UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME
HISTORIC
AND/OR COMMON
Beatrice City Library

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
220 North 5th Street
CITY, TOWN
Beatrice
STATE
Nebraska

3 CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY
_DISTRICT _X BUILDING(S) _STRUCTURE _SITE _OBJECT
OWNERSHIP _X PUBLIC _PRIVATE _BOTH PUBLIC ACQUISITION _IN PROCESS _BEING CONSIDERED
STATUS _X OCCUPIED _UNOCCUPIED _WORK IN PROGRESS ACCESSIBLE _YES, RESTRICTED _YES, UNRESTRICTED _NO
PRESENT USE _AGRICULTURE _MUSEUM _COMMERCIAL _PARK _EDUCATIONAL _PRIVATE RESIDENCE _ENTERTAINMENT _RELIGIOUS _GOVERNMENT _SCIENTIFIC _INDUSTRIAL _TRANSPORTATION _MILITARY _OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME
City of Beatrice
STREET & NUMBER
204 North 14th Street
CITY, TOWN
Beatrice
STATE
Nebraska

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Register of Deeds
STREET & NUMBER
Gage County Courthouse
CITY, TOWN
Beatrice
STATE
Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE
DATE
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE
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<td>__ DETERIORATED</td>
<td>__ ORIGINAL SITE</td>
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<td>_ GOOD</td>
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Beatrice City Library is located near the center of the downtown business district and is surrounded on three sides by public space. The Beatrice Public Schools face the library on the west and north, while Charles Park enhances the rear (east) facade of the building. To the north are commercial buildings.

Designed by architect George A. Berlinghof, who was then working in Beatrice, the building exemplifies the principles of Beaux-Arts Classicism. Symmetrical about an east-west axis, the plan features a central (west) entrance which rises above the half basement into the main hall. Flanking the main hall are the librarians' space and reference desk to the north and the reading room on the south. On axis with the entrance and housed in a large octagonally-shaped wing is the book stack area. The overall plan-form, then, is tee-shaped with the crossing of the "tee" forming the main (west) facade. The children's reading room and book stack spaces occupy the basement along with the safe and other storage and mechanical spaces.

The library was constructed in 1902–03 with the grand opening on January 1, 1904. Rutherford Lee & Co. were the general contractors ($17,000) with G. C. Pyle the plumbing and heating contractor ($1615), Western Electric Company of Omaha the electric contractors ($200), while the Beatrice City Gas Company performed the gas fitting operations ($43.60). Architect Berlinghof received $500 (3½%) for his plans and specifications. The building was constructed with a grant from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation, which also supplied an additional $3000 for library furnishings supplied by the Library Bureau of Chicago.

Structurally the building is of brick construction, with iron used for the floor and presumably the roof construction. Bedford limestone was used for the basement up to the water table, with pressed brick used as a facing for the upper walls. Architectural details are executed in terra-cotta.

The symmetrical plan is reflected in the main entrance facade of the building. Designed in a classical three-part Beaux-Arts composition, the facade features a projecting entrance pavilion. Here, access to the recessed entrance is through a high arched vault which is enhanced by a coffered ceiling. The arch itself features a Corinthian keystone and is modeled with the use of enriched talon, bead and reel, and pearl motifs. Above the entrance vault is the terra-cotta name plate and, finally, the elaborate cartouche which rests on top of the parapet and serves to date the building.

Flanking the entrance vault are paired Corinthian columns which are separated sufficiently to give the entrance pavilion a stong three-part composition. The columns frame a small rectangular window and a simply detailed medallion on each side of the entrance. These columns, when viewed with respect to the whole building, however, are tantamount to the use of the coupled column which so characterizes the Beaux-Arts motif.
Rectangular pilasters—also of the Corinthian order—model the wall behind each column and together with the columns, support an entablature of classical derivation. Here the cornice features egg and dart, bead and reel, and enriched talon motifs along with dentils while the architrave utilizes enriched talon and pearl motifs.

The classically derived entablature, which supports an articulated parapet, runs the perimeter of the building and ties the composition together. The end pavilions of the main facade each feature a round-arched window, which is detailed in the same fashion as the entrance arch. The pavilion itself is framed by heavy brick quoins. A broken string course visually ties the spring line of the three arches and forms the lintel of the small rectangular windows between the columns. Round-arched windows form the fenestration for all facades except the octagonal book stack wing, which utilizes a series of tall rectangular lights.

The building has retained its original character on the exterior with the exception of the modern entrance doors, whose non-symmetrical character is so antithetical to the Berlinghof design. The present interior—remodeled ca. 1968-71 by Shaver & Co., architects from Salina, Kansas—has been substantially altered with the use of suspended ceilings, pressed wood wall paneling and decorative translucent acrylic panels over the stack windows. Original library desk and other furnishings have been replaced.
The establishment of the Beatrice City Library was the culmination of an effort on the part of the Beatrice Literary Club which was founded in 1890. This Club confirmed the earlier efforts of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union which had established a small circulating library in the city. By 1893 the Literary Club had come into possession of a considerable sum of money and began a campaign to have the city accept the WCTU library and, with the use of the Club's capital as seed money, establish a City Library which could meet the demands of the community with full and free access. The City accepted this offer, moving the library together with a small reading room into new quarters on the upper floor of the recently completed Post Office building (October 1893).

In 1902 the Library Board was successful in obtaining a grant of $20,000 from Andrew Carnegie for the construction of a proper library building. Sketches and designs were submitted by Beatrice architects George A. Berlinghof and R. W. Grant and by Gunn & Curtiss of Kansas City, Mo. Grant submitted two designs, one classically derived, the other Romanesque; Gunn submitted two, both of which were classical. Berlinghof's submission, of course, was classically derived also. Berlinghof's design was chosen by the Board and he agreed to a 3½% commission as well as alterations of his original design. One month later, in August of 1902, Berlinghof was again before the Board to seek approval of his plans and construction specifications. Bids were taken and contracts awarded (see Item #7) on September 27, 1902.

The Beatrice City Library is one of only two outstanding examples of Beaux-Arts Classicism which have been identified in Nebraska to date. The library, restrained though it is, displays the basic features which are associated with the style: the strict symmetry of a three-part Beaux-Arts composition with the climactic, highly articulated central pavilion; the synthesis of Roman and Greek structure which is expressed in the combination of columns, arches and vault; the use of coupled columns and both arched and linteled openings and the broken facade, which, together with the articulated cornice and the elaborate cartouche, gives the facade a "classically pictorial" quality. Beaux-Arts principles were quite popular in Nebraska after the turn of the century but they were expressed most often in buildings of the Neo-Classical Revival style.
The style, which received such impetus nationwide from the World's
Columbian Exposition in Chicago of 1893, received additional stimulus
locally and regionally from the Trans-Mississippi and International
Exposition in Omaha, Nebraska of 1898. Walker & Kimball of Boston and
Omaha, architects-in-chief of the Exposition, executed the planning and
and provided strict architectural specifications for the individual
buildings. Here, all buildings had to conform to Beaux-Arts three- or
five-part compositions, were limited in height and in the composition of
the skyline, and all buildings had to be white and of "simple Renaissance
or Classical style." Perhaps most notable of those that fit Whiffen's
definition of Beaux-Arts Classicism was the Agriculture Building by Cass
Gilbert. Berlinghof's entrance pavilion of the Beatrice Library bears a
striking resemblance to Gilbert's on the Agriculture Building. Much simpler
in execution and devoid of figure sculpture, the main constituent elements
of the Beatrice pavilion are the same as Gilbert's and produce an over-all
effect very similar to that of the Agriculture Building. One can assume,
from some of Berlinghof's later projects and his proximity to Omaha at
that time, that he certainly must have attended the Exhibition and been
influenced by it.

Little is known of Berlinghof's life. Born in 1862 in Germany, he
first appears in Nebraska as a Beatrice architect in 1898. Sometime around
1906 he came to Lincoln, where in 1910 he went into partnership with Ellery
L. Davis. The partnership lasted until about 1917, during which time the
firm built many important structures in Lincoln and established a position
of prominence which the later Davis and Wilson maintained in Lincoln for
many years. Berlinghof continued his practice on his own from 1918 until
1930 when he retired. He died in Lincoln at the age of 82 in 1944.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Beatrice Library Board: "Minutes," 1902-03. (Archives of the Nebraska State Historical Society)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A [14] [691] [560] [459] [670] [B] [C] [D]
ZONE EASTING NORTHING ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

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FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

D. Murphy, Architect

ORGANIZATION

Nebraska State Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

1500 R St.

CITY OR TOWN

Lincoln

DATE

February 26, 1976

TELEPHONE

(402) 432-2793

STATE

Nebraska

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   STATE   LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE: Marcus D. Knudt

DATE: 3/1/76

TITLE

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
Overall view of the main (west) façade, looking east
Photo by D. Murphy, 1975, NSHS (7509/3:12)
Overall view of the east façade from Charles Park, looking west
Photo by D. Murphy, 1975, NSHS (7509/3:3)
Detail view of column capitals, entablature and a portion of the entrance vault, looking upward toward the northeast
Photo by D. Murphy, 1975, NSHS (7509/3:17)
Detail of west façade of the north side pavilion showing arched window and entablature, parapet and quoin details
Photo by D. Murphy, 1975, NSHS (7509/3.7)