

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FINAL

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Converse-Jackson Township Public Library

other names/site number 103-620-51001

2. Location

street & number 100 South Jefferson Street N/A not for publication

city or town Converse N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Miami code 103 zip code 46919

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

2-1-99
Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

- determined not eligible for the National Register

- removed from the National Register

- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: Library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: Library

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

roof OTHER: Membrane Roofing

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

- 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.)

Property is:

- 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.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION _____

ARCHITECTURE _____

Period of Significance

1918-1948 _____

Significant Dates

1918 _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

Bowstead, H.G. _____

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Converse-Jackson Township Public Library

Converse-Jackson Township Public
Name of Property

Miami IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	6	5	9	5	3	1	0	4	4	9	2	2	7	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

3

Zone	Easting				Northing									

4

Zone	Easting				Northing									

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Troy D. Thompson
organization Schmidt Associates date 6-4-97
street & number 320 East Vermont Street telephone 317-263-6226
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46204

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name The Library Board of Trustees
street & number 100 South Jefferson Street telephone 765-395-3344
city or town Converse state IN zip code 46919

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications 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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet

*Converse-Jackson Township Public Library
Miami County, Indiana*

Section number 7 Page 1

Narrative Description

The Converse-Jackson Township Public Library was completed in 1918 on a small corner lot and remains essentially unaltered since its construction. This Classical Revival library manifests all of the seminal ideas of Carnegie Library design. The building is of brick and masonry construction with a low-slope roof behind parapets. The site slopes upward around the structure. The grounds are minimally landscaped with small shrubs and gravel planting areas near the front facade. There is one large tree in the rear yard. A low, concrete retaining wall runs along the yard on the two street elevations, the east being the front of the building.

The structure is a one story library built over a basement. The basement floor is located approximately two feet and six inches below the sidewalk level. The basement walls are covered with a cementitious parge material up to a finished grade where a limestone watertable wraps all facades of the structure. The course above the watertable is limestone and flush with the brick above it. The eight courses of brick above the limestone band are topped by a soldier course and then a header course. The remainder of the facades are brick and laid in a running bond pattern.

Each facade is symmetrical about its centerline. The exterior walls are constructed of brick with limestone accents. A frieze consisting of applied, painted wood, six courses of brick, and a projecting, painted wood and metal band runs along all four sides. Above are seven courses of brick and a limestone cap which serve as a parapet. The front facade has a center, recessed entry fifteen steps above sidewalk level. The front step sidewalls are constructed of brick topped with limestone bands which align with the watertable and limestone course around the structure. At present, there are two black metal lamp posts located at the ends of the sidewalls and two painted concrete planters on the sidewalls. Neither the lamps nor the planters appear in very early photos. A metal handrail has been added down the center of the stairs.

The entry is flanked by two limestone Doric columns supporting a limestone entablature over the entry. The limestone beam is flush with the brick of the facade and has raised, geometric surfaces marking the bearing points of the columns. The present entry doors consist of the original wood frame transom with classical cross mullions in each of the three transom lites. This pattern is characteristic of all the first floor windows as well. The original pair of doors have been replaced with a single metal door with a sidelight on each side. Inscribed in the limestone parapet above are the words "PVBLIC LIBRARY".

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*Converse-Jackson Township Public Library
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On both sides of the entry, the front facade is balanced by five-lite windows with transoms above each lite. Centered below each of the five windows is narrower basement window. These windows are cut into the limestone waterable with inserted, cut limestone sills. The tops of these windows are at the bottom of the header course running around the building.

All four facades are marked by vertical, single-brick "pilasters" flush with the rest of the facade and located at each corner. The top of each pilaster is capped with a limestone square that is part of the soldier course immediately below the wood band. The verticals are located at the jambs of each window and at the end of the limestone lintel over the center entry. The markings are the same on the rear and front facades. Each end is the same, with the pilasters located on each jamb of the centered five-lite windows. A pair on the corners match the corners of the front facade.

The rear facade is similar to the front facade, but without the entry and raised stone parapet. In place of the entry, a three-lite window with transoms aligns with the other windows on the first floor. The three basement window below center on the window above. On each side of the central three-lite window is a round metal downspout with metal scuppers. An air conditioning unit sits behind a wooden lattice fence and upon a concrete pad at the southwest corner of the building. A brick chimney also rises above the parapet at this corner of the building.

The northern facade has a centered five-lite window with centered basement windows, all having the same dimensions as those on the front facade. The southern facade has a five-lite window above a door leading to the basement. On each side of the door stands a thin single-lite window.

The interior of the library is simple and virtually unchanged. The upstairs floor is one open room with an entry vestibule that protrudes into the first floor space. Opposite the entry, and located a distance from the back wall equal to the protruding distance of the vestibule, are two square, wood columns. Between the columns, running perpendicular to the rear wall, are built-in bookcases. The charge desk is located between the columns, as it was on opening day. The plan is symmetrical about the front door and end elevations with the entry vestibule on one side balanced by the circulation desk on the other. A center aisle connects the two "rooms" on each end of the plan. Located in the vestibule are the wood balustrade stairs to the basement. The stairs are "L" in plan and terminate in the largest of the basement rooms. The vestibule is

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defined by a pair of doors in a wall windowed from the midpoint up. The paneling of the wall matches the simple woodworking and finish of the built-in shelving around the perimeter of the room and the sides of the one-half octagon circulation desk. The circulation desk's millwork matches the shelving. The first floor is unchanged from the opening day other than the suspended fluorescent light fixtures. The original light fixtures are reportedly stored in boxes in the basement. The wood plant stand near the front door is present in the opening day photographs.

The basement contains one large room (the children's room) which covers the entire northern two-thirds of the plan. A central corridor leads from this room to the basement door on the building's south side. Near the end of the corridor are four risers to a landing inside the basement door. Looking down the corridor (to the south), there are two rooms on the right of the corridor and one on the left. The large children's room has two columns that are located directly below the columns on the first floor. There is a door to storage space located under the front steps.

Overall, the integrity of this Carnegie Library is excellent. The only visible changes are the replacement of the exterior doors and the upstairs light fixtures. The interior plaster walls, built-in bookcases, and furnishings are in original condition. The exterior has not been changed, with the exceptions of the planters and additional lights.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Converse-Jackson Township Public Library warrants listing on the National Register under criteria A and C. Under criterion A, the building represents the culmination of a community-wide movement to create a free public library in Converse. It has served as the only public library for the community since construction was completed in 1918. Under criterion C, the Converse-Jackson Township Public Library is a good example of Neo-Classicalism and, most importantly, stands as one of the best preserved Carnegie Libraries in the state of Indiana.

Entrepreneur and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie was born in Dunfermling, Scotland in 1835. Having earned \$333 million in the steel industry, Carnegie was determined to benefit others with

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*Converse-Jackson Township Public Library
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his wealth. He established a program to fund the construction of libraries throughout the English speaking nations in 1886. Carnegie believed his libraries should be free, public institutions for communities which expressed an interest by offering a building site and public funds to maintain the property. Indiana received more Carnegie Libraries than any other state with a total of 164. Many are still in use as libraries while others have been adaptively reused. Except for buildings already promised but not completed due to the cost of the building materials during World War I, no libraries were funded after 1917.

Earlier buildings donated by Carnegie tended to be imposing monuments, however, by 1908, he recognized this problem and requested that plans of proposed libraries be submitted for approval. This process was formalized in 1911 when James Bertram, Carnegie's personal assistant, issued "Notes on Library Buildings" (sic). Carnegie believed libraries should be plain and dignified and this is reflected in Bertram's leaflet. "Notes" outlined basic requirements and included some suggested floor plans.

The Converse Library conforms closely with the plans suggested in "Notes". The simple rectangular massing and Neo-Classical detailing clearly reflect Carnegie's wish that grant recipients not build "Greek Temples" as libraries, but rather simple, dignified structures. The building's architect was H.G. Bowstead, but no information regarding his career or other works has thus far come to light. While modest, the library Bowstead designed is a rather distinguished local structure. Within Miami County, the Converse Library is one of only ten Neo-Classical buildings rated "notable" or higher in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory. The only other Neo-Classical structure in the town of Converse is the "notable" rated, but altered, bank building one block from the library. With few exceptions, the Converse Library remains as it stood in 1918.

Architecturally, the Converse Library is a good example of basic Neo-Classical design for utilitarian purpose, combined with some influence of the Craftsman style. The simple brick and limestone parapet and entrance Doric columns are the most apparent characteristics of the Neo-Classical style. The projecting metal and wood cornice with modest circular detailing also stands out as a prominent Neo-Classical feature, but the projection of the cornice gives it a Craftsman quality. The library presents a mixture of design features when an examination of the windows is made. Craftsman style windows with projecting stone sills are displayed on each facade and above the front doorway. The windows are then framed with Neo-Classical brick pilasters and a

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brick lintel which runs along the entire building. Craftsman design is also emphasized inside the library. A Craftsman pattern like the one featured in the exterior windows appears in the transom windows above interior doors. Likewise, the exposed wood columns with strapwork detail add to the Craftsman qualities of the structure. These columns demonstrate a mixing of design elements as well by way of their classical-like capitals.

The Carnegie Library was built in 1918, making it one of the last Carnegie Libraries to be built. After three years of soliciting Andrew Carnegie and local officials for support, an agreement for a Carnegie Grant was finalized on November 9, 1916 for \$9,000. As noted in Mrs. Milton Macy's first letter to Carnegie, the initial plans for the library were to include a meeting room for 800 to 1000 people, with a kitchen/dining room for roller skating and basketball. The Converse-Jackson Township Public Library is a fine example of an early 1900s small town facility which still serves the public beyond the needs of library services. The library was a product of many local individuals and movements, including strong support by the local Chautauqua participants. Theodore Jones notes in Carnegie Libraries Across America: A Public Legacy that in many small midwestern towns there was a unique bond between supporters of Chautauqua programs and the original library supporters. There was no public library system established in Converse before construction of the Carnegie supported structure. The building has continued to house the library for the past eighty years.

Bibliography

Bobinski, George S. Carnegie Libraries. Chicago: American Library Association, 1969.

"History of Converse-Jackson Township Library," unknown author, Converse-Jackson Township Public Library vertical file, February, 1931.

Jones, Theodore. Carnegie Libraries Across America: A Public Legacy. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997.

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Section number 9,10 Page 6

“Rites Held for Former Resident,” obituary for Mary Ollie Wetherbee (Mrs. Milton Macy), unknown author and newspaper, Converse-Jackson Township Public Library vertical file, May 3, 1946.

Smith, Harold. “The Early History of Economic Development in Miami County, Indiana, 1830-1910,” Peru/Miami County Economic Development Corporation, Converse-Jackson Township Public Library vertical file.

Smith, Virgil O. The History of the First Farmers National Bank, 1885-1985: A Commemorative History. Lagro, IN: Commercial Printing, 1985.

Van Slyck, Abigail. Free to All: Carnegie Libraries and American Culture, 1890-1920. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Various letters and records from the Converse-Jackson Township Public Library files, all unattributed, many undated.

Verbal Boundary Description

Ninety-two (92) feet off of the south end of Lots Eleven (11) and Twelve (12) original plat in town of Converse (late Xenia), Miami County, State of Indiana.

Boundary Justification

This is the current and original boundary of the property as recorded in the title of the property.

Additional Documentation

Maps

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



