Form 10-300 (Rev. 6-72)

2

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE: New York

COUNTY:

Niagara

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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Niagara Falls	PUDITE LID	rary					
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Standing on the west side of Main Street between Ashland Avenue and Elmwood Avenue the one-story Niagara Falls Public Library is built of yellow brick with stone trim on a high stone basement. The building appears rectangular in shape when viewed from Main Street, but to the rear (west) it billows out in a generous semi-circle.

The front (Main Street) facade is seven bays wide with an imposing front entrance in the center. The pedimented doorway is recessed slightly and flanked by two monumental stone ionic columns. The windows are also topped with pediments resting on ionic pilasters. The building has a flat roof and a heavy stone cornice which establishes a horizontal emphasis repeated in the stone string courses connecting the window lintels and sills and in the smooth coursed ashlar base.

Little has changed on the interior since the building was described by the <u>Niagara Falls</u> <u>Gazette</u> on April 14, 1904 at the time of the library's opening:

The interior of the building is rich in its appointments. From the vestibule which is finished in quartered oak and marble one enters the delivery room which is directly in front of the book stacks and which is furnished with an octagon receiving room is also finished in quartered oak and marble. At the left of the main room is the children's reading room which is a new feature in libraries... In the rear of the delivery counter are the radial two tier book stacks each having a capacity of 16,000 volumes and may be added to at any time. From their positions at the receiving counter the librarians command a full view of the entire first floor of the library. the basement of the building is the room for the historical society and the lecture room...It (the lecture room) has a seating capacity of 200 persons and is fitted with a large and roomy stage. (Today, this space has been filled with stacks.)

The general decorative tone is green, the tints throughout the entire building being in that color. Everything is rich and lasting. The light fixtures are in old

See Continuation Sheet

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE	
New York	
COUNTY	
Niagara	
FOR NPS USE ON	ILY
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
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7. Description Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

brass and so placed as to afford the best light for the eyes at the reading tables, etc. To fully appreciate the new library one should visit it and see what the city possesses in this line.

<sup>1</sup>Niagara Falls Gazette. April 14, 1904.



ERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	☐ 16th Century	☐ 18th Century	20th Century
☐ 15th Century	☐ 17th Century	☐ 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicab	le and Known) 1902-	04	
REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Che	eck One or More as Appropr	iate)	
Abor iginal	Education	Political	Urban Planning
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☐ Historic	☐ Industry	losophy	
☐ Agriculture	☐ Invention	Science	
X Architecture	☐ Landscape	Sculpture	
	Architecture	Social/Human-	
☐ Art			
Art Commerce	Literature	itarian	
	☐ Literature ☐ Military	itarian  Theater	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Functional, silent and almost grim on the exterior and charmingly warm and ornate inside, the Niagara Falls Public Library is a turn-of-the-century period piece, one of a special generation of public libraries endowed by Andrew Carnegie.

The early 20th century Carnegie libraries hold a touchingly human as well as enduring place in the history of American philanthropy and social history. They stand today as a record that the U.S. public library movement was not initiated through government programs or by public demand but rather due to the farsighted generosity of an extraordinary individual.

Some \$45 million of Carnegie's vast fortune went into the construction and endowment of library buildings, however, a community was not simply given a blank check by the Carnegie Foundation in order to build a library. The \$50,000 grant awarded to Niagara Falls in 1901 came with the stipulation that the city must spend \$7,000 annually for the building's maintenance. A main library and a branch already existed in Niagara Falls with a total of about 10,000 books acquired throughout the 19th century. It started with 40 books donated back in 1814 by General Pankhurst Whitney and was known originally as the Grand Niagara Library. Small but determined and innovative, the Niagara Falls Library developed in the late 19th century, an unusual reputation for its collection of books for the blind.

The city of Niagara Falls was established in 1892 and by 1901 when the Carnegie grant was secured the existing library was one of "village proportions" facing "city needs." The site on Main Street in the former village of Suspension Bridge was chosen in the estimated center of the reading population of the day, and in 1904 at the time of its official opening, the new library boasted the greatest circulation in proportion to population in New York State.

See Continuation Sheet

GPO 931-894

Form 10-300a (10ph 1383)

MAY 1 3 1974 NATIONAL UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL

REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	COUNTY
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STATE	New York	
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REGISTER Significance (Number all entries)

E.E. Joralemon, a local architect, designed the structure with a capacity for 50,000 volumes. The contractor was George B. Long and the plumbing and electrical work done by F.W. Oliver Company. The completed building showed an extraordinary emphasis on the interior, a fact explained by The Niagara Falls Gazette:

> As is well known this structure cost \$50,000, and most of the money was spend on the interior, where it will be most appreciated by the reading public.1

With its lavish plaster pilasters and moldings, marble steps and pale skylights, the "frosted cake" interior which is still intact continued to dazzle visitors and residents as quaintly expressed by one observer in 1914:

> ... (the) building is beautiful indeed and you will notice that others as well as yourself take a full deep breath as you tarry to look at the whiteness of it all before climbing the marble steps that will bring you in direct communication with volumes, the contents of which are equally immaculate.

The library grew with the years, and by 1950 the building designed for 50,000 volumes had to deal with 116,000. auditorium on the lower level was converted for stack space, and a number of branches were established. The continued concern for handicapped readers led to the establishment of a microfilm book service for the bedridden, said to be the first of its kind in a New York State library. The equipment was given by the Scottish Rite Masons in 1949 and was designed for bedridden patients unable to hold heavy volumes. The microfilmed books are projected onto the ceiling.3

The seventy-year old library is to be vacated in the near future for the new Earl Brydges Library designed by Paul Rudolf several blocks away, and plans are underway to convert the old library into a city arts center.

The Niagara Falls Gazette. April 14, 1904.

Niagara Falls Gazette, 1914 as cited in Marjorie Williams, "Fifty Years of the Public Library 1900-1950" undated. p. 6.

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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(Continuation Sheet) 8. Significance 3 (Number all entries)

<sup>3</sup>Marjorie Williams, "Fifty Yeas of the Public Library 1900-1950" undated. p. 11.



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### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

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AND/OR HISTORIC: Carnegie Library	3114
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State Plaza, Albany, New York	12223
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(Julian Baraca)	skeerior, rooking west
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### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

New York

COUNTY

Niagara

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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1. NAME				
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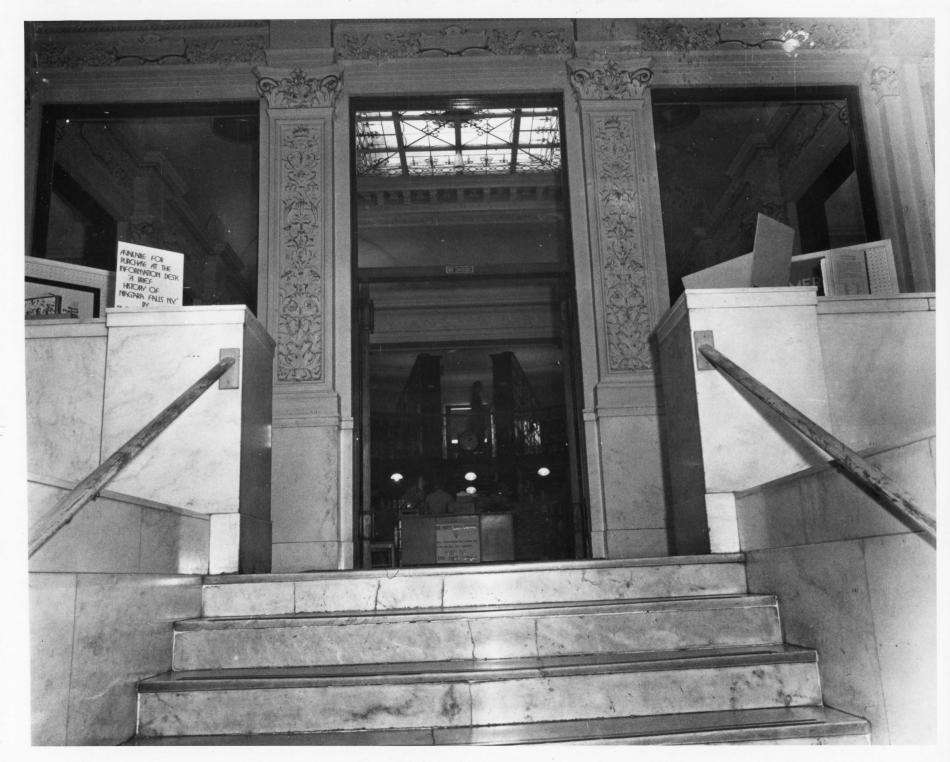


#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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Detail of one of the three skylights	



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#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

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Niagara

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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View of interior of building from entranceway, looking west



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### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

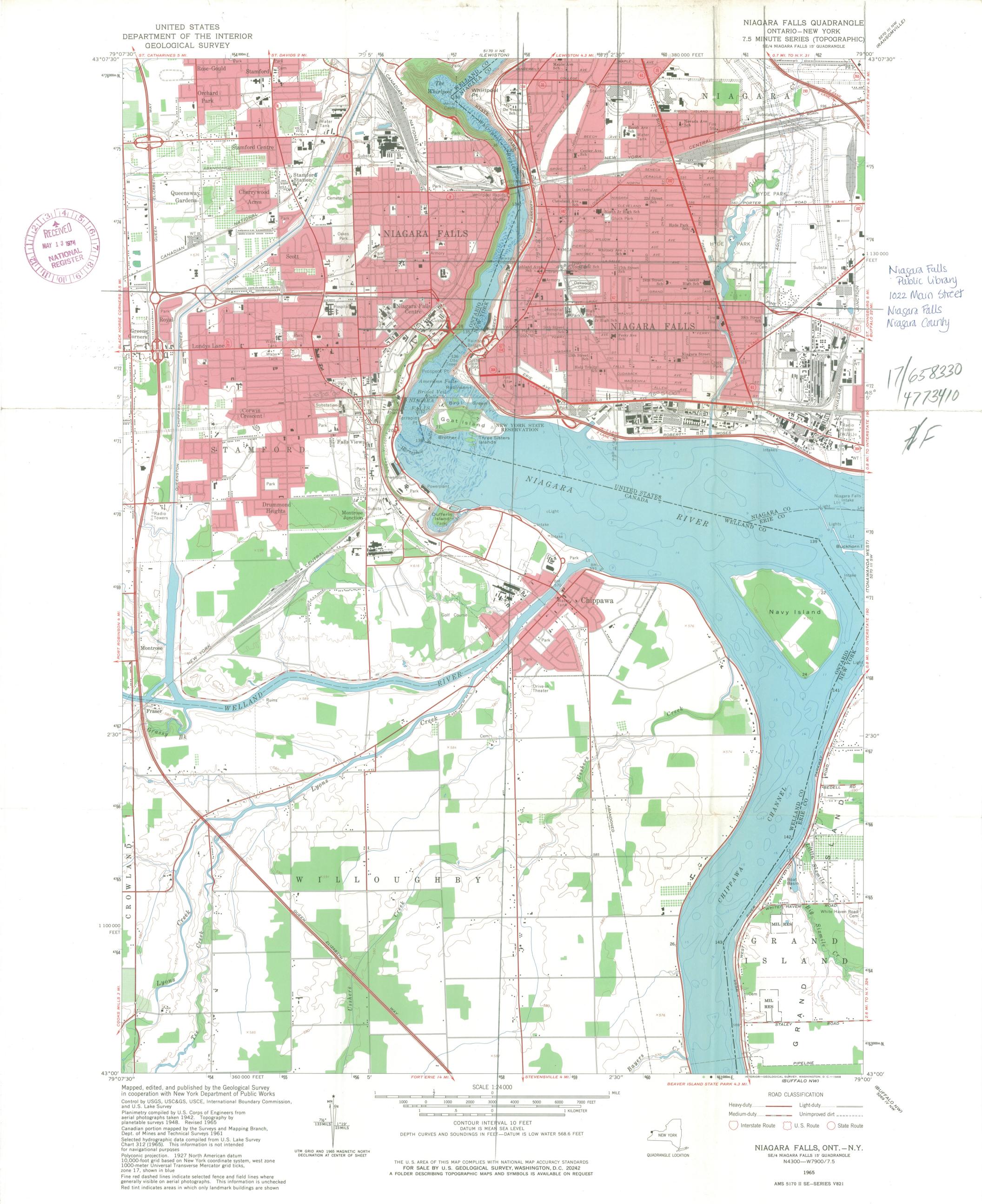
### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

#### PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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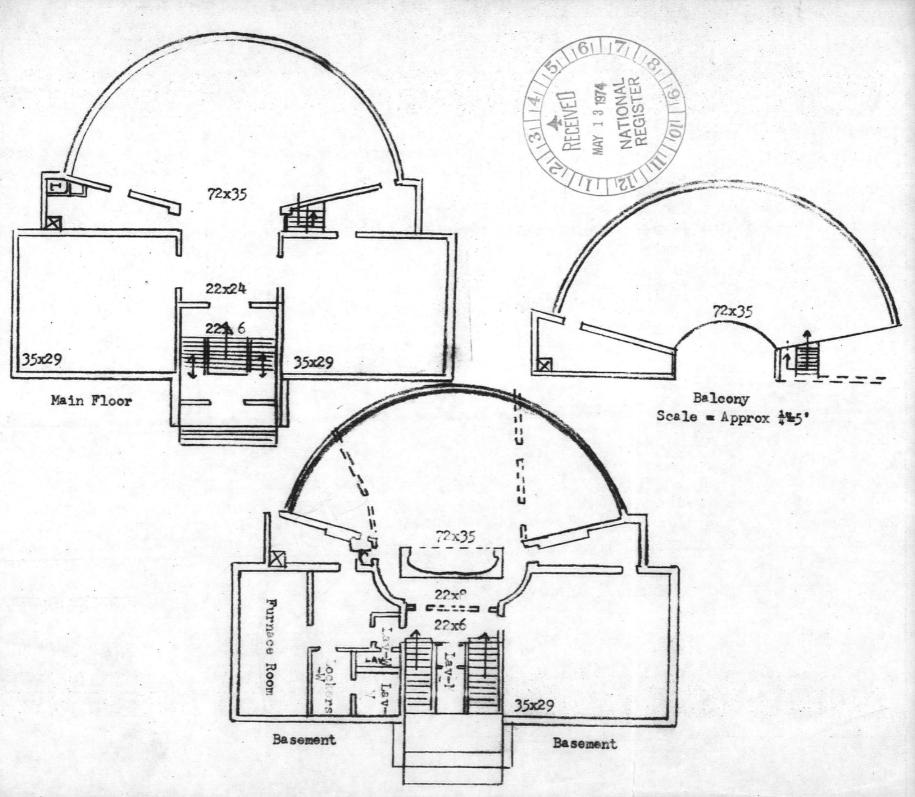


Form No. 10-301 Rev. 7-72 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

STATE	
New York	
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FOR NPS USE O	NLY
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(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)	ENTRY NUMBER DAT
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Form No. 10-301 Rev. 7-72

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	
New York	
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NEW YORK STATE PARKS & RECREATION South Swan Street Bldg. South Mall, Albany, New York 12223 Information 518 474-0456 Alexander Aldrich, Commissioner

May 7, 1974

Dr. William Murtagh Keeper of the National Register National Park Service Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dr. Murtagh:

As the State Historic Preservation Officer, I am forwarding the enclosed nomination to the National Register of Historic Places:

Niagara Falls Public Library, (Carnegie Library), 1022 Main Street, Niagara Falls, New York, Niagara County

The above nomination has been reviewed and approved by the Committee on Registers in accordance with the criteria outlined in Section 2.2 of the Grants Guide.

The staff of the New York State Division for Historic Preservation, the officially designated Preservation Agency, would welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission with your office.

Sincerely,

ALEXANDER ALDRICH State\_Historic Preservation Officer

MAY 1 3 1974

NATIONAL

REGISTER

By:

F. L. RATH, JR. Deputy Commissioner

#### ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

1074 JUN 5 Date Entered

Name

Brick Church Corners

Niagara Falls Public Library

Talcott Falls Site

Location

Ontario Wayne County

Niegara Palls Niagara County

Adams vicinity Jefferson County

#### Also Notified

Hon. Jacob K. Javits Hon. James L. Buckley

Hon. Frank Horton

Hon. Henry P. Smith, III

Hon. Robert C. McEwen

State Historic Preservation Officer Mr. Alexander Aldrich, Commissioner Parks and Recreation

Room 303, South Swan Street Building

Albany, New York 12223

Regional Director, North Atlantic Region

PR MMOTT: pl 6/10/74

### Niagara Society of Artists, Inc.

8728 BUFFALO AVENUE NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK 14304



716 283-**9437** 

April 25, 1980

National Register for Historic Properties 440 & Street Northwest Washington, D. C. 20001 Niagora Co

Dear Sir:

We would like to make application to have one of the oldest buildings in LaSalle, a suburb of Niagara Falls, put in the National Register. Originally, it was the Town Hall and is currently a branch of the Niagara Falls library system.

Please send the application forms to:

Mrs. Helen Wagner 8441 Buffalo Avenue Apt. 27 Niagara Falls, New York 14304

As public relations chairman for the Niagara Society of Artists, she has volunteered to research the history of this building. Our studios and gallery are housed in the upper floors of this building.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Lila Wantz, president

LW/bn

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