Here open to all is the history of this people.

September 20, 2024

Joy Beasley Keeper of the National Register National Park Service National Register Program 1849 C Street, NW (7228) Washington, DC 20240

RE: Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for Property in Nebraska

Dear Ms. Beasley,

This submittal contains a true and correct copy of the nomination for the Shelton Public Library located in Shelton, NE, to the National Register of Historic Places.

Notification

The property owner(s) was (were) notified of the proposed nomination on August 14, 2024.

	No objections to the nomination were submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office during the public comment period.
	An objection to the nomination was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office during the public comment period.
	A letter of support for the nomination was submitted to the State Preservation Office during the public comment period.
Certific	ed Local Government
\boxtimes	The nominated property is not located in a CLG community.
	The nominated property is located in a CLG community and a copy of the local commission's review is attached.
<u>Histori</u>	ic Tax Credits
	The federal historic tax credit is being used in the rehabilitation of this property.
NPS G	rant-Funded Submissions
\boxtimes	Not funded with an NPS grant
	African American Civil Rights Grant
	Historically Black Colleges & Universities Grant
	History of Equal Rights Grant

Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Subgrant Program
Save America's Treasures Grant
Semiquincentennial Grant
Tribal Heritage Grant
Underrepresented Communities Grant

State Review Board

The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Board reviewed the draft nomination materials at its meeting on September 13, 2024. The Board voted that the property meets the National Register Criteria for Evaluation under Criterion A. The State Historic Preservation Officer has approved the nomination.

If you have any questions concerning this nomination, please do not hesitate to contact me at michael.belding@nebraska.gov or (402) 613-1591.

Sincerely,

Michael M. Belding III

National Register and Historic Markers Coordinator Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office

michael.belding@nebraska.gov

Phichael M. Bolding the

Phone: 402-613-1591

Shelton Public Library Name of Property	Buffalo County, Nebraska County and State			
United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	·			
National Register of Historic Places Registra	ation Form			
This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, ente "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.				
1. Name of Property Historic name: Shelton Public Library Other names/site number: Shelton Carnegie Library; BF14-024 Name of related multiple property listing: Nebraska Carnegie Libraries, 1902–1922 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)				
2. Location Street & number: 313 C St. City or town: Shelton State: NE County: Buffalo Not For Publication: Vicinity:				
3. State/Federal Agency Certification As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.				
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:				
national statewideX_ local				
Applicable National Register Criteria:				
<u>X</u> A _B _C _D				
Civily Male 15HPO/Director S Signature of certifying official/Title	ept. 17 2024 Date			
Nebraska State Historical Society				
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government Date				

Shelton Public Library Name of Property	Buffalo County, Nebraska County and State			
United States Department of the Interio National Park Service	r			
	storic Places Registration Form			
How to Complete the National Register of Historic Place.	tions for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, is <i>Registration Form</i> . If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter assification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories			
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national statewide	X local			
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<u>X</u> A _B _C	_D			
Signature of certifying official/Title Date				
Nebraska State Historical Society	Nebraska State Historical Society			
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government Date				

Shelton Public Library		Buffalo County, Nebraska
Name of Property		County and State
In my opinion, the prop	perty meets does not meet the l	National Register criteria.
Signature of comment	ing official:	Date
Title:	State or Federal agen	ncy/bureau or Tribal Government
4. National Park Servill hereby certify that this entered in the National determined eligible for determined not eligible removed from the National other (explain):	property is: al Register or the National Register le for the National Register	
Signature of the Keeper		Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private	7
Public – Local	X
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	X
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: <u>0</u>

United States Department of the Interior	
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration F	orm

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: library

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Prairie School MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials

(enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: <u>Foundation: CONCRETE</u>

Walls: BRICK

Roof: ASPHALT

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Shelton Carnegie Library is located in Shelton, Buffalo County, Nebraska. Shelton is a small town of about 1,000 people located on Highway 30 four miles north of Interstate 80 and the Platte River, along the north side of a triangle formed by the regional cities of Kearney (west), Grand Island (east), and Hastings (south). The Shelton Public Library is located on the main street of the village, C Street, approximately three blocks south of Highway 30. North of the library is a village maintenance building. The areas to the east and south of the library are dominated by single-family residences; to the west is an apartment complex. The one-story library with basement is a dark reddish-brown brick building with an asphalt shingle roof. The front (west) façade is largely intact with minor alternations including a replacement front door and a ramp for improved access. The brickwork is in good condition. The rectangular building is stylistically mixed, combining the Prairie School style of architecture, seen primarily in wide eaves and horizontal bands of windows around the structure under the eaves and at the basement level, and the Art Deco style with its linear appearance and sleek lines.

Narrative Description

The Shelton Carnegie Library is located on a flat site in the middle of the small town of Shelton, Nebraska. The building is rectangular, measuring approximately thirty feet deep by fifty feet wide, facing Shelton's main street (C Street) about three blocks south of Highway 30 and the Union Pacific Railroad line. It was designed by architect M. N. Bair of Hastings, Nebraska. Specifications for the construction of the library were released in July 1913. Five bids were

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

received by August 7, 1913. That of J. H. Teed, for \$7,500.00, was approved by the library board and Carnegie Corporation. By September 18, 1913, stakes were set on the site. By September 25, 1913, construction had begun. In June 1914 construction concluded and the library was opened.

Exterior

The building's related Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Nebraska Carnegie Libraries, 1902–1922," identifies it as a blend of the Prairie School and Art Deco styles. The Shelton Carnegie Library displays the Prairie School style in the overall horizontality of its form and the emphasis of that form in a limestone belt course that runs around the whole building, a hipped roof with broad overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails, and windows in horizontal bands. Simultaneously, it shows an Art Deco influence in its sharp-edged linear appearance, the strips of windows and sleek lines, and the geometric forms on the front columns.

The library stands on a concrete foundation, which is accented by nineteen-inch-high battened limestone blocks above the ground. All sides of the building display the original brick and stone. The brickwork is a dark reddish-brown.

The main (west) façade is brick and stone. It is opened by an entrance at the north end. Carved into the stone frieze above the door is "CARNEGIE PUBLIC LIBRARY". The entrance is flanked by columns whose tops are in line with the belt course. The columns' pedestals and capitals are stone; their shafts, brick. Elongated stone drops in the shape of an inverted T extend from the capitals into the shafts on both their fronts and exposed sides. A modern concrete ramp with aluminum handrails, installed for accessibility, leads up to the entrance from the sidewalk.

The north façade is pierced by two basement windows at the basement, placed on either side of the wall's center line, by two windows in line with them at the first story, whose sills align with the belt course that runs around the whole building, and by two additional windows, each situated halfway between the outer edge of the window opening and the end of the wall. The south façade is opened the same way, with the addition of two basement windows in line with the left and right first-story windows. On the library's east façade, or rear, six windows open into the basement and six into the first story. The first-story and basement openings align with each other. The voids in the north half of the wall mirror those in the south side around the wall's center line, but the three openings on each half are not themselves spaced evenly.

Seventeen one-over-one windows, which measure two feet wide by three feet tall, pierce the building at the basement level. Twenty-two one-over-one windows, which measure two feet wide by four feet, four inches tall, sit below the eaves on the main floor. All windows are single-hung and original. For their protection, however, each has been covered by a storm window. The basement windows are trimmed in pine, the main floor windows in oak. The windows are operational, with counterweights hidden in the casing that are attached to the lower sashes via ropes running on pulleys.

Interior

The library's only entrance is located at the north end of the west façade. A modern replacement aluminum door provides access to a vestibule with a split entry. Descending stairs lead to storage rooms, restrooms, and the furnace room. Ascending stairs lead to the main library room. The vestibule's original wood flooring has been covered with carpeting. Extant and visible

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

features at the vestibule include the five oak-framed windows of the upper story, oak handrails, and original light fixtures that hang from the ceiling. A non-original door installed within the past twenty years on the landing at the top of the stairs opens into the main library room.

The main room is rectangular and occupies the entirety of the building's upper story. The librarian's desk, which is not one of the original furnishings, is situated to the left of the entrance from the vestibule. There is a small office and storage area to the left of the desk. The room's original wood floor was covered first with carpet (at an unknown date) and then, in 2022, with vinyl plank flooring. The original wood floor is still in place. The ceiling is an original Kinnear and Gager Manufacturing Company quadruple interlocking metal ceiling, underlaid with 1½-lb. wool deadening felt and decorated with organic motifs where it serves as molding at the top of the wall. Fluorescent lighting has replaced the original light fixtures. Fourteen windows framed in oak are near the ceiling on the east, south and west sides of the room and three windows are near the ceiling in the office/storeroom in the northeast corner. Bookshelves are placed below the windows along the walls. The current bookshelves are not original but some of the original tables and chairs are still used in the library.



Fig. 1: Shelton Public Library Main Floor Window

The basement consists of a large meeting room in the south end, a storage area and a furnace room at the base of the stairs, and two small bathrooms at the north end. Original plumbing fixtures in the bathrooms have been replaced. The meeting room is approximately twenty-five feet by twenty-five feet and occupies half of the basement area. The ceiling is similar to the main floor ceiling and it is original. The floor is concrete. There are seventeen single-hung windows framed in yellow pine in the basement. Eleven are in the meeting room.

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State



Fig. 2: Shelton Public Library Basement Window

Photographic evidence shows that the building was originally covered by a roof of slate tile. At an unknown date, this was replaced and is currently asphalt shingles.

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State



Fig. 3: Shelton Township Library (circa 1914)

Alterations and Integrity

Some alterations to and replacement of the Shelton Carnegie Library's historic fabric have been made, but the building exhibits good historic integrity. It is located on its original site in the center of the town. Its design and original specifications for quality materials and excellent workmanship, along with community support for the library, have resulted in affordable maintenance and improvements to the building that have preserved its character-defining features. Major changes to the building include: the original slate tile roof's replacement with asphalt shingling; installation of gutters; replacement of the historic wooden door with an aluminum door in 1996; installation of a ramp from the sidewalk to the front door in 2016; replacement of a door in the main library room's entryway; and replacement of interior lighting, restroom fixtures and heating appliances. However, these changes do not intrude upon the historic structure and its design. The historic fabric of the building's walls, ceilings, interior window trim, and windows has been preserved. The building remains in use today and has survived without any significant change to its floor plan or exterior appearance.

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

X	A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
	C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

ink x in an the boxes that apply.)				
A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes				
B. Removed from its original location				
		C. A birthplace or grave		
		D. A cemetery		
		E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure		
Ī		F. A commemorative property		
Ī		G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years		

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/library

Period of Significance

1914–1974

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

Architect/Builder

M. N. Bair (architect)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Shelton Public Library is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of education. The period of significance begins in 1914 with the library's opening and ends in 1974, fifty years before the time of nomination, as the building continues to serve the community as a library. The Shelton Public Library is nominated under cover of the "Nebraska Carnegie Libraries 1902–1922" Multiple Property Documentation Form.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Multiple Property Documentation Form: Nebraska Carnegie Libraries, 1902–1922

The multiple property listing "Nebraska Carnegie Libraries 1902–1922" identifies a few ways that a Carnegie library in Nebraska may qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Carnegie libraries must have been constructed in 1902–1922. They may have local, state, or national significance. They may be nominated under any combination of Criteria A (events or broad patterns of history), B (persons), or C (architecture or design). When nominated under Criterion A, a Carnegie library should be significant in the area of Education and/or Social History.

The Shelton Public Library is nominated under Criterion A in the area of Education at the local level of significance. It was built in 1913–1914 using a grant of \$9,000 for the purpose from the Carnegie Corporation. The Shelton Public Library was the product of local women's advocacy of education through their volunteer work and, in several ways, reflects the community's ongoing interest in education and public support for it. These include: insistence on a design that they thought would meet their needs better than Carnegie recommendations would, collection and circulation statistics, approval of tax levies, extension of service not only to the residents of the village of Shelton but also to inhabitants of rural Shelton Township, and the transitioning of the library from management by the women's association that founded it to public management by the village and, later, township.

The Shelton Library Prior to 1912

During the late nineteenth century, libraries were often started by women's groups to provide education as they focused on women's social and political causes. Women were no longer content at that time to be a marginalized group and they took actions to encourage reforms,

¹ Laura Wilson, "Nebraska Carnegie Libraries, 1902–1922," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2018), 4.

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska County and State

which would eventually result in voting rights and property rights for women.² The educational services of a library would enlighten residents of communities and encourage the growth of democracy. This could result in elected officials who were best suited to fill their roles.³

The circumstances of the Shelton Public Library's creation, along with its continued operation and adaptation, demonstrate a substantial interest in education on the part of residents of the village of Shelton and Shelton Township and show the importance of the library to local education. Moreover, the work of organizing and maintaining a library in Shelton, and later of securing Carnegie Corporation funding, was largely undertaken by women. Their interest in civic improvement, specifically civic improvement by establishing a public library, was typical of women's public role during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era (1877–1920). Such interest shows the presence and strength in Shelton, Nebraska of major contemporary trends, such as what problems people perceived (e.g. moral danger and illiteracy) and what they regarded as solutions (e.g., libraries). As the Nebraska Public Library Commission (NPLC) observed in its first biennial report, "a public library['s] ... proper place" was "among the educational forces of the state."

In 1892, some of the Shelton women who had been involved in the Chautauqua movement associated together to "stimulate the intellectual development of its members and for the promotion of unity and good fellowship among them." They called their organization the Nineteenth Century Club. In June 1896, one of its members, Elizabeth Stedman, shared with a group of her friends her desire for Shelton to have a public library. Some eastern friends had given her books for this purpose. The Nineteenth Century Club, later known as the Twentieth Century Club, accepted the task of establishing a library as its special mission.

Members of the Nineteenth Century Club were able to raise \$50.00, which they used to subscribe for five years to the Fremont Circulating Library. This library of 1,000 volumes was sent out quarterly in divisions, with the club paying the freight. The books were available to the public in the millinery room of Anna Wood, located in the rear of the Hostetler Building on the main street of Shelton's business district, north of the current Highway 30. It was well received.

In 1898, the club believed that the library should be owned by the public. To this end, it established a separate body to manage the library and requested financial support from tax revenues. At a meeting on January 14, 1898 held in the A. H. Morris Drug Store, twenty-eight ladies formed a separate organization to continue the library mission. They elected officers, appointed committees, and solicited books. Morris donated a steam-heated room for use as a library while club members donated a large number of books they had on hand. A list of books was ordered and the books of the Fremont Circulating Library were presented to the association by the Nineteenth Century Club. The library was opened to the public on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons with members acting as librarians. In April 1898, the Nineteenth Century Club asked the village board for a library appropriation of one mill. This was granted and in 1901, a regular librarian was appointed. In conjunction with other money raised, the library was kept open and some new books were added (the subscription to the Fremont Circulating Library ended that year). By 1902, the library had 670 books on the shelves.

² Alan Axelrod, The Gilded Age, 1876–1912: Overture to the American Century (New York: Sterling, 2017), 18.

³ Wilson, "Nebraska Carnegie Libraries," 4.

⁴ Nebraska Public Library Commission, First Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: 1902), 4.

⁵ Samuel Clay Bassett, Buffalo County, Nebraska and Its People (Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1916), 150.

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

Early successes in organizing a group of interested people and securing space, an appropriation, and a collection did not mean the library's future was secure, though. The library closed in November 1903 due to lack of funds and lack of public interest. In December 1904, the association reorganized with 84 members and the library re-opened in the Bromley Building, located in the business district, in January 1905. Space was donated by the building's owner. During the summer of 1906, books were catalogued under the Carnegie system by Elfrie Stebbins, who donated her time. In January 1907, the library moved to a room in the Meisner Opera House block, also located in the business district, and the association voted to dissolve and make the library a public institution under village control. On July 3, 1907, the Shelton Library Association was formally turned over to the village of Shelton. In January 1908, the Shelton Public Library was opened to the public in the Mortimer Building of the business district. By the end of 1908, the library had 1,657 volumes on its shelves and had received \$514.26 from the village treasurer. By the end of 1911, three years later, there were 2,192 volumes on the shelves.

Women's critical role in the creation of Nebraska public libraries was recognized at the time. The NPLC stated that the bill to create a state library commission received "a goodly support from educators and other citizens" such that "the legislature of 1901 yielded to the popular demand and passed the library commission law", but it singled out women's groups specifically as an agent in creating public support for the bill. The creation of the NPLC had not merely been a cause of the Nebraska Library Association (NLA). Rather, "through the personal efforts of some of the librarians, the interest of some of the members of the Nebraska federation of women's clubs was enlisted, and these, in turn, brought the matter before their Federation in such an effective way that the fall of 1900 found that organization committed to the undertaking of securing the desired legislation."

Women's groups continued to support the NPLC after its establishment, promoting it in communities and helping make material available. One of the NPLC's first projects was to initiate correspondence with numerous communities it knew did not have a library but where residents seemed to be interested in one. Many of its targets were women's groups, which responded energetically and effectively. The NPLC explained, "As a result of the sending of circular letters and printed matter among the women's clubs, a number of clubs have been encouraged to take up the matter of starting libraries, in several cases with immediate success, while others are gradually working in that direction. Women's clubs in Osceola, Sutton, Wayne, Madison, Stanton, Wakefield, Bloomfield, Aurora, Sidney, Stromsburg, Milford, Valley, Stella, Elba, Stuart, Wisner and Minden have agitated the matter and there is no doubt of their ultimate success."

Women were uniquely important in providing Nebraskans with educational resources via the library system. In lieu of permanent libraries, many communities took advantage of the state's traveling library program—"thirty collections of forty volumes each" that "remain three months in a place." On their own, these "perform[ed] an important part in the educational development of the state" but were intended "to be used to encourage the establishment and maintenance of public libraries." In a "typical case" of the way that a community availing itself of the traveling library eventually became a permanent library (by which it meant purchasing a

⁶ Nebraska Public Library Commission, First Biennial Report, 3.

⁷ Nebraska Public Library Commission, *First Biennial Report*, 3.

⁸ Nebraska Public Library Commission, First Biennial Report, 4.

⁹ Nebraska Public Library Commission, First Biennial Report, 6.

¹⁰ Nebraska Public Library Commission, First Biennial Report, 7.

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

traveling library and being able to keep it for five years instead of three months) supported through local taxation, the NPLC pointed to the town of Osceola. There, "the Ladies literary club," decided "that 40 books were not enough, collected 65 suitable volumes to circulate with the traveling library," and "raised money to become a permanent traveling library station," by which time "the community was educated up to the library idea, and the village board passed a library ordinance levying the full two mills for a public library." In addition to women's role in promoting the traveling library service and using it to make community libraries more permanent, they helped enhance offerings. The NPLC credited "the library extension committee of the Nebraska federation of women's clubs" with "constant assistance in the work of helping especially deserving localities to a knowledge of our system of special loans, as well as being a most efficient aid in the general work of library extension." ¹²

Criterion A: Education

In 1912, the extension of the Shelton library's services to more people became a matter of public business. Shelton Township began to consider a township-level tax to support the library, turn the village library that had been established in 1896 by the women of the Nineteenth Century Club into a township library, and apply for a grant from the (Andrew) Carnegie Corporation to construct a building on land the village would donate. At the same meeting in which this plan was promulgated, the similar question of constructing a new building for public meetings and offices of both the village and township was raised. As the newspaper reported, "The present building known as the town hall was said to be unfit for the purpose of holding any public meeting....This is one of the needs of the township and village and has for a number of years been in the minds of the people of Shelton....Together with the proposed Carnegie library and Union Pacific Park [it] will add much to the beauty of Shelton."

Within a few months, a 2-mill township tax was levied to support the Shelton library as an institution of the township rather than the village. In the summer of 1912, one of its board members wrote to the Carnegie Corporation to inquire about a construction grant and after some back-and-forth to clarify the village-to-township transition and a discussion of the board's selected design, the township received a grant of \$9,000 to build the nominated library." The Carnegie Corporation based this amount on the population to be taxed to support the library (1,462). The revenue from the two-mill tax already levied, \$1,027.47, exceeded the Carnegie Corporation's condition that tax revenue equal to no less than ten percent of its construction grant be used to operate the library. The final piece of the puzzle, the village's transfer of land to the township for the library site, was placed in early June 1913, when voters approved it 102 to 13. The Shelton Carnegie Library was built in 1913–1914 and opened on June 1, 1914. The *Shelton Clipper* enthusiastically greeted the new library, saying, "The opening of the well-equipped

¹¹ Nebraska Public Library Commission, First Biennial Report, 7.

¹² Nebraska Public Library Commission, First Biennial Report, 8.

¹³ "New Buildings Proposed," Shelton (NE) Clipper, March 7, 1912, Newspapers.com.

¹⁴ "New Buildings Proposed."

¹⁵ "Carnegie Public Library, Shelton, Nebraska;" Series II (Files on Microfilm), Subseries A (Gifts and Grants), Subseries 1 (Libraries), Section a (Free Public Library Buildings), roll 3; Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia Digital Library Collections, Columbia University, New York; https://doi.org/10.7916/d8-cw6q-xc40.

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska County and State

library building will mark an epoch in the educational advantages of this community. The library equals if not surpasses the public schools in that the library is for all ages and may be used twelve months in the year."¹⁶ Over time, the library added to its collection, hosted an increasing number of education-oriented events and meetings, served as a polling place for elections, and expanded its offerings by acquiring new technologies such as audio recordings and computers. Throughout its history, women have been the key leaders in advancing and operating the library in Shelton.

A Prairie Community's Prairie Commitment

The Shelton Carnegie Library was designed by architect Moses N. Bair of Hastings, Nebraska. He was born in Pennsylvania in April 1863. After practicing architecture for one year in Auburn, Nebraska. Bair then opened an office in Falls City, Nebraska, where he worked from 1894-1907. His commissions included the library and city hall there and an unbuilt Carnegie library (location unknown). Bair then moved to Hastings, Nebraska, where he practiced architecture "from 1909 to 1915 and served as the Hastings City Engineer from 1913-1914." In addition to the Shelton Township Library Bair designed the built Carnegie libraries in Aurora, Broken Bow, Fullerton, Gibbon, Gothenburg and Sutton in Nebraska. 20

A total of thirteen Nebraska Carnegie libraries were designed in the Prairie School style or in a mix of the Prairie School with another style (such as with the Art Deco, as at Shelton, according to "Nebraska Carnegie Libraries, 1902–1922"). Bair may be regarded as an architectural advocate of the Prairie School style in Nebraska library buildings. He seems to have been uniquely interested in applying the Prairie School style to Carnegie libraries. First, most of Bair's Nebraska Carnegie libraries used it. Only two of the seven built Carnegie libraries that he designed did not use it, meaning that more than 70 percent of the Nebraska Carnegie libraries built according to his design reflect the Prairie School style. Second, Bair designed a plurality of the Nebraska Carnegie libraries that used it. Nebraska's Carnegie libraries in the Prairie School style not attributable to Bair were designed by five other architects, none of whom designed more than two. Third, no architect was as much a vector of a style or combination of styles that was used more than twice (such as the Romanesque Revival) as Bair was of the Prairie School. Bair designed five of them, making him responsible for more than 38 percent of the Nebraska Carnegie libraries built in that style. No architectural style was as exclusively worked in by a single architect as the Prairie School was worked in by Bair.

The Prairie School style in architecture was crystallized around the turn of the twentieth century by younger architects working in Chicago, Frank Lloyd Wright among the most notable of them.²² These architects blended the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement, which

¹⁶ "Carnegie Library Opening Monday," Shelton Clipper (Shelton, NE), May 28, 1914, 1.

¹⁷ Laura Wilson, "Nebraska Carnegie Libraries, 1902-1922," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, 2017), Section E, 12.

¹⁸ "Moses N. Bair Dies at Shiremanstown; Retired Architect," *Gazette and Daily* (York, PA), March 6, 1934, Newspapers.com.

¹⁹ Wilson, "Nebraska Carnegie Libraries, 1902-1922," Section E, 12.

²⁰ Wilson, "Nebraska Carnegie Libraries, 1902-1922," Section G, 1–4.

²¹ Wilson, "Nebraska Carnegie Libraries, 1902-1922," Section G, 3.

²² Virginia Savage McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses, The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 548–64.

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska County and State

emphasized nature, craftsmanship, and simplicity, with the work and writings of architect Louis Sullivan. The most defining characteristic of the Prairie School style of architecture was an emphasis on horizontal lines. The Shelton Public Library's one-story-over-basement height, long street-side façade uninterrupted by an entrance, and the low-pitched hip roof's wide eaves reference the Prairie School's low horizontality.

The architectural features that give the library its Prairie School appearance are not elaborate iterations of the style. They were, however, consequential, and show community interest in and dedication to the library's planned and, eventually, built form. Bair's design required special approval from the Carnegie Corporation. Shelton's handling of the matter shows their engagement with contemporary debates on library design and their interest in having a library constructed in the Prairie School style. In addition to its use of the Prairie School style, the Shelton Township Library is somewhat anomalous among the 69 Carnegie libraries in Nebraska, and among the 29 that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, in that its main entrance is not centered on the façade. Seven listed Nebraska Carnegie libraries share this characteristic. Of the seven Nebraska Carnegie libraries with an off-center entrance, only one is in the Prairie School style. A second is in a mixed Craftsman and Art Deco style. When Shelton submitted Bair's design placing the entrance at the far end of the façade to the Carnegie Corporation for approval, James Bertram responded with skepticism and explained to Mrs. George Prouty how such a decision could affect the usability of the interior space. He wrote:

By the center entrance we believe that much better reading room space can be provided,—one side to serve as a general reading room, and the other for children's reading room, with perhaps sufficient space in rear of the children's room for a reference room, if desired. The delivery room should be placed a few feet from the entrance, leaving sufficient space back of the desk for the librarian's room.

The reading room space as shown on the plans submitted is difficult to arrange conveniently and economically.²³

Shelton's plan was indeed contrary to Bertram's preferences. In 1911 he had written a memorandum on the preferred designs for Carnegie libraries; he had enclosed it in an earlier letter to Prouty.²⁴

Prouty had already considered such potential difficulties. She assured Bertram that Shelton's "reasons for the corner entrance in our library plans are based on the suggestions from the State Library Commission" and that "this plan was worked out by Patton & Miller of Chicago, who have made a special study of the needs of the village library and was carried out in the Carnegie Library at Wayne Neb. which is pronounced by several librarians who have seen it to be one of the best buildings in Nebraska." In addition to appealing to these authorities, Prouty explained the alternative merits of placing the entrance at the far end of the façade, which were

²³ James Bertram to Mrs. George Prouty, August 27, 1913, "Carnegie Public Library, Shelton, Nebraska," Carnegie Corporation of New York Records.

²⁴ James Bertram, "Notes on the Erection of Library Bildings [*sic*]," 1911, Andrew Carnegie Collections, Digital Collections, Carnegie Mellon University Archives, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/carnegie_jbc/box00001/fld00002/bdl0002/doc0001; Bertram to Prouty, April 2, 1913, "Carnegie Public Library, Shelton, Nebraska," Carnegie Corporation of New York Records.

²⁵ Prouty to Bertram, September 4, 1913, "Carnegie Public Library, Shelton, Nebraska," Carnegie Corporation of New York Records.

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

both functional and aesthetic. Functionally, she was concerned that "a projecting vestibule" would have to be "carried inside," forcing the placement of the librarian's office and service desk into a space that was narrow and uncomfortable, while any accommodation by adding an ell that projected outward from the rear elevation would add to the building's cost. ²⁶ She appears to have reflected on the experience of comparable libraries in supporting Bair's design. "Several small libraries which are built on this plan"—that is, with an entrance centered on the façade and under a projecting vestibule—"have found this defect in the plan." Prouty also considered a formal division between adult and children's space within the library to be superfluous. She explained that, "since a village library is never used for very serious study having one undivided room for both children and adults is not as bad as it might seem. One side of the room will be reserved for children and one side for adults and eventually floor cases will make alcoves which will give greater privacy to the readers." ²⁸

Aesthetically, and perhaps most notably, Prouty believed that "a center entrance makes a projecting vestibule necessary which spoils the outside appearance of a building of this style of architecture." Prouty, at least, wanted Shelton's library to appear in the Prairie School style, and she convinced the Carnegie Corporation to pay for it.

Library Operations

The Shelton Carnegie Library was formally opened at 8:00 p.m. on June 1, 1914, with a short program and reception. The program recognized the contributions of several individuals to the community's library facilities, including Elizabeth Stedman, the original proponent of the library; A. H. Morris, who had donated a room for use as a library in 1898-1903; and George Meisner, who had donated a room for use as a library in 1905-1908. Attendance was good despite rain and, after the program, everyone could inspect the new building. The *Shelton Clipper* reported that "...no part of the work was slighted in making it a substantial and well erected building," acknowledging the general contractor, J. H. Teed of Gibbon, Nebraska, and C. R. Tritt of Shelton, the stone and mason contractor, for their work.

Lawrence Treat of Shelton spoke about the village's duty to the library. He said, "Everyone is more or less a seeker of knowledge. The American idea is to bring intelligence, enterprise and ambition to the front. Who has not heard of the 'self-made man,' the man who despite poverty and lack of facilities, has risen by his own efforts, and his own ambition above and beyond the unfortunate condition of his youth. This because he studied and read, and by his own application rose to a position far harder to attain than the conditions that confront us today. For today, we have the public library with its thousands of books touching upon practically every point that one might wish to read." In November 1914, the library was open to patrons on Monday,

²⁶ Prouty to Bertram, September 4, 1913, "Carnegie Public Library, Shelton, Nebraska," Carnegie Corporation of New York Records.

²⁷ Prouty to Bertram, September 4, 1913, "Carnegie Public Library, Shelton, Nebraska," Carnegie Corporation of New York Records.

²⁸ Prouty to Bertram, September 4, 1913, "Carnegie Public Library, Shelton, Nebraska," Carnegie Corporation of New York Records.

²⁹ Prouty to Bertram, September 4, 1913, "Carnegie Public Library, Shelton, Nebraska," Carnegie Corporation of New York Records.

³⁰ "Carnegie Library Building Dedicated Monday Evening," Shelton Clipper (Shelton, NE), June 4, 1914, 10.

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

Wednesday, and Saturday afternoons from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and every evening from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. As new books were added to the library, the *Shelton Clipper* published notices of the new acquisitions.

Statistics of the library's collection, size, number of patrons, and circulation generally increased in the early twentieth century (see Table 1).³¹ This suggests that community members continued to be interested in the library, that community support generally translated into public investment, and that the library continued to play an important role in education and enrichment for residents of the village of Shelton and Shelton township. The number of volumes in the library's collection rose from 800 at the end of 1902 to 1,557 at the end of 1908; 2,654 at the end of 1914 (the year in which the Carnegie library was opened); 5,000 at the end of 1922; and 5,288 at the end of 1928.

Date of Report	Volumes	Borrowers	Circulation
Nov. 30, 1902	800	450	(not indicated by
			NPLC)
Nov. 30, 1904	800	450	(not indicated by
			NPLC)
Nov. 30, 1906	(no report received)	(no report received)	(no report received)
Nov. 30, 1908	1,557	258	(not indicated by
			NPLC)
Nov. 30, 1910	1,990	474	(not indicated by
			NPLC)
Nov. 30, 1912	2,183	623	(not indicated by
			NPLC)
Nov. 30, 1914	2,654	356	5,885
Nov. 30, 1916	3,661	665	8,669
Nov. 30, 1918	4,020	855	7,352
Nov. 30, 1920	4,462	968	8,914
Nov. 30, 1922	5,000	770	7,942

³¹ The data presented in this table were extracted from the first fourteen biennial reports of the Nebraska Public Library Commission. Nebraska Public Library Commission, First Biennial Report, 13; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Second Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: 1904), 22; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Third Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: 1906), 17; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Fourth Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: 1908), 12; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Fifth Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: Woodruff Bank Note, 1910), 12; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Sixth Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: Woodruff Bank Note, 1912), 15; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Seventh Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: Woodruff Bank Note, 1914), 22; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Eighth Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: Woodruff Bank Note, 1916), 20; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Ninth Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: Kline, 1918), 12; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Tenth Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: Beacon, 1920), 22; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Eleventh Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: Burr, 1922), 22; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Twelfth Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: Acme, 1924), 33; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: American, 1926), 26; Nebraska Public Library Commission, Fourteenth Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission (Lincoln, NE: American, 1928), 53.

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

Nov. 30, 1924	4,879	(not indicated by NPLC)	9,278
Nov. 30, 1926	5,135	(not indicated by NPLC)	11,548
Nov. 30, 1928	5,288	(not indicated by NPLC)	9,888

Table 1: Collection, Borrower, and Circulation Statistics of Public Libraries in Nebraska, 1902–1928

The library expanded its role in the community by adding new types of media to its collection, adopting modern amenities, and offering programs for residents of all ages. A living collection, a more comfortable building, and a programmatic schedule that covered the residents' varied ages and interests created a more inviting library whose educational purpose could reach more people. In December 1915, the local Philanthropic Educational Organization (PEO) gave the library an Edison phonograph and a number of records. By July 1920, the library had electric fans, making it a pleasant and comfortable place on warm afternoons and evenings. Music evenings were advertised in the *Shelton Clipper*. Story hours were held for children on Saturday afternoons.

In 1926, after the library basement was finally furnished, local organizations began to hold meetings there. These included the Stitching Club,³² Twentieth Century Club,³³ a caucus to nominate township officers,³⁴ Extension Club,³⁵ and a meeting to organize a women's community club.³⁶ In the spring of 1929, for the first time, voting for the spring election was held in the library basement.³⁷ The library basement served as a voting place until the 1970s.

The township levy to support the library was greatly reduced in the 1930s and 1940s but the library continued to provide services. National Book Week was celebrated every November. Books continued to be added.

Since the 1970s, the Shelton Public Library has been a stop on the route of the Kearney Public Library Bookmobile. In the 1990s, computers were added to the library inventory, and they have been updated regularly. Assistance is available to users of the computers.

The Shelton Carnegie Library had a significant impact on the community by providing access to books, educational opportunities, and other resources to encourage literacy and learning in a small town in rural Nebraska. New acquisitions were frequently noted in the local newspaper, the *Shelton Clipper*. When the library is discussed by residents and former residents who lived in Shelton as children in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, they recall the excitement of new books available to check out and wonderful times spent in the library as they looked through the books on the shelves.

The township form of government in Buffalo County ended in January 2015. Consequently, the Shelton Public Library became the responsibility of the Village of Shelton. The library has always been an excellent resource for and service to the community of Shelton. A long-term relationship, decades in length, with the Kearney Public Library Bookmobile offers additional books to residents. As technology and the library's role have evolved, several computers and a printer are available for the local community, as well as assistance in their use. As of

³² "In Society," Shelton (NE) Clipper, June 10, 1926, 1.

³³ "In Society," *Shelton (NE) Clipper*, September 16, 1926, 8.

³⁴ "Caucus: Nominate Township Officers," *Shelton (NE) Clipper*, October 14, 1926, 1.

³⁵ "Extension Club," Shelton (NE) Clipper, November 21, 1929, 1.

³⁶ "Organize Women's Community Club," *Shelton (NE) Clipper*, April 29, 1926, 1.

³⁷ "Spring Elections Next Tuesday," *Shelton (NE) Clipper*, March 28, 1929, 1.

United States Department of the Interior	
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration F	orm

Shelton Public Library

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

September 2023, the library's collection includes 10,569 books, 3,000 of which were added in the preceding two years. The library has approximately 250 users per month.

To provide additional support to the Shelton Public Library, volunteers formed "Friends of the Shelton Public Library" in 2021 to raise funds for library improvements. Generous donations and a grant through the Kearney Area Community Foundation funded replacement of floor covering in the library in 2022. Donations during a designated giving day in Buffalo County in December 2023 totaled \$3,250, demonstrating continued support for the library.

Conclusion

Library services in Shelton, NE were initiated by a women's group in 1896 and evolved into a village library followed by a township library as Carnegie funds were received. Continual support from tax levies and ongoing interest by the residents of the community and township as shown in collection and circulation statistics demonstrate the local advocacy for this valued service and its significance to the community as an educational institution from its construction onward. The building retains its design and much of its workmanship. There have been minimal alterations but character-defining features have been retained both inside and outside.

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- Axelrod, Alan. *The Gilded Age, 1876–1912: Overture to the American Century.* New York: Sterling, 2017.
- Bassett, Samuel Clay. Buffalo County, Nebraska and Its People. Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1916.
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- Nebraska Public Library Commission. *Third Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission*. Lincoln, NE: 1906.
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- Nebraska Public Library Commission. *Ninth Biennial Report of the Nebraska Public Library Commission*. Lincoln, NE: Kline, 1918.

Shelton Public Library Name of Property	Buffalo County, Nebraska County and State
Nebraska Public Library Commission. <i>Tenth Biennial Report of Commission</i> . Lincoln, NE: Beacon, 1920.	the Nebraska Public Library
Nebraska Public Library Commission. <i>Eleventh Biennial Report Commission</i> . Lincoln, NE: Burr, 1922.	of the Nebraska Public Library
Nebraska Public Library Commission. Twelfth Biennial Report of Commission. Lincoln, NE: Acme, 1924.	of the Nebraska Public Library
Nebraska Public Library Commission. <i>Thirteenth Biennial Repolitionary Commission</i> . Lincoln, NE: American, 1926.	rt of the Nebraska Public Li-
Nebraska Public Library Commission. Fourteenth Biennial Repoblic Library Commission. Lincoln, NE: American, 1928.	ort of the Nebraska Public Li-
Shelton (NE) Clipper	
Wilson, Laura. "Nebraska Carnegie Libraries, 1902–1922." Nati Multiple Property Documentation Form. Washington, Do rior, National Park Service, 2018.	
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	
preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) h previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # recorded	as been requested
Primary location of additional data:	
State Historic Preservation Office Other State agency	
Federal agency	
Local government	
University	
— Other	
Name of repository:	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):	

Shelton Public Library			Buffalo County, Nebraska
Name of Property			County and State
10. Geographical Data	1		
Acreage of Property:	Less than one acre	_	
Use either the UTM system or Latitude/Longitude Content coordinates to 6 decimal Datum if other than WC	oordinates places)		
1. Latitude: 40.777421		Longitude: -98.733654	
2. Latitude:		Longitude:	
3. Latitude:		Longitude:	
4. Latitude:		Longitude:	
Or UTM References Datum (indicated on US	SGS map):		
NAD 1927	or NA	AD 1983	
1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing	:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing	:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing	:
4. Zone:	Easting:	Northing	:
Vorbal Roundary Doc	crintion		

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nomination is bounded by the exterior lines of lots nine and ten of block ten of the Second Addition in Shelton, NE, which is currently the southern half of a parcel owned by the Village of Shelton. The nominated resource is known by the address 313 C St., Shelton, NE.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nomination's boundaries are those of the property historically associated with the Shelton Carnegie Library, which remain its boundaries to the present and contain only the nominated building.

Shelton Public Library	
Name of December	

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Deb Schroeder / Michael M. Belding III, National Register Coordinator

organization: Friends of Shelton Public Library / Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office

street & number: 6231 South Wiseman Road / 1500 R St.

city or town: Shelton / Lincoln state: NE zip code: 68876 / 68508

e-mail: deb.schroeder50@gmail.com/michael.belding@nebraska.gov

telephone: 308-216-0028 / 402-613-1591

date: August 16, 2024

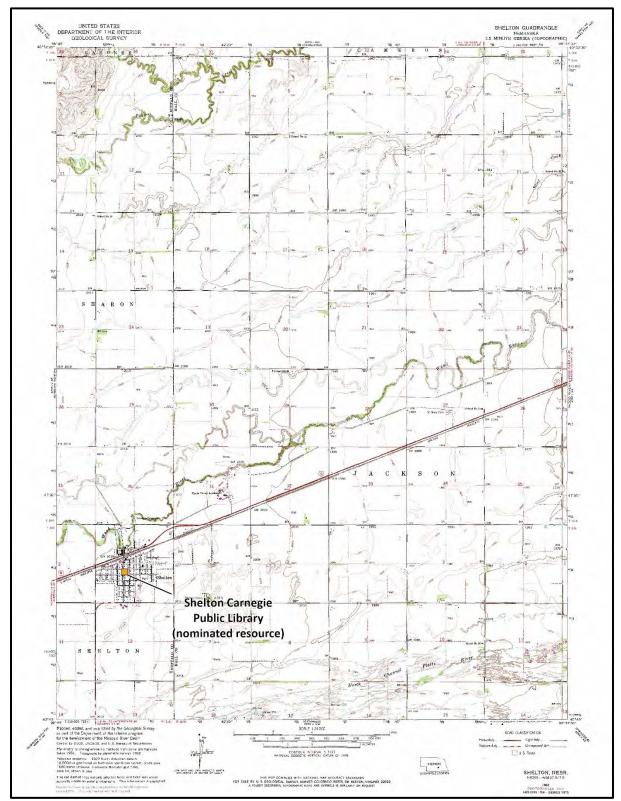
Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Maps: A USGS map or equivalent (7.5- or 15-minute series) indicating the property's location.

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State



Map 1: Nominated resource's location in Shelton, NE and vicinity (USGS)

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State



Map 2: Nominated resource's boundaries in Shelton, NE (Esri/World Imagery)

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State

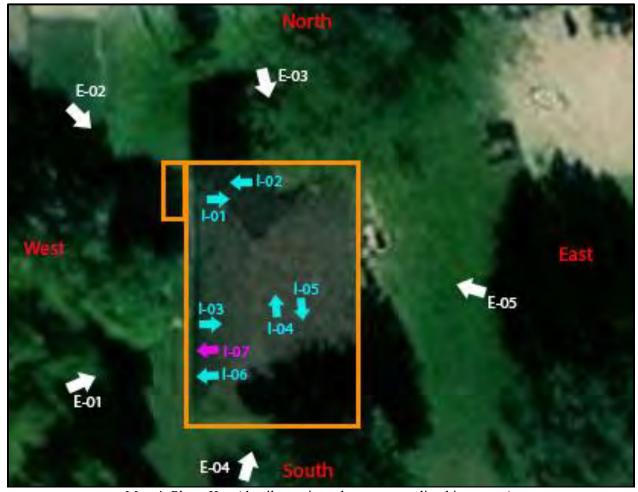
Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.



Map 3: Photo Key (city block; nominated resource outlined in orange)

Name of Property

Buffalo County, Nebraska
County and State



Map 4: Photo Key (detail; nominated resource outlined in orange)

Additional items:

(Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Shelton Carnegie Library

City or Vicinity: Shelton

County: Buffalo County State: NE

Photographer: Deb Schroeder

Shelton Public Library	Buffalo County, Nebraska
Name of Property	County and State

Date Photographed: April 2023 and July 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Exterior

- 1. E-01: View of west (primary) façade, facing northeast.
- 2. E-02: View of west (primary) façade, facing southeast.
- 3. E-03: View of north façade, facing south.
- 4. E–04: View of south façade, facing northeast.
- 5. E-05: View of east façade, facing northwest.

Interior

- 6. I-01: View of staircase to basement from entrance, facing east.
- 7. I-02: View of entrance, facing west.
- 8. I–03: View of reading room, facing east.
- 9. I–04: View of reading room toward entrance, facing north.
- 10. I-05: View of reading room, facing south.
- 11. I-06: View of first-floor window, facing west.
- 12. I-07: View of basement window, facing west.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 - 60-100 hours

Tier 2 – 120 hours

Tier 3 - 230 hours

Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.























