

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
address:	1006 Penn Ave La Grande, Union County	historic name:	La Grande Carnegie Library
assoc addresses:		current/other names:	Union County Art and Culture Center
location descr:		block/lot/tax lot:	
		twshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:	3S 38E 8
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
resource type:	Building	height (stories):	1.0
elig evaluation:	eligible/significant	total elig resources:	1
prim constr date:	1913	second date:	
		NR Status:	Individually Listed
		date indiv listed:	06/17/2026
primary orig use:	Library	orig use comments:	
second orig use:		prim style comments:	
primary style:	Classical Revival: other	sec style comments:	
secondary style:		siding comments:	
primary siding:	Standard Brick	architect:	Bunting & Block
secondary siding:		builder:	Rush, George H.
plan type:	Rectangular Block		
comments/notes:			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
Not associated with any surveys or groupings.			
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
NR date listed:	06/17/2026	106 Project(s):	None
ILS survey date:		Special Assess Project(s):	None
RLS survey date:		Federal Tax Project(s):	None
Gen file date:	10/21/2009		
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION			
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>			
<p>Completed in 1913,¹ the La Grande Carnegie Library is located at 1006 Penn Avenue a few blocks west of downtown La Grande and a few blocks north of Eastern Oregon University in Union County, Oregon. The twentieth-century Classical Revival building exemplifies the Carnegie Library typology. The onestory, rectangular brick building features a raised basement and a symmetrical front façade with exterior stairs leading from the street level to a centered entrance. Exterior decorative features are concentrated on the main entrance surround, which is elaborated by a pediment supported by brick and wood pilasters, with a frieze above. There are modillions at the molded cornice. Concrete accents and soldier courses provide decorative treatments to exterior brick wall surfaces. Fenestration consists of doublehung one-over-one wood sash placed high on main level walls to provide interior space for bookshelves, with taller one-over-one windows on the south (rear) façade and shorter one-over-one windows at the basement level. Interior stairs lead up from the entrance vestibule to the main circulation area with large reading rooms on either side. The original open plan of the main level has been retained except for replacement of the circulation desk with a gift shop enclosed by partial-height, glass-topped walls. Original finishes include plaster walls and brick fireplaces; original finished wood features including interior columns, door and window surrounds, wood-sash windows, and baseboards have been retained but are painted. The basement level retains its original layout with a hallway leading to what was originally the large meeting room (later the children's library) with original fireplace and several smaller rooms. Alterations to the building include the removal of the circulation desk and built-in bookshelves, installation of partial-height walls around the new giftshop, addition of interior structural posts and ceiling beams, installation of new light fixtures, reconfiguration of the exterior stairs, and replacement of the original exterior doors at the main entrance. The building retains historic integrity through the retention of most of its original character-defining features from the period of significance.</p>			
HISTORY			
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>			
<p>The La Grande Carnegie Library meets the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) threshold for significance at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Education. It also meets the threshold for significance at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. In the area of Education, the free public library represents La Grande's dedication to accessible information and education. The La Grande Carnegie Library was developed after years of effort by active citizens who believed that the local economy and community well-being depended on public investment in education, and it served as the educational center of the city from 1913 through 1969. Library staff worked closely with public schools to assist with their mission of educating children, and the library was an essential self-education resource for adults. Residents depended on the library for information in the form of educational lectures and periodicals as well as books. During its first decades, it was an important source of community pride, and for a time in the 1920s, it had the fifth-highest circulation of any public library in Oregon.⁷ In the area of Architecture, the library is an excellent example of Classical Revival architecture that retains integrity and represents a strong example of the Carnegie Library Program's typology. The building exhibits features recommended by the Carnegie Corporation's own "Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings," including a rectangular floor plan with a central exterior staircase leading up to a vestibule with a set of stairs to the main floor circulation area.⁸ In this way, it is representative of the Carnegie Corporation's encouragement of standardized designs and efficient interior layout while allowing for local variation in architectural style and ornament. Furthermore, the building's classically-inspired style, evinced in its symmetrical façade, hipped roof, brick construction, heavy cornice with decorative modillions, and pedimented entrance with decorative surround, is characteristic of the majority of Carnegie libraries in Oregon.⁹ The building, designed by local firm Bunting & Block and completed in 1913, retains a high degree of integrity (as described in Section 7) and is able to convey its significance.</p>			
RESEARCH INFORMATION			
Title Records	Census Records	Property Tax Records	Local Histories
Sanborn Maps	Biographical Sources	SHPO Files	Interviews
Obituaries	✓ Newspapers	State Archives	✓ Historic Photographs
City Directories	Building Permits	State Library	
Local Library:		University Library:	
Historical Society:		Other Respository:	
Bibliography:			

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.) Allen, Cain. "Grande Ronde Valley c.1884." Oregon History Project. 2005. Accessed March 18, 2026. <https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/grande-ronde-valley-c1884/> Anderson, Greg. The Observer. "Library said lacking years ago." November 24, 1973. Art Center East. "Our Story." Accessed Sept. 26, 2025. <https://artcentereast.org/about/>. Bertram, James. "Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings." 1915. <https://digitalcollections.library.cmu.edu/node/85459>. Bobinski, George S. "Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development." ALA Bulletin 62, no. 11 (1968): 1361–67. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25698025>. Brunzell, Kara. Personal interview with Art Center East Executive Director Darcy Dolge. September 5, 2025. Carnegie Corporation of New York. "Andrew Carnegie's Library Legacy: A Timeline." Jan. 8, 2025. Accessed Jul. 16, 2025. <https://www.carnegie.org/our-work/article/andrew-carnegies-library-legacy/rk>. Cockle, Dick. The Observer. "Library Death Wish." May 8, 1978. Coos Bay Times. "New Firm is Formed Here." Sept. 11, 1914, 8. Greenwood, Walt. The Observer. "Library, public facility at top of list of La Grande's needs." January 30, 1974. Hamilton, William A. Blueprints. 1982. Hartman, Rebecca. "La Grande." Oregon Encyclopedia, May 18, 2023. Hug, Bernal D. History of Union County, Oregon. La Grande, OR: Eastern Oregon Review, 1961. Idaho Statesman. "Births, Marriages and Deaths." Apr. 6, 1911, 3. La Grande Evening Observer. "Library Bids Let to Rush." Jul. 26, 1913, 1. "Library at Enterprise." Nov. 20, 1913, 2. "Library Bids Let to Rush." Jul. 26, 1913, 1. "New Carnegie Library Here." Dec. 20, 1913, 13. "Society," March 14, 1914, 8. "New Books at Library." Sept. 4, 1914, 8. "To the Citizens of Union County." February 27, 1919, 6. "Receives Appointment." Nov. 12, 1917, 5. "Greenhouse To Be Started." Mar. 30, 1918, 4. United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2035) La Grande Carnegie Library Union Co., OR Name of Property County and State 22 "Lectures are Well Attended," November 9, 1920 1. "La Grande Library Has Enjoyed Rapid Growth." May 26, 1923. "La Grande Library Circulates 90,000 Volumes Each Year." August 31, 1927, 23. "Enterprise Builder Dies at California." Apr. 10, 1947, 4. "La Grande Public Library to Honor George Cochran," October 3, 1951, 1. "Library Sandblasted," Feb. 18, 1970, 2. "LG Library: Who Should Pay?" Nov. 27, 1973. Construction Work at Library," Jul. 11, 1975. "Library Changes Improve Access," Jan. 14, 1983, 2. "Momentum Builds for City Library Project." Mar. 1, 2005, 4. "Honored Artist Show Continues." Sept. 1, 2014, 6. La Grande Library Board. Library Board Meeting Minutes, May 24, 1957. Library Board Meeting Minutes, September 27, 1958. Library Board Meeting Minutes, October 20, 1958 Library Board Meeting Minutes, May 2, 1960. Oregon Theater Project. "La Grande, OR." Accessed Sept. 8, 2025. <https://oregontheaterproject.uoregon.edu/cities/la-grande/or/#:~:text=Demographics%2C%20Politics%20&%20Society,in%20all%20along%20eastern%20Oregon> National Park Service. "Carnegie Libraries: The Future Made Bright (Teaching with Historic Places)." Accessed Jul. 16, 2025. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/carnegie-libraries-the-future-made-bright-teaching-with-historic-places.htm>. National Register of Historic Places. "Enterprise Public Library." 10-900 Form. Sept. 30, 2013. "The La Grande Commercial Historic District." Prepared by Donna Hartmans, Sally Donovan, & Dr. Joby Patterson. July 23, 2000. Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission. "Classical Revival Style 1895 – 1950." Accessed Nov. 11, 2025. <https://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/classical-revival.html>. Schepcke, Jim. "Carnegie Libraries in Oregon." Oregon Encyclopedia. Accessed Nov. 12, 2025. United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2035) La Grande Carnegie Library Union Co., OR Name of Property County and State 23 Sunday Oregonian. "Obituary." Sept. 21, 1919, 13. "Illness Takes Field Auditor." Dec. 28, 1943, 11. "Former Oregon Man Named Manufacturer Group Head." Dec. 22, 1946, 25. United States Census Bureau. La Grande, Oregon. 2010-2020. Accessed Sept. 26, 2025. Virginia. "George H. Rush." 1900. Van Slyck, Abigail Ayres. Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture, 1890-1920. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.