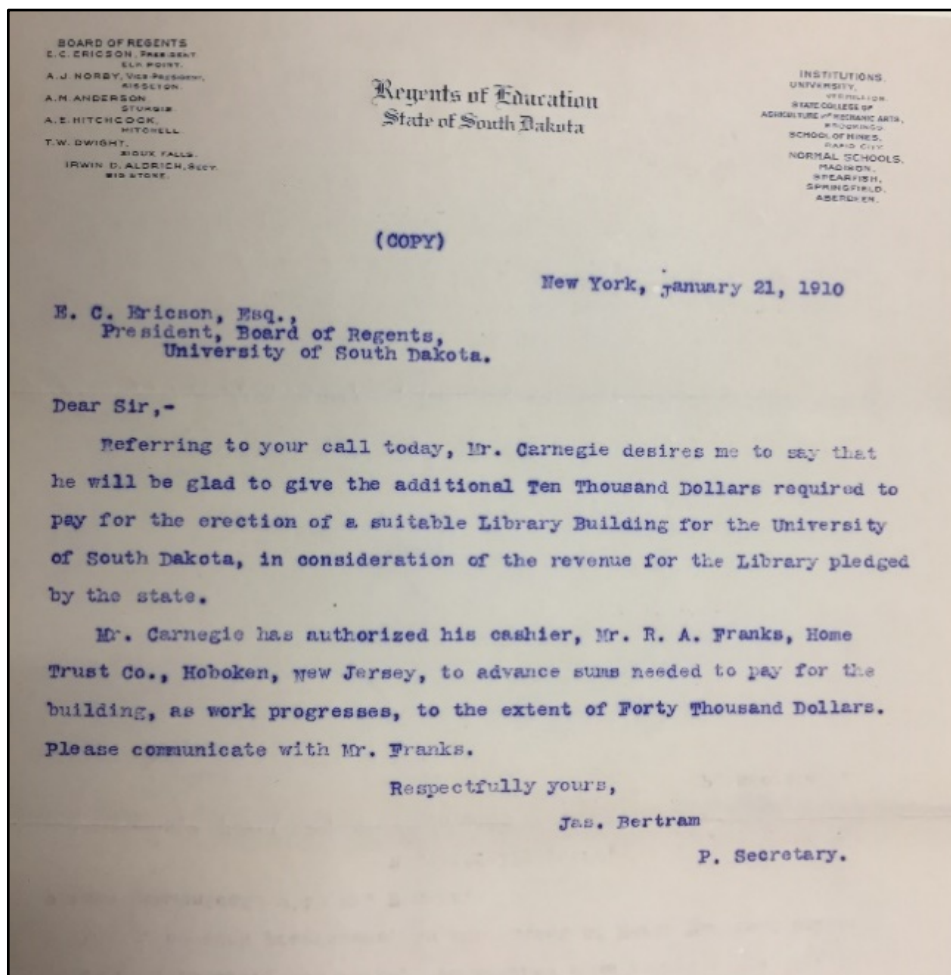
In a three-page, single-spaced letter from President Gault to Bertram on February 19, 1909, Gault outlined in great detail the need for the increased dollar request as follows: an increased cost of building materials, a larger student body (450 versus 380 students),<sup>46</sup> and inadequacy of the current library. In addition, he said, the University of South Dakota and the state of South Dakota were now better able to provide the "maintenance fee," which included money for buying library books, and he noted the overall willingness of the Board of Regents to support the maintenance and

development of new buildings on campus. By March 2, 1909, the funds had still not been granted (see letter below). It was not until January 21, 1910, that Carnegie agreed to support the \$40,000 structure as noted in a letter (see Page 41) from Bertram to the President of the Board of Regents E. C. Ericson, who acknowledged the support for the endeavor by the South Dakota Legislature and in a joint resolution by the South Dakota Board of Regents.

Shortly after receiving the gift for \$40,000, Regents President Ericson passed away and A. J. Norby took over as the contact person on the Board of Regents, as noted in the letter (see Page 42) from University of South Dakota Secretary Charles Sloan's files in USD Archives and Special Collections.



Letter from Bertram to USD President Gault dated March 2, 1909.



Letter from Board of Regents President E. C. Ericson to Carnegie's personal secretary James Bertram dated January 21, 1910 (USD Archives and Special Collections).



University of South Dakota

SLOAN, SECRETARY

SECRETARY'S OFFICE

Vermillion, S. D., August 23, 1910.

Mr. R. A. Franks,  
Home Trust Co.,  
Hoboken, N. J.

Dear Sir:-

In transmitting the first estimate for payment on construction of the Carnegie Library Building, located on the campus of the University of South Dakota, I beg to offer the following note of explanation. Mr. E. C. Ericson, who in company of the Governor of the State, Hon. R. S. Vessey, and Regent T. W. Dwight, comprising the committee who waited upon Mr. Carnegie relative to the gift of \$40,000.00 for a Library Building at the University of South Dakota, and who also visited your office relative to the required procedure of securing payments, died soon after reaching his home from the trip, much to our sorrow and there has been no election of President of the Board since; Regent A. J. Norby is acting President until such an election shall be made.

I beg to remain,

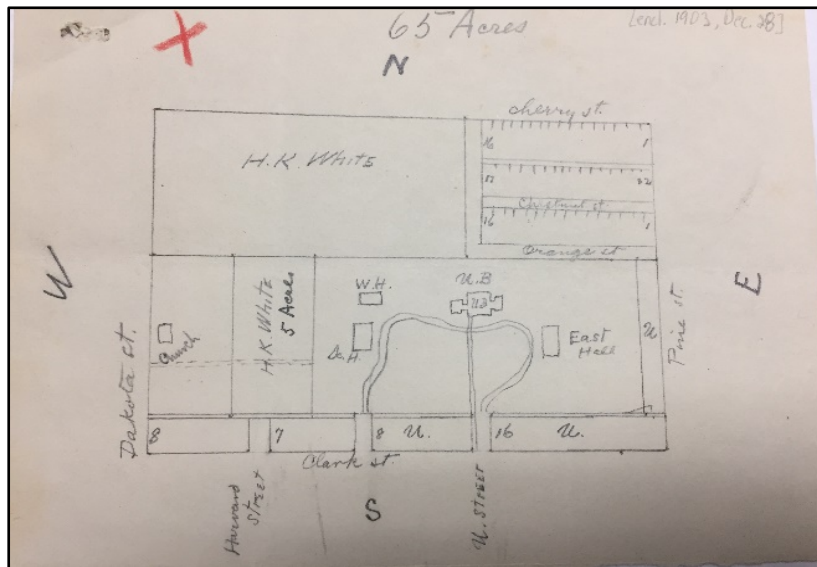
Very respectfully yours,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary,  
University of South Dakota.

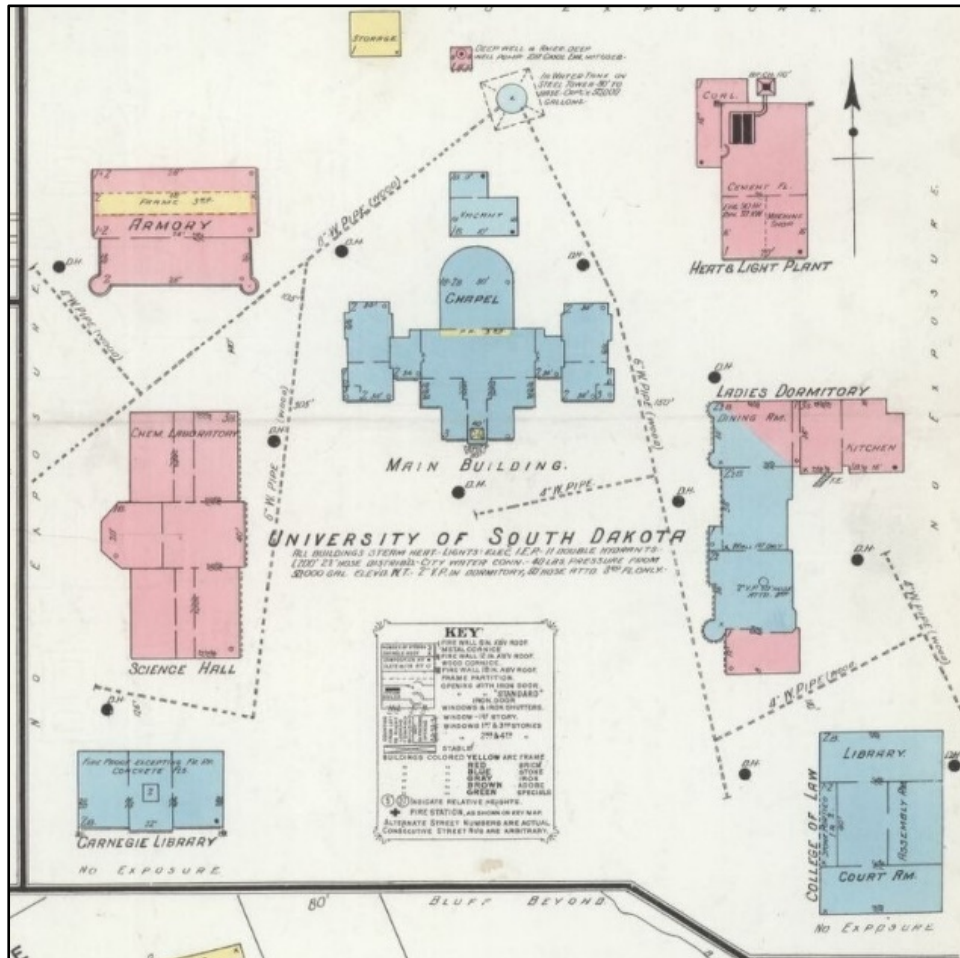
Letter from USD Secretary Charles Sloan to Home Trust Company executive R. A. Franks about the death of Regent E. C. Ericson.

Information regarding the construction of the University Carnegie Library and its addition was gleaned from a number of sources in the University of South Dakota Archives and Special Collections including files titled “Carnegie Library (Arts and Sciences; Shrine to Music; National Music Museum; W.H. Over Museum),” Correspondence and Related Papers Grant Negotiation, 1906-1910), President Franklin Gault’s files, Charles A. Sloan files containing building receipts and bills, reports of the Board of Regents and of the South Dakota Governor, pictures from the Coyote Yearbook, and from Michael Suing and Dr. Margaret Banks of the National Music Museum. In addition, USD Facilities Management shared blueprints of the original building and the addition completed in 1940.

Before building commenced, a location for the building needed to be determined. A 1903 hand drawn map of the campus below shows the location of various buildings including University Hall (U.B.), East Hall, West Hall (W.H.), and the Science Building (Dc.H.). Some land around the University was privately owned at that time. Also, a road looped past the main buildings of the campus.



Hand-drawn map of USD in 1903. Courtesy of USD Secretary Charles Sloan files, USD Archives and Special Collections.



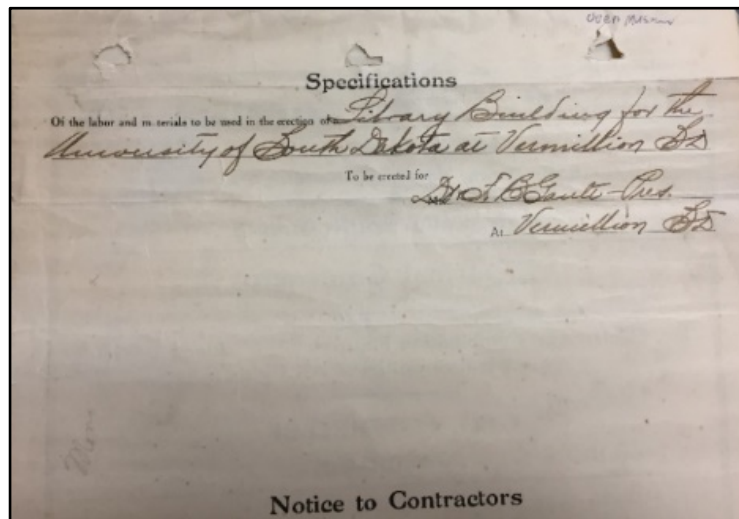
The 1912 Sanborn Fire Map shows the size, location, building materials, and footprints of buildings on the USD campus. Blue indicates that the building was constructed of stone, yellow indicates wood construction, and red indicates brick construction. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

By 1910, several buildings were added to the University including the Armory (now the Belbas Center), the Heat and Light Plant, and the Law Building. The location for the proposed Carnegie library was the southwest corner of the USD campus. A Sanborn fire map of the campus (above) in 1912, after the library was completed, shows the footprint of the building relative to other structures on campus. Note

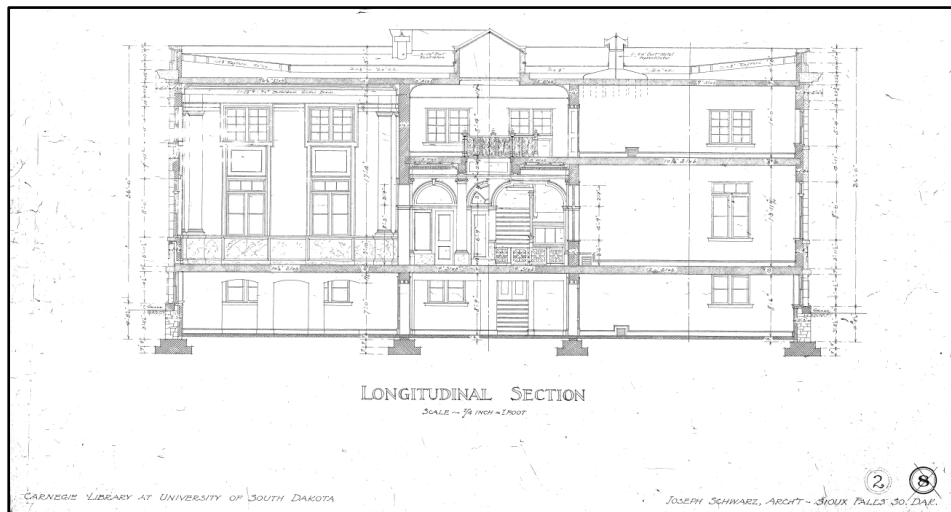


that West Hall no longer existed and that several structures had been added.

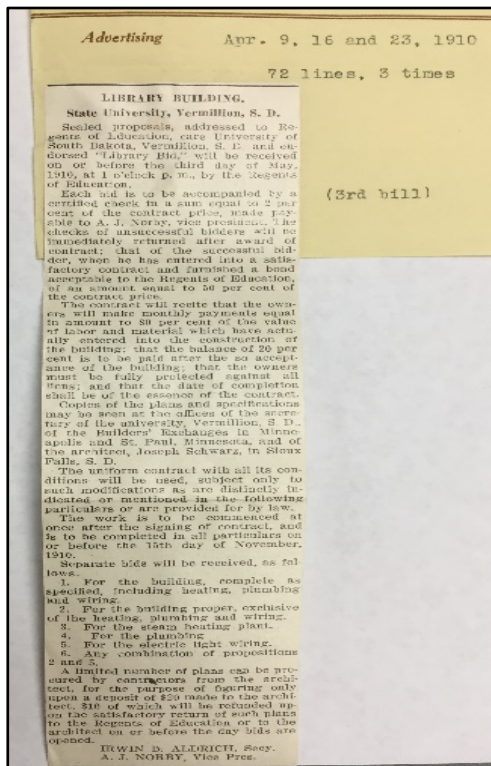
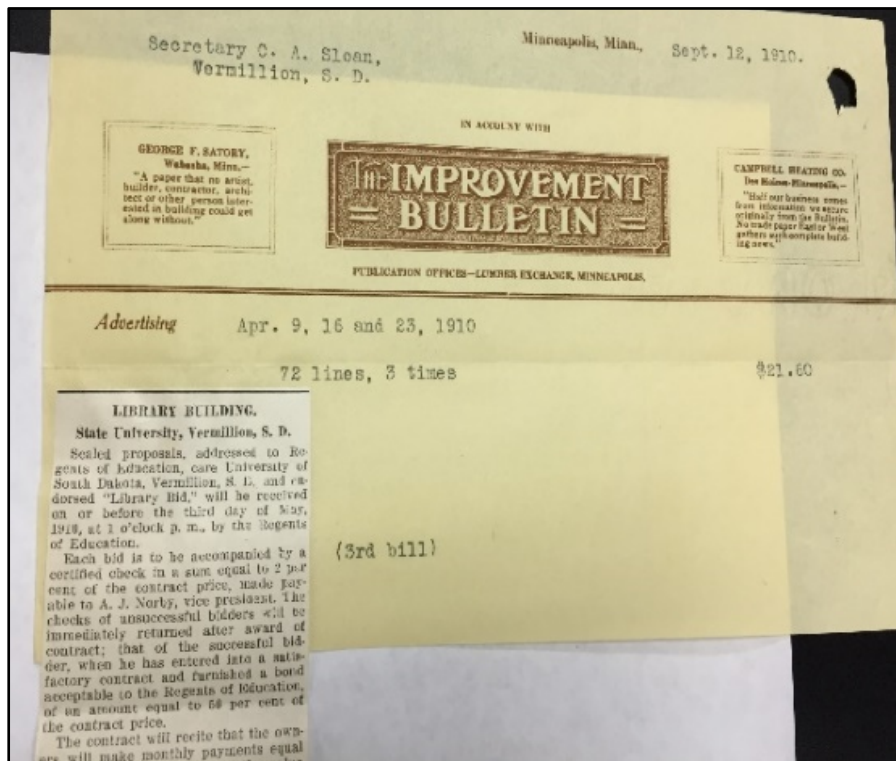
Schwarz's original requirements for the construction of the USD Carnegie Library building, were detailed in a 35-page, single-spaced document that Schwarz sent to President Gault. The front of the document is shown below.



First page of the specifications document that Joseph Schwarz sent to USD President Gault for the construction of the USD Library. Courtesy of Gault Files, USD Archives and Special Collections.



The architectural plan of the building also denotes some of the detail Schwarz utilized in the construction of the building. Courtesy of Sandy Wolfswinkel at USD Facilities Management.



Advertisements for specific contractors were published in the *Improvement Bulletin* in 1910. Note that the entity in charge was the Regents of Education, under A. J. Nurdy, and that USD Secretary C. A. Sloan submitted the advertisement.

[Ind. 412, Sept. 14]

### Estimate #2

2 Cars Brick	256.50
4 Cars Cut Stone	3000.00
1 " Lime	121.50
65 Yds Crushed Rock	247.00
36 " Sand	100.00
Lumber	300.00
80 Bbls. Cement	148.00
Frames	310.00
58 Yds. Sand	101.50
Labor	756.00
	<hr/> 5340.50
	800.50
Less 15%	<hr/> \$4540.00

Vermillion S.D.  
Sept. 17-1910  
OK George W. Ward  
Supt

Estimate of costs of components needed to build the University Carnegie Library Building. Courtesy of USD Archives and Special Collections: Charles Sloan files.

The USD library was completed in 1911. Its architectural characteristics included a Bedford, Indiana, limestone exterior, and a central entrance bay projecting in a portico beyond the front façade, with the recessed door flanked on each side by two Ionic stone columns. Light entered the library through several large windows on four sides of the building, as well as smaller basement windows and a large skylight. Students and faculty entered the building via a flight of stone stairs.

Vermillion, S. D.  
March 10th, 1911.

Est. #6.  
Net Amt. \$5000.00

Hon. Board of Regents,  
Vermillion, S. D.

Gentlemen:

I find due the sum of Five thousand <sup>no</sup>/<sub>100</sub> (\$5000.00) Dollars for labor and material which has entered into the construction of the Carnegie Library at the University of South Dakota, as follows-

P. F. Cavanaugh - Steam Service-----	\$875.00
Symms-Powers Co. - Heating and Plumbing-----	1500.00
McQuay Electric Co. - Lighting-----	227.00
Wold and Johnson - General Contract-----	2900.00
Miscellaneous-----	300.00
<b>Total-----</b>	<b>\$5000.00</b>

Respectfully submitted,

*Joseph Schwarz*  
Architect.

I hereby certify that Mr. Joseph Schwarz is the official architect of the Carnegie Library Building being erected on the campus of the University of South Dakota, at Vermillion, S.D.

*Charles Sloan*  
Secretary,  
University of South Dakota.

Accepted bids listed for contractors for the USD library.

Vermillion,  
South Dakota, Feb. 17, 1911-191

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

TO Geo. W. Ward,  
Sioux Falls, S.D.

OR

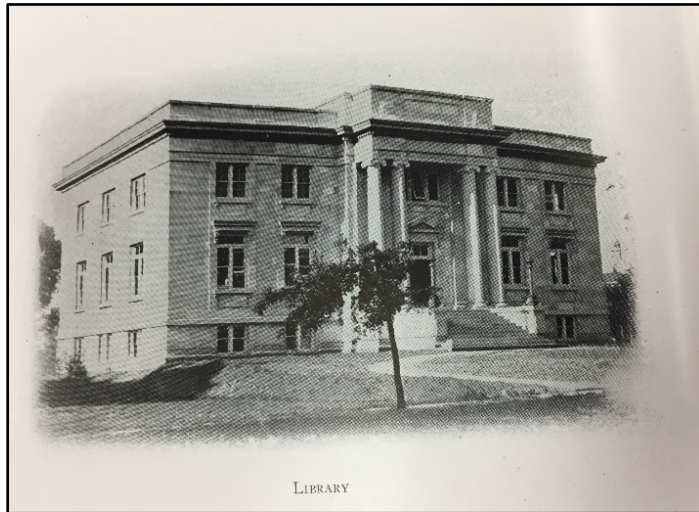
For Supplies Furnished the University of South Dakota.

All bills must be itemized, stating Quantity and Price per Unit.

To payment on account of superintending construction of Carnegie Library Building, located on campus of University of South Dakota, Vermillion, S.D., 11 Days at \$4.00 per day,		44 00
Previously paid Mr. Geo. W. Ward		
You.	3	Check #4, Sept. 6th 1910, \$ 150.00
"	7	" #5, Nov. 1st 1910 \$ 158.00
"	10	" #11, " 28th 1910 \$ 142.00
"	12	" #13, Jan. 9th 1911 \$ 80.00
"	17	" #15, Feb. 17th 1911 \$ 44.00
		604.00
OR.		
By 151 Days labor as superintendent of construction of Carnegie Library Building located at University of South Dakota, Vermillion, S.D., at \$4.00 per day		604 00

Bills, payments and contractor information for George W. Ward, superintendent of construction. Courtesy of USD Archives and Special Collections, USD Secretary Charles Sloan's file.



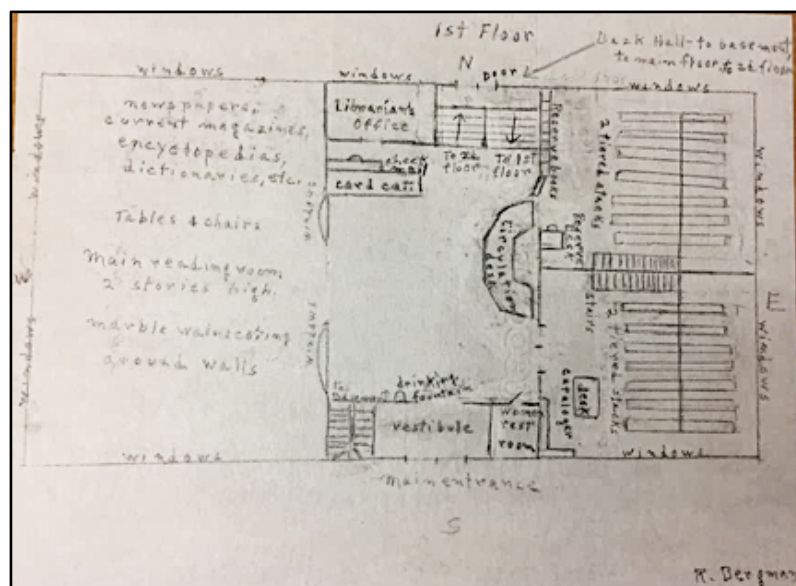
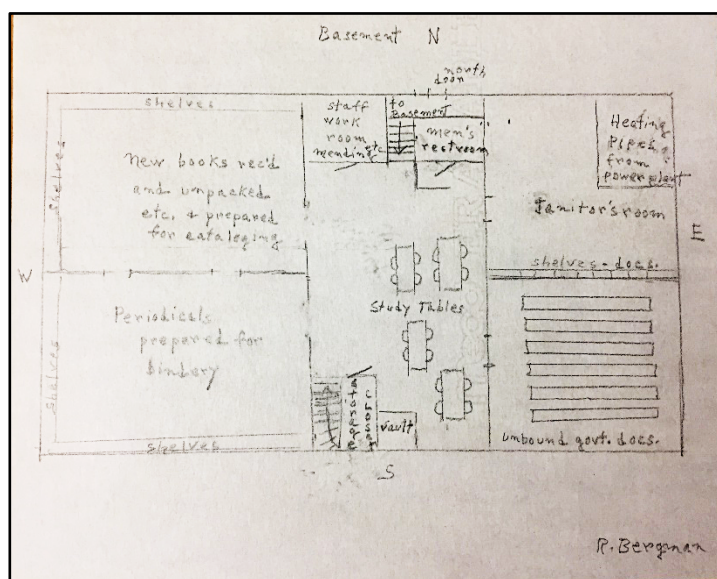


LIBRARY



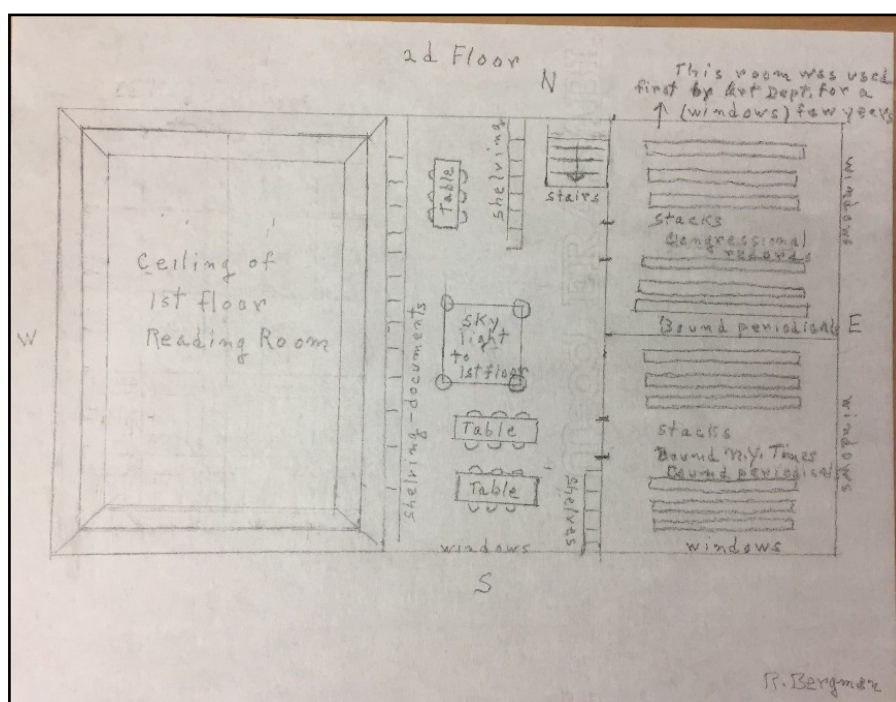
Photos of the exterior and interior of the building from the 1912 Coyote Yearbook showing the charging table and a reading room.

Another view of the interior of the building comes from hand drawn pictures by Ruth Bergman, who was director of the library for many years.<sup>47</sup> Her detailed drawings of the give an idea of how the library functioned in 1930.



Layout of the basement and first floor of the USD Carnegie Library drawn by Ruth Bergman, longtime director of the library. She signed each drawing.

According to Bergman's drawings, the basement was used to prepare books as well as store unbound government documents. Several study tables were centrally located. Heating and plumbing facilities were located on the northeast corner of the basement, as was the janitor's room. The first floor was dedicated to reading rooms, book and periodical stacks, a card catalogue, and a charging table located near the entrance to the building. The second floor contained stacks for periodicals and newspapers but few reading tables. A note on the drawing indicated that the northeast section housed the art department at one time.



Second floor of the USD Carnegie Library, as drawn by Bergman. Thanks to Michael Suing, National Music Museum Archives, for providing the drawings.

By 1936 student enrollment at USD reached 900 students,<sup>48</sup> so construction of an addition to the library was considered a priority by President I. D. Weeks. An application to the Public Works Administration (PWA) was

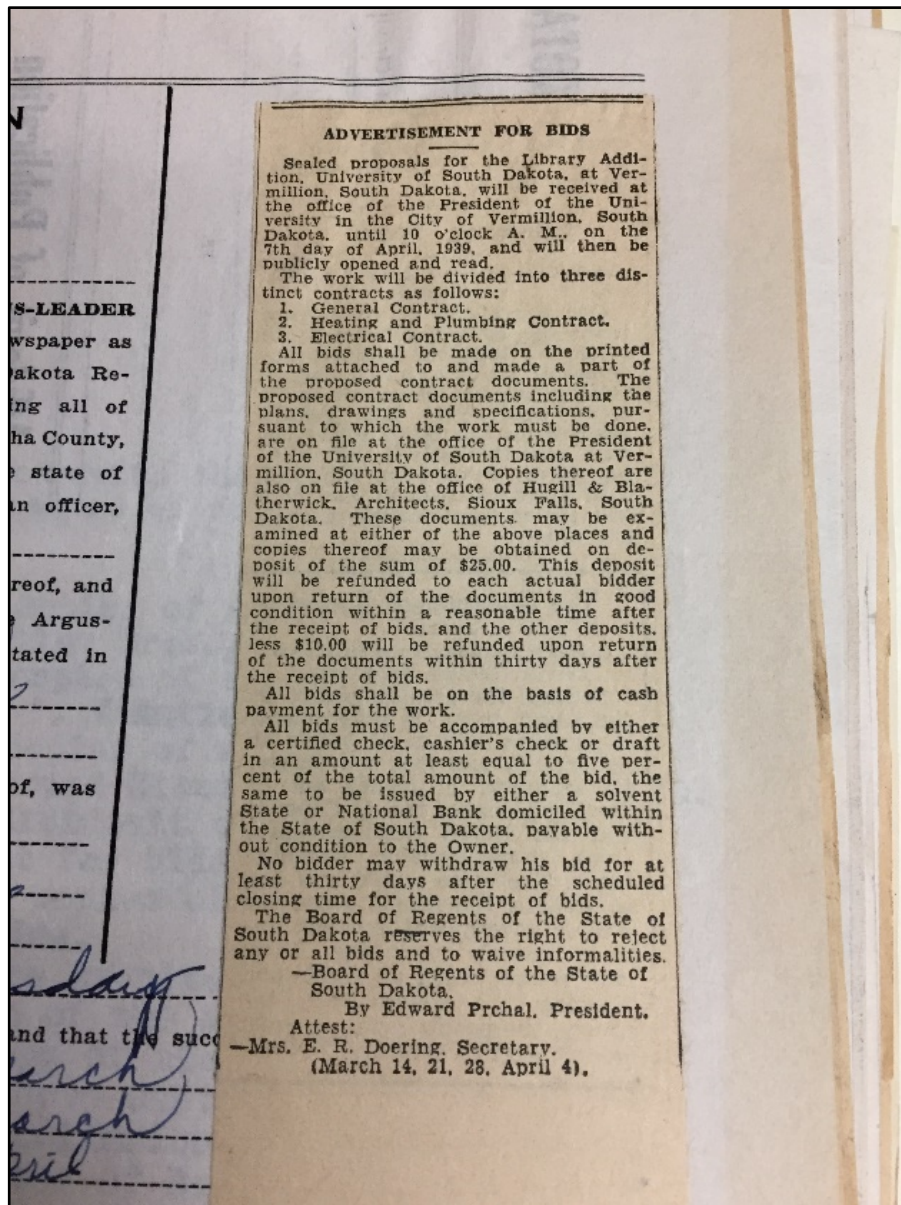


rejected at that time. In 1939 the Board of Regents gave Weeks full approval to move forward on the project with the stipulation that the state would not pay for the addition. The second application for funding from the PWA was accepted. The telegraph message from Weeks to Captain R. A. Radford (PWA) indicates that the state Board of Regents would pass a resolution to accept money from the PWA to fund the library addition. Funds for maintenance of the building would come from the Board of Regents and student fees (\$7.00 per school year and \$1.00 for the summer) that were placed into a "University Library Revenue Fund."

Telegram from I.D. Weeks announcing resolutions from the Board of Regents needed to obtain federal Public Works funds.

Hugill and Blatherwick Architects, Sioux Falls, designed the addition. The firm, founded by George C. Hugill and Wilfred F. Blatherwick in 1921, was responsible for the design of many structures in South Dakota that are on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>49</sup>

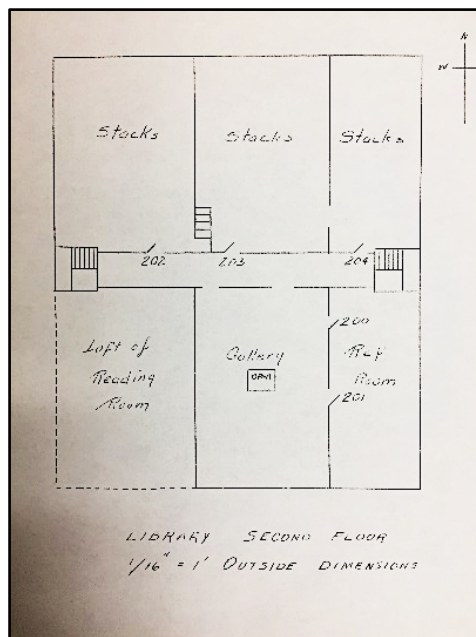
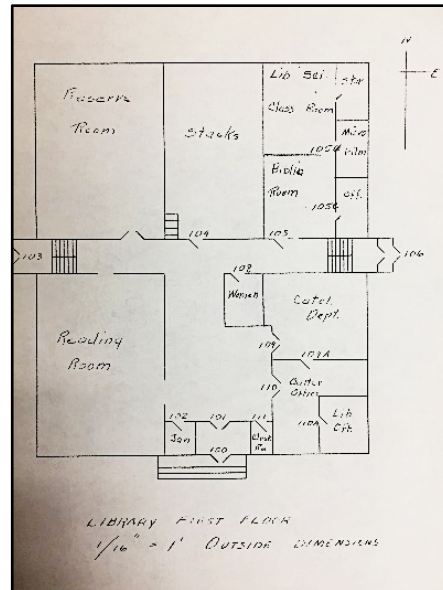
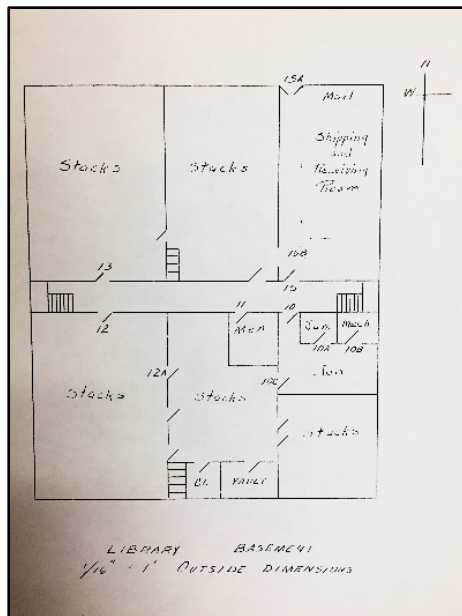




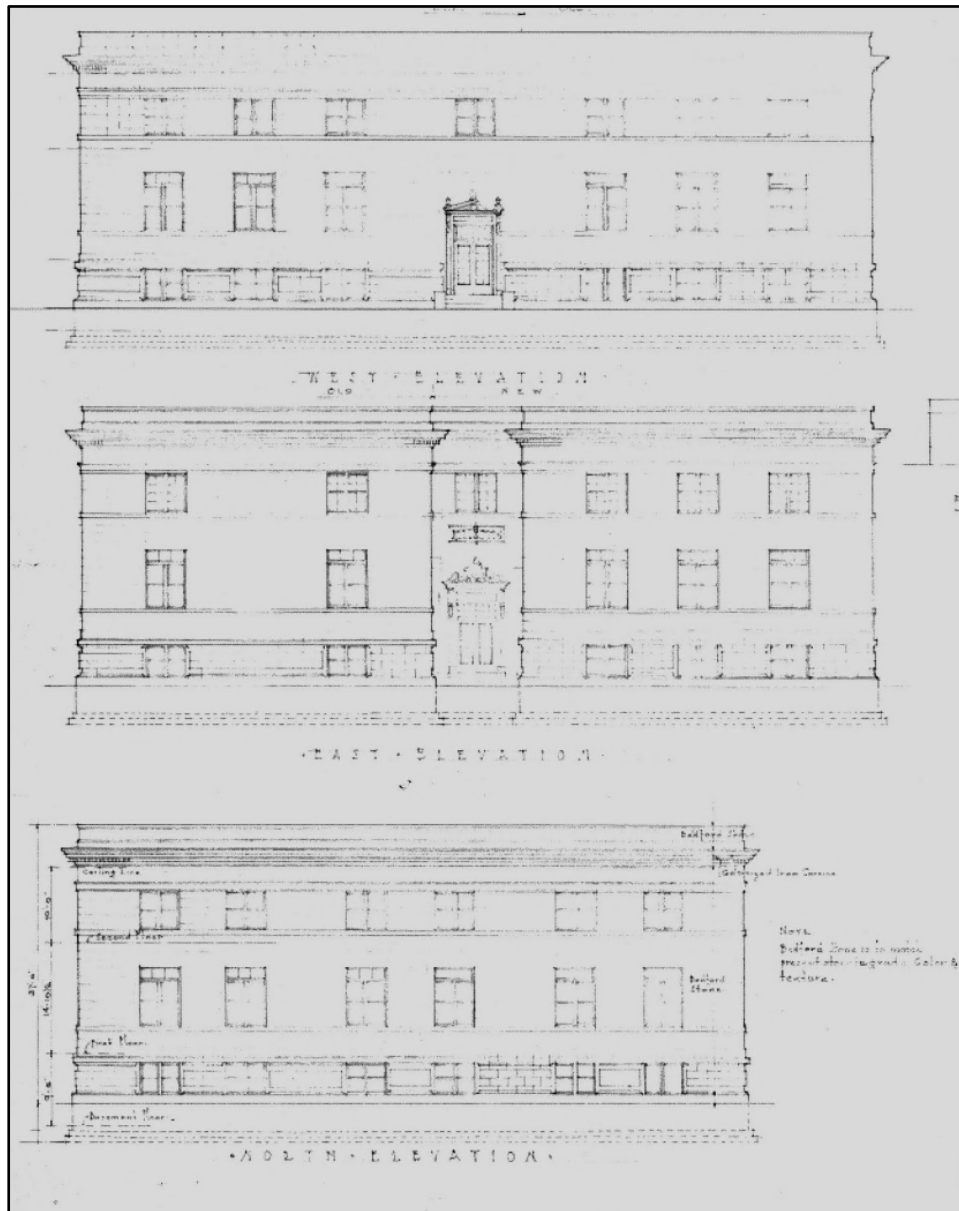
Bids for specific contractors were detailed in the advertisement from the Board of Regents. Thanks to Archives and Special Collections, Carnegie Library files.

The addition, like the original building, was constructed using Bedford, Indiana, limestone, and it essentially doubled the size of the building. However, during construction, there were a number of delays including a two-month strike by draftsmen at the Indiana Limestone





Functional drawings of different levels of the enlarged library with the addition north of the older library. Note that in addition to the original main entrance on the south side of the building, two entrances were added on the east and west sides of the first floor. Thanks to USD Archives and Special Collections Carnegie Library files.

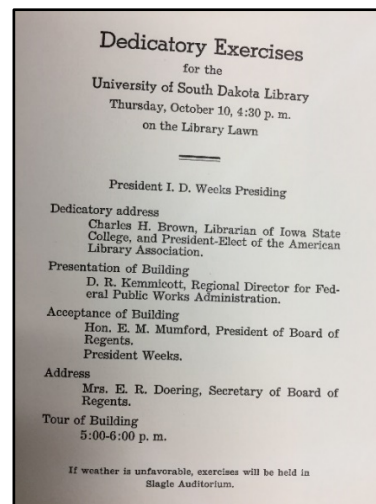
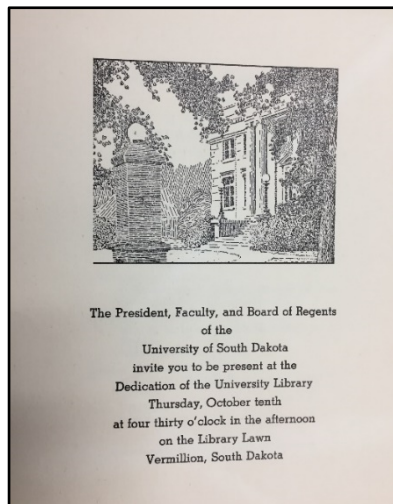


Architectural drawings by Hugill and Blatherwick Architects of the outside of the expanded building. The two halves of the building, the older south portion and newer north wing, are marked by new entrances on the east and west elevations. Thanks to Sandy Wolfswinkel, USD Facilities Management, for a copy of the blueprints.





The 1940 addition to the north side of the original building is lighter and the east side entrance is tucked between the old and new parts of the building. Photo courtesy of Jeanette Williams.



The USD Carnegie Library expansion was officially dedicated on October 10, 1940. Courtesy of USD Archives and Special Collections, Carnegie Library files.

By 1966 the need for a new, larger university library became evident. Enrollment at USD had reached 4,000 students.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the question arose what should become of the historic Carnegie building that had served USD as a library for 55 years.



### *From USD Library to Museums*

When the I. D. Weeks Library replaced the University of South Dakota Carnegie Library in the mid-1960s, the school repurposed the old library first as a home for the W. H. Over Museum and the Oscar Howe Gallery, and later also the Shrine to Music Museum. The Shrine to Music and the Center for the Study of the History of Musical Instruments was founded in 1973 under the direction of Dr. André P. Larson,<sup>51</sup> and would take over the entire building by 1984. In 2002, The Shrine to Music Museum was renamed the National Music Museum. Several small additions to the building and its surroundings occurred after the W. H. Over Museum collections vacated the building. Interestingly, unlike Vermillion's old Carnegie public library that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the USD Carnegie Library building is not. According to an email on the subject, Liz Almlie, South Dakota Historic Preservation officer, stated that the USD Carnegie Library building and the old South Dakota Union, directly to its west, were both deemed eligible for listing on the Register. However, the nomination process was never completed.

#### *The W. H. Over Museum and Shrine to Music Museum*

President I. D. Weeks and the South Dakota Board of Regents suggested that the vacated Carnegie library building was an excellent facility to house the extensive W. H. Over Museum collections that then occupied space in the basement of Slagle Hall. Moreover, additional offices in Slagle were required for the expanding administration creating another impetus to move the W. H. Over Museum out of that building. Correspondence from Carl A. Norgren, a prominent businessman and USD alum, and Weeks made it clear that the idea actually originated several years earlier.<sup>52</sup>

3. The W. H. Over Museum at the University has a superior collection but these cannot be properly displayed because of lack of space. The space now occupied by the museum is needed for office space. It is our plan to convert the present library building for a museum as soon as a new library is built.

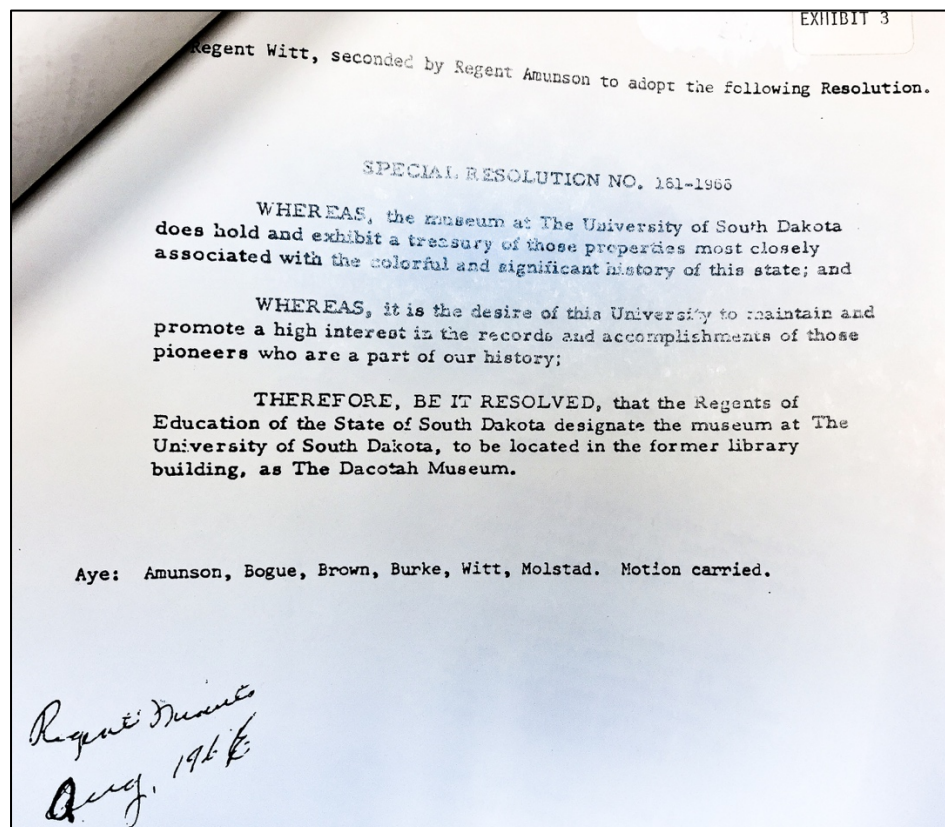
Some remodeling will be necessary to make the present building suitable for a museum. We feel that there are those who would like to contribute to make the University museum one in which the state can take pride.

The estimated cost of the project is \$173,936.70.

143,936.70

Exhibit cases - 1500 ft. at \$60 per ft.	\$90,000.00
Two museum technicians at \$7500 per year	<del>60,000.00</del>
Laboratory shelving and storage cases	15,000.00
Electrical changes, including labor	7,736.70
Repairs and changes in building to make it suitable for a museum	1,200.00

The case was made to the Board of Regents to convert the USD Carnegie Library to the W. H. Over Museum. (Courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, I. D. Weeks files, Box 108).



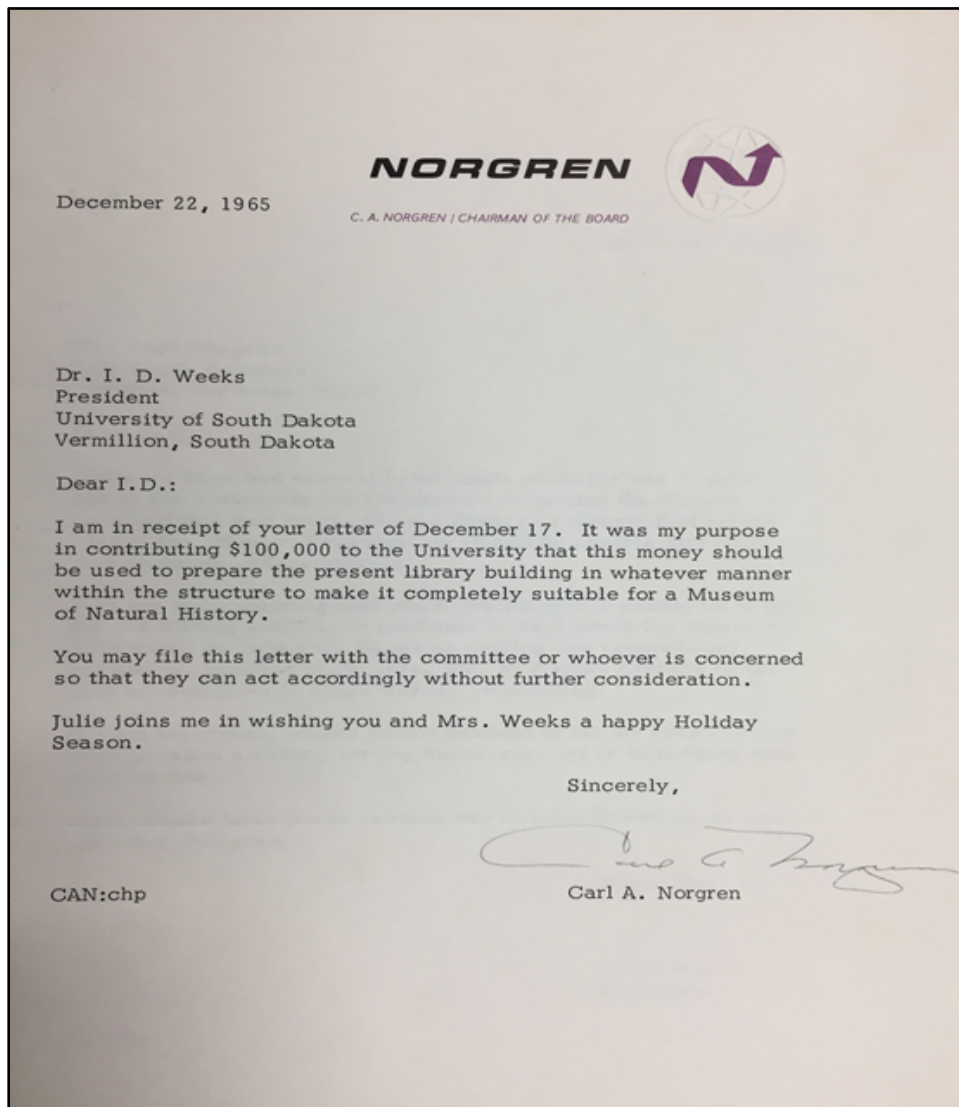
A Board of Regents resolution moved the W. H. Over Museum to the old Carnegie library building. (Courtesy of W. H. Over Archives).



The Board of Regents passed a resolution in 1966 (resolution on previous page) to convert the old library into a building to house the W. H. Over Museum, also called the “Dacotah Museum” in the document.

Founded in 1883 as the University Museum, the museum was renamed in 1948 for its longtime director, William Henry Over.<sup>53</sup> During Over’s tenure (1913-1948), there were significant increases in the quality and quantity of collections including cultural, archeological, and natural-history artifacts. Over carefully catalogued each item, according to his papers housed in the museum’s archives. These catalogues were still being used in 2019. Over was also a prolific writer, as Charles Sundling notes in his biography of the museum director. In addition, the museum was considered to be an integral part of the university for education and research purposes, and the museum director reported directly to the president of the university. Thus, in 1966, the W. H. Over Museum was highly regarded by the University of South Dakota.

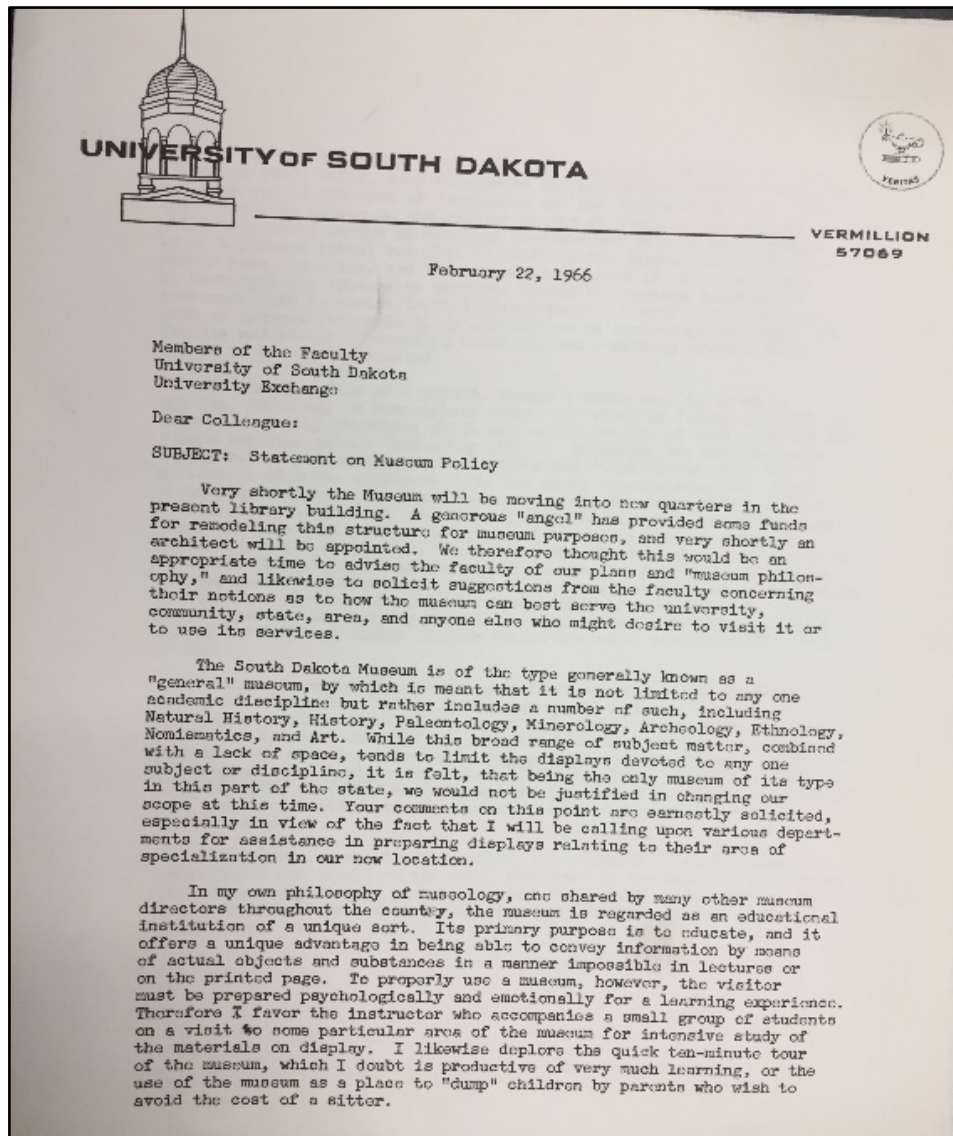
Funds for converting the library building into a museum came from the South Dakota Board of Regents and donors. Carl August Norgren, a prominent supporter of the W. H. Over Museum and a South Dakota native, donated \$100,000 toward the conversion and development of Natural History exhibits.



Letter from Carl A. Norgren to President I. D. Weeks agreeing to contribute \$100,000 for the new museum.

In addition, prior to moving into the Carnegie building in 1967,<sup>54</sup> the director of the Over Museum, James H. Howard (director, 1963-1968), wrote an open letter to the USD faculty enunciating the mission, activities, and goals of the W. H. Over Museum in its new home. He stated that prime functions of museums are education, research and preservation of “study materials.” He also engaged faculty members to present their suggestions to plan, develop, and

produce a "new" museum. Below (and on the following page) is a copy of the letter found in Archives and Special Collections, I. D. Weeks files.



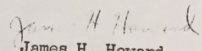
In our new location, budget willing, I hope to institute a series of museum study units, each devoted to one particular subject, for grade and high school children of Vermillion and the surrounding area. Such units would be geared to the regular course of study of the schools, which they would enrich by enabling students not only to see displays (i.e. a pioneer cabin) but also to handle a few durable artifacts (i.e. powder horn, broadaxe, sad iron). Advanced units of this type might be developed for university students should the various departments concerned wish to assist in their development. I have certainly found such an approach valuable in my own courses in archeology and ethnology. Tactile and visual impressions reinforce and sometimes correct ideas gained in lecture or reading.

Another function of a museum, though a minor one, is to store objects, which may be commonplace today, for study by future generations. This is obviously something which can easily get out of hand, turning the museum building into a "community attic." Sometimes the Director must firmly refuse gifts of two headed calves and "that clever Jones boy's collection of model airplanes." In the past, museums sometimes tried to display everything in their collections all at once - thus a museum visitor would be greeted, in the archeology section, by case after case of nearly identical projectile points, followed by several cases of nearly identical stone axes, etc. Today the trend is toward attractively designed, well-lighted exhibits which, though they may have only one or two objects of a certain type, also try to show the function of the object in question. The remaining 1,000 objects of this type remain in storage for the perusal of visiting scholars. Displays are rotated regularly to afford the habitual museum visitor (there are some) an occasional change of diet.

A third function of a good museum is research, and our University museum has always been strong in this area. We hope, in our new location, to continue in this line and to expand our efforts by providing research facilities for our own staff and students plus the occasional visiting scholar. Our museum publications, Museum News, Anthropological Papers, and Archeological Series have gained an international reputation. The first of these publishes scholarly papers in many fields. Those not familiar with these publications are invited to stop by the museum to examine current numbers.

These three areas, then education, preservation of study materials, and research are viewed as the prime functions of the museum. In closing this communiqué, already much too long, I once again invite your suggestions and solicit your help in planning for a better and more useful museum in our new location.

Sincerely,

  
James H. Howard  
Director  
South Dakota Museum

While the W. H. Over Museum occupied most of the building, in 1967 Arne B. Larson, founder of the Shrine to Music's world-class collection, was given room 104 of Carnegie Library building for teaching, rehearsals of the Golden Age of Bands (founded in 1967 and featuring historic instruments from the Arne B. Larson Collection), and the display of a portion of his collection.<sup>55</sup> Arne Larson had been hired the previous year by the University Of South Dakota





Photograph of Arne Larson holding a “Shrine to Music” sign and Dr. James Howard holding a “W. H. Over Dacota Museum” sign at the entrance to the Carnegie library building. Courtesy of the W. H. Over Museum Photographic Archives.

School of Music. He brought with him about 1,200 instruments that were initially housed in Old Main.<sup>56</sup> In 1973, three events had a great influence on the fate of the building and which museum —Shrine to Music or W. H. Over—would occupy it in the future. The first was the passage of Executive Order 73-1 whereby some state universities and the Board of Regents relinquished ownership of four museums associated with colleges and universities, including those in Vermillion (W. H. Over), Brookings, Madison, and School of Mines.<sup>57</sup> Thus, the Over collections (but not the Carnegie building) now belonged to the state of South Dakota. This marked an enormous shift from the University Museum founded 90 years before and closely affiliated with USD, to one governed by the state of South Dakota.

The second factor was that Arne Larson, USD Professor of Music, had continued to amass an even larger collection of instruments, musical scores, and books that necessitated additional space for storage and display. In response to this need, the Shrine to Music, founded in 1973, was given several rooms in the old Carnegie building for galleries to display musical instruments.<sup>58</sup>

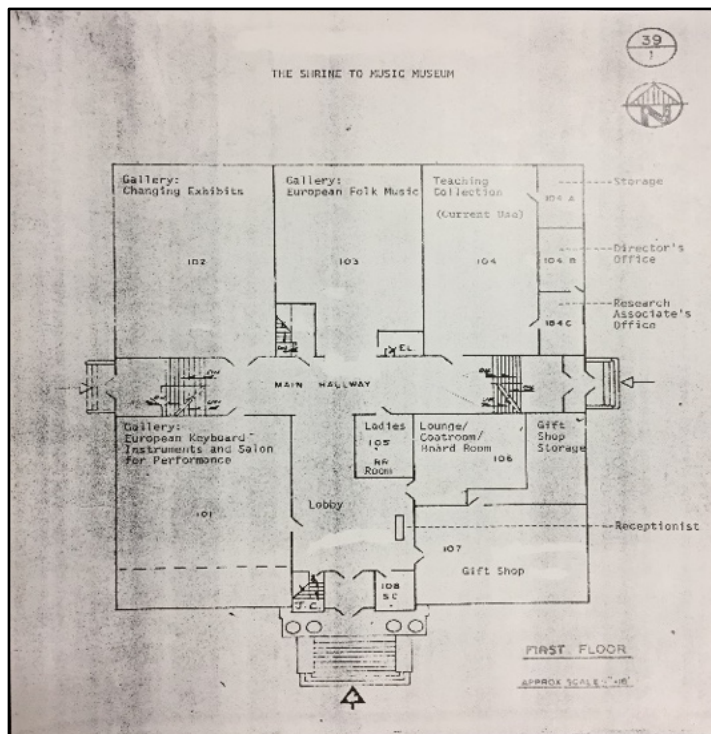
Third, Dr. André Larson, Arne Larson's son and the first director of the Shrine to Music, continued to collect world-class musical instruments, music, and music ephemera that required more rooms for exhibition, curation, conservation, documentation, and storage. Three rooms were given to the Shrine in the Carnegie building, as noted in the October 1975 issue Newsletter of the American Musical Instrument. In 1979 Arne Larson donated his farm and his entire musical collection to USD,<sup>59</sup> and in 1980 a new conservation laboratory was constructed in the Carnegie building basement (Newsletter of the American Musical Instrument Society October 1980). The younger Larson received invaluable collections of instruments from a variety of historical periods and well as countries all over the world, so that the collection totaled 15,000 instruments. The building also housed the Oscar Howe Gallery in honor of Professor Oscar Howe, assistant curator at the W. H. Over Museum and a world-renowned Native American artist.<sup>60</sup>

By the early 1980's, USD President Joseph McFadden, who was on the Board of Trustees of the Shrine, strongly supported the expansion of the Shrine to occupy the entire building.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, McFadden suggested that the W. H. Over Museum find another home because the Over was no longer under the control of the university, according to Executive Order 73-1, while the Shrine was part of USD. Initially, McFadden suggested that the Over Museum occupy any one of several buildings, including the then-condemned Old Main, the National Bank Building in downtown Vermillion, the Old Armory (now the Belbas Larson Center)

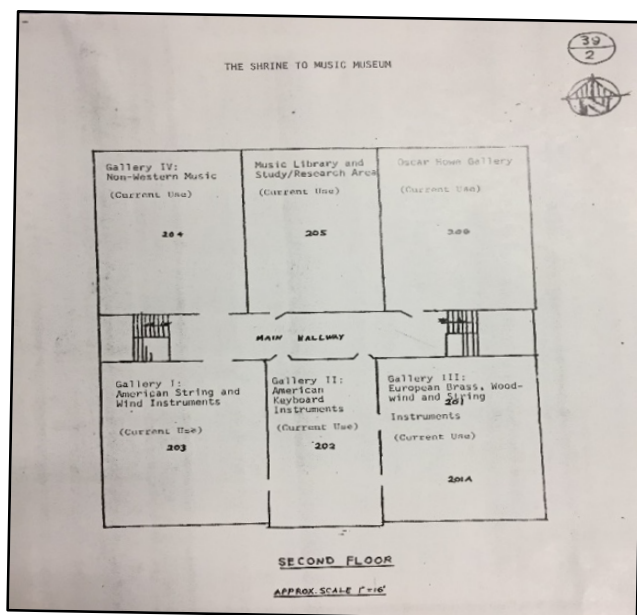
on campus, or the former Law School (now the College of Arts and Sciences).<sup>62</sup>

In addition, there was interest from several residents in Yankton—26 miles to the west—to move the Over to the Mead Building (currently the Mead Cultural Educational Center<sup>63</sup>), possibly as a means to renovate the building that was falling into disrepair. Residents of Vermillion were not receptive to moving the Over, which had been in Vermillion for over 100 years by that time. However, none of the Vermillion buildings were considered adequate to house the Over collection, according to Junius Fishburne, Director of the Board of Cultural Preservation.<sup>64</sup> Subsequently, interested people began a campaign to move the W. H. Over Museum out of the Carnegie building and to construct a new building on the campus of the University of South Dakota. In 1988, after fundraising efforts lead by the Friends of the W. H. Over Museum (including money from generous donors, the city of Vermillion, the state of South Dakota, and the Clay County Commission) the Over collection was moved into its new home at the corner of University and Taylor Streets east of the DakotaDome football stadium.

After the W. H. Over Museum and the Oscar Howe Gallery vacated the Carnegie building, André Larson made plans for major renovations so that the building could accommodate the music museum. These plans included new exhibit galleries, a new elevator to facilitate moving items within, into, and out of the building, as well as improving handicap accessibility. Other improvements included a new heating and cooling system and improved storage space for instruments. By 1985, the new elevator was in place and several of the windows in the building were replaced either by brick and limestone or special glass to decrease the corrosive activity of sunlight on the instruments on exhibit.



Proposed floor plans of the building to be occupied by the Shrine to Music, drawn by Dr. André Larson in 1981-1982, according to Dr. Margaret Banks. From Archives and Special Collections, President McFadden's files. Note that the Oscar Howe Gallery was still housed on the second floor of the building.







The Shrine to Music in the early 1980s, when it first occupied the Carnegie building and before initial renovations. Photo courtesy of Dr. Margaret Banks.



During renovation, windows were enclosed, and an elevator and central air conditioning were installed. Courtesy of Dr. Banks.

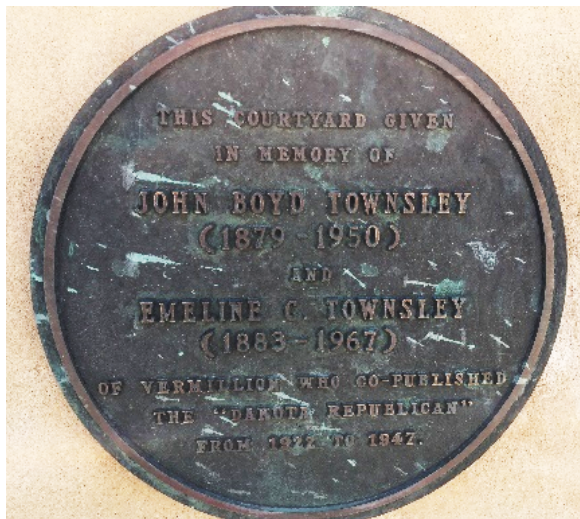
The dedication of the renovated building which also included new galleries coincided with the 15th annual meeting of the American Musical Instrument Society (AMIS) and the Midwest chapter of the American Musicological Society.<sup>65</sup> The newly renovated building and exhibit halls that comprised the Shrine to Music Museum were welcomed by an international audience.

Another major renovation was the construction of the Townsely Courtyard in 1987. It was built near the entrance on the south side of the building using the same Indiana limestone of the original building and the addition. The terrace was designed by Donald R. Baltzer of Koch Hazard Associates in Sioux Falls, and constructed by Gil Haugan Construction. The outdoor plaza was a gift of Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Rawlins to memorialize Mrs. Rawlins' parents, John and Emeline Townsely, long time co-owners (with A. H. Lathrop) of the *Dakota Republican* newspaper in Vermillion that had been in existence from 1869 until 1947 when it merged with the *Vermillion Plain Talk*.

One side of the terrace featured an amphitheater for musical performances during the summer, while the other side contained a fountain, 22 feet in diameter, with two tiers of falling water. It also featured four sculptures consisting of an immigrant violinist and three children, all cast in dark bronze. The sculptures were designed and produced by Michael R. Tuma, a prominent Black Hills sculptor living in Hot Springs. The bronze casting was completed at the Renaissance Foundry in Bridgeport, Connecticut.



Architect's rendering of the Townsely Terrace in front of the Shrine of Music Museum with the amphitheater and fountain. Courtesy of Shrine to Music Museum.



Plaque commemorating the Townsely Terrace in memory of John and Emeline Townsely. Photograph by Evelyn Schlenker.





President McFadden dedicating the Townsely Terrace while standing on the amphitheater in 1987. Behind the president are Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Rawlins, André Larson, John S. DeVany, chairman of the Board of Trustees, and Merle Offerdahl, mayor of Vermillion. Courtesy of Shrine to Music Newsletter, 1987.

André Larson was director of the music museum until 2011, when he retired.<sup>66</sup> Afterward, Cleveland Johnson was named director, followed by interim acting directors Margaret Banks and Dennis Acrea. In 2019, Matt Collingsworth was named director of the National Music Museum.

Over time, the fountain and the violist on the plaza became a target of vandals and the fountain was converted into a garden.



Townsely Fountain converted to a small garden because of vandalism to the fountain. Note the sculptures in the center of the garden. Photo by Evelyn Schlenker.

Although the Townsely Terrace served as a venue for summer music programs for many years, it deteriorated over time, while improvements to the building occurred over the years. In 2004 the building which was renamed the National Music Museum in 2002, was tuck pointed and a new roof installed, according to Banks.

Early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, museum leaders made plans to renovate the building and expand it with a three-level addition. The Board of Regents and the state of South Dakota approved the addition and renovation to improve accessibility, increase the number of exhibit galleries, enlarge and update the concert space, and increase conservation and storage space.<sup>67</sup> Funds for the major project came from donors, the Board of Regents and also the Vermillion City Council. State-of-the-art technology and lighting is expected to enhance the capability of staff and the enjoyment of the facility by its patrons. On October 7, 2018,



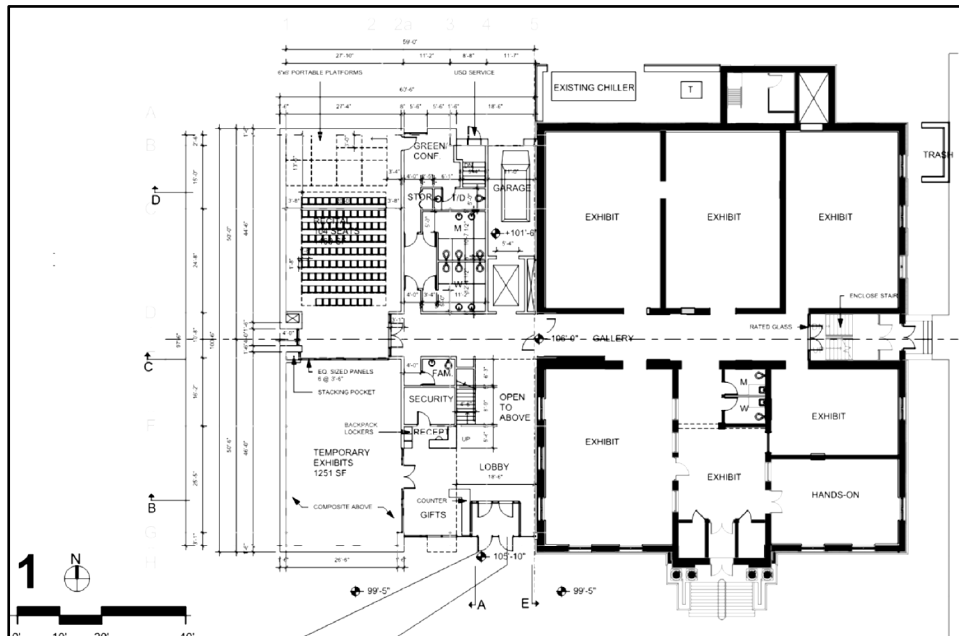
Two views of the 16,000 square foot addition and changes to the landscape of the National Music Museum. The new entrance to the Museum will be through the handicapped-accessible new addition. The façade of the original building will be retained, but no longer provide access to the building. Photos courtesy of Dr. Patricia Bornhofen, National Music Museum.

the National Music Museum closed for renovation that was expected to last until 2021. Building the new addition commenced in April 2019.

An architect's renderings shown above indicated that the landscaping around the Carnegie building would be markedly altered and the Townsely Terrace removed. The fate of the statues and plaque was to be determined.



A Board of Regents report noted that the addition and renovations would cost \$10.6 million.<sup>68</sup> A new elevator will make the building more accessible, while the old elevator will be renovated and retained. The project will increase exhibit and storage space as well as create a venue for musical programs and performances. In 2019, a new Preservation Center constructed in north Vermillion increased storage space for instruments, books and archival items and allotted space for research by museum staff and patrons.



First Floor plan for the 2020 addition and renovation of the National Music Museum. The portion of the building outlined in boldface is the building as it existed before 2018. The new addition is on the west side of the old structure.

Thus, the two Carnegie library buildings in Vermillion have a long history serving the community and the university. For more than 100 years they have garnering support from the Board of Regents, the Vermillion City Council, the Clay County Commission, the state of South Dakota and many generous donors and volunteers. Both library buildings were constructed in the early part of the twentieth century and were designed by the same architect,



Joseph Schwarz. The buildings served as libraries for several decades before being utilized for other purposes, as law offices in the case of Vermillion Public Library and in the case of the USD Carnegie Library building as museums, first the W. H. Over and Oscar Howe Gallery, and then the world class National Music Museum. Importantly, the Carnegie buildings have withstood the test of time, have been put to good use, and continue as historically significant architectural structures in Vermillion. The next steps are getting the USD Carnegie building on the National Register of Historic Places and maintaining, improving and protecting the former Vermillion Carnegie library, which is a fixture in downtown Vermillion.

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## Notes

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5. Ibid., 24-31.
6. Ibid., 34-56 and 203-206.
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10. Jennifer Dumke, *W.L. Dow: the Architect Who Shaped Sioux Falls* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013), 105-107.
11. Ibid., 107-111
12. Cedric C. Cummins, *The University of South Dakota, 1862-1966*, (Vermillion, SD: Dakota Press, 1975). On-line access: [https://cdm17102.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/univ\\_arc/id/2550](https://cdm17102.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/univ_arc/id/2550) . Page 311.
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16. Dumke, *W. L. Dow*, 75-76.
17. "Joseph Schwarz, Architect of Many Important Buildings, Dies Suddenly," *The Argus-Daily Leader*, December 28, 1927.
18. Peoplepill.com, Buildings designed by Joseph Schwartz (sic) on the National Register. <https://peoplepill.com/people/joseph-schwartz-1/>
19. Donald Meeks, *A History of the University of South. Dakota School of Law* (USD Master's thesis in History, 1967), 27 and Jim Wilson, *Vermillion Architects and Contractors 1870 to Present*, (Clay County Historic Preservation Commission, 2013, Pressing Matters Printing), 4.
20. Vermillion City Council meeting minutes, August 4, 1902.
21. Ibid., September 21, 1903.

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22. Stephen K. Ward, *Women and Wine: The Making of the Vermillion Public Library in a Man's World* (Sioux Falls: Pine Hill Press, 2004), 29.
  23. Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries*, 57-75.
  24. Interview with Fern Kaufman, former librarian at the Vermillion Carnegie Public Library, September 8, 2019.
  25. Harold Benedict Gotaas (1906-1977), a South Dakota native who went on to receive a doctorate from Harvard. He was highly recognized as a sanitary engineer and received many awards for his work. He retired as Dean of Engineering at Northwestern University (<https://www.nae.edu/189415/HAROLD-BENEDICT-GOTAAS-19061977>)
  26. Ward, *Women and Wine*, 57-71.
  27. Vermillion City Council Minutes, *Vermillion Plain Talk*. November 9, 1978.
  28. City Council Minutes. *Vermillion Plain Talk*. November 30, 1978.
  29. "Vogel sues city, lawfirm," *Vermillion Plain Talk*. August 16, 1979.
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  31. Frank H. Adams, "A New Look to the Old Library," *Vermillion Plain Talk*, February 7, 1980.
  32. Interview with Attorney James E. McCullough, August 19, 2019.
  33. Ward, *Women and Wine*, 18-23.
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  35. Herbert S. Schell, "The University Enters the New Century," *Vermillion Plain Talk*. February. 26, 1980.
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  38. "Mr. Droppers Resigns," *Vermillion Plain Talk*, February 2, 1905.
  39. Ibid., and "Students Protest," *Vermillion Plain Talk*, February 9, 1905.
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  41. Ibid., 74.
  42. "Dr. Garrett Droppers," *Vermillion Plain Talk*, June 5, 1905.
  43. Cummins, *University of South Dakota*, 74.
  44. "Plans for Library," *Vermillion Plain Talk*, March 9, 1905.
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  49. "South Dakota Architects: W. F. Blatherwick, C. V. Booth, R. H. Booth," *History in South Dakota*, <https://historysouthdakota.wordpress.com/2017/09/12/south-dakota-architects-w-f-blatherwick-c-v-booth-r-h-booth/>
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  51. John Koster, "André P. Larson (1942-1917): A Memorial Portrait," *Galpin Society Journal* (West Sussex Vol. 71, March 2018), 279-283.
  52. I.D. Weeks files (Box 108), USD Archives and Special Collections.

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53. O. Neuhaus, "A seed falls on fertile ground. (William Henry Over short biography)," *South Dakota Magazine*, <https://www.southdakotamagazine.com/a-seed-on-fertile-ground> and Charles William Sundling, *W. H. Over: A Biography* (USD Master's thesis in History, 1975).
54. "W. H. Over Museum Moves from Basement of Slagle Hall to the Carnegie Building. Nine Tenth of Museum Goes Unseen," *Volante*, July 25, 1967.
55. Chronology of the Carnegie Building (1883-1983), W. H. Over Museum archives and discussions with Dr. Margaret Banks, July 7, 2019.
56. "Instructor Displays Antique Instruments," *Volante*. February 21, 1967.
57. South Dakota Executive Order #73-1; Forty-eighth legislative assembly, 1973, Section 254.
58. Chronology of the Carnegie Building (1883-1983), W. H. Over Museum archives.
59. "The Arne B. Larson Collection," *Collections, National Music Museum*, <http://collections.nmmusd.org/arne.html>
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68. *National Music Museum at the University of South Dakota: 6 September 2017 Concept Design Update*, <https://www.sdbor.edu/the-board/committees/building-usd/Documents/2017UpdatedConceptBookProposal.pdf>.