United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Oswego Public (Carnegie) Library

and or common Same

2. Location

street & number 704 Fourth Street

city, town Oswego

classification not for publication

state Kansas
code 20
county Labette
code 099

3. Classification

Category Ownership Status Present Use

X district X public X occupied ___ agriculture ___ museum

building(s) private unoccupied ___ commercial ___ park

structure both work in progress ___ educational ___ private residence

site Public Acquisition

object X in process ___ entertainment ___ religious

N/A being considered ___ government ___ scientific

Accessible ___ industrial ___ transportation

4. Owner of Property

name City of Oswego

street & number City Hall

city, town Oswego

classification not for publication

state Kansas

county Labette

code 67356

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Labette County Clerk

street & number Labette County Courthouse

city, town Oswego

classification not for publication

state Kansas

county Labette

code 67356

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date N/A

federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A

state N/A
7. Description

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Oswego Public (Carnegie) Library (c. 1912) is located at 704 Fourth Street in Oswego, Labette County, Kansas (pop. 2,218). The one-story, brick, Utilitarian building stands on a corner in the southwest end of Oswego’s central business district. Its facade orientation is north. The building measures approximately forty feet from east to west and thirty-eight feet from north to south. The building retains its original function as a library.

The one-story, red brick building sits on a raised limestone foundation with a water table. It is a rectangular structure with an asphalt shingled, hipped roof. The building is one bay wide and one bay deep. A chimney rises from the eastern elevation wall. A plain wooden entablature defines the building on all elevations.

The library was remodelled in 1965 and 1979. The two remodellings resulted in lowering of the first floor ceiling to just below the window transoms, the removal of the transom frames and boarding over of the transom openings, the raising of the front door and the addition of steps, the removal of the front doorway transom and front doors, and the closing of the transom over the back entrance.

A limestone tablet bearing the carving "Public Library" stands above the front doorway on the facade elevation. The doorway, which has been altered, is partially obscured by an asphalt shingled, porch roof which projects above it. The doorway retains its classical limestone architrave and brick and limestone surround. However, when the door level was raised, the wooden framed glass transom above the door was removed and the doorway itself was reduced in width. Today, steps lead up to a single wood and glass door with translucent single course, glass block sidelights and a transom.

Pairs of 1/1 double hung windows with transoms comprise the building's first level fenestration. Limestone sills underscore each fenestration group. There are two such groupings on each outer bay of the facade and rear elevations and three such groupings on the north and south elevation. A single door pierces the center bay of the rear elevation, providing basement access. Its tall transom has been removed and the transom opening has been boarded over but it retains its limestone lintel. One-over-one, double hung windows pierce the foundation below the first level windows.

The building maintains its one-bay floor plan with an open vestibule entrance. The first floor ceiling has been covered with dropped acoustic tiles, this treatment lowers the ceiling height to just below the window transoms. The interior woodwork, such as the door and window surrounds, has been painted.
8. Significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Areas of Significance</th>
<th>Check and justify below</th>
<th>Specific dates</th>
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**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Oswego Public (Carnegie) Library (c. 1912) is being nominated to the National Register as part of the Carnegie Libraries of Kansas thematic resources nomination (c. 1902–1921) at the local level of significance under criteria A and C for its historical association with the Carnegie Corporation Library Building Program and for its architectural significance as a new building type. A library association was organized in Oswego in 1877. The community received their $5,000.00 Carnegie Library grant in 1909, library construction was completed in 1912. The Oswego Public (Carnegie) Library is an example of the Utilitarian style.

Sixty-three Carnegie funded libraries were built in Kansas during the first three decades of the Twentieth Century; four of these libraries were built on college campuses. In most cases, the Carnegie funded library represented the community’s first library building although many Kansas communities had book clubs and library organizations well before the Carnegie Corporation Library Building Program was founded. In the case of the four college libraries, the building represented the first structure which was solely devoted to housing the institution’s books and providing study space. Carnegie did not solicit interest in the program, with the exception of the Anderson (Carnegie) Memorial Library which was built by Carnegie as a memorial to his friend John Anderson and was the first college library nationally to receive Carnegie funding. Communities initiated contact with the corporation by letter, indicating their desire for a Carnegie funded library. If the Corporation responded favorably to the request, a firm local commitment to the program’s requirements, which generally resulted in a public election in support of the library, followed. Obviously these actions represented a perceived need within the community for a library building and the Carnegie Corporation Library Building Program represented an excellent way to secure the funds to build one. Many of the Carnegie Libraries built in Kansas reflect the high space utilization design guidelines promoted by the Carnegie Corporation after 1910, underscoring the point that before the Carnegie Corporation Library Building Program, few architects and/or builders had experience designing this building type.

Twenty-eight Carnegie Libraries are included in this nomination (see inventory). Twelve Carnegie Libraries have been listed individually on the National Register: Argentine, Case Library (Baker University, Baldwin City), Caldwell, Dodge City, Emporia, Goodland, Lawrence, Leavenworth, Newton, Ottawa, Parsons, and Pittsburg. The Carnegie Library at Arkansas City is included in a downtown historic district. Thirteen Carnegie Libraries have been demolished: Great Bend, Halstead, Hays, Iola, Kansas City, McPherson, Morrison Library (Fairmont College, Wichita), Olathe, Osawatomie, Plainville, Russell, Salina, and Washington. Five Carnegie Libraries have been altered enough to make them ineligible for the National Register: Abilene, Garden City, Hiawatha, Lyons, and Stockton. (The nominations for the Concordia, Eureka, Independence, and Winfield libraries were deferred.) Twenty-two of the nominated libraries retain their original function. All of the buildings are in use or have an active use planned for them. The
nominated libraries maintain a high to moderate degree of architectural and structural integrity.

Industrialist Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919) and the Carnegie Corporation significantly influenced the development and expansion of public library systems worldwide. Between 1886 and 1921 Carnegie funds assisted in the construction of 1,681 city and 108 college libraries in the United States. As a region, the Mid-West, Kansas included, did not have a well established public library system until the Carnegie Program and ranks highest in the number of communities which obtained Carnegie Libraries nationwide. Out of the forty-six states to participate in the library building program, Kansas ranks approximately eleventh in the number of Carnegie Libraries built. For many Kansas communities, the Carnegie Library represented its first library building, providing an environment that all members of the community could share for the purposes of reading, learning, and education.

Eligibility for Carnegie Library funds rested on several factors. Firstly, the population of the community had to exceed 1,000; in Kansas this indicated at least a second class city status. This population requirement generally resulted in county seat communities applying for and receiving Carnegie Libraries. Some communities with populations less than 1,000 banded together with neighboring communities to achieve the 1,000 mark and applied for township libraries, as in the case of the Peabody and Canton Township libraries. In the case of college libraries this constraint may not have applied, although the four Kansas colleges to receive Carnegie libraries were located in cities which had populations in excess of 1,000 by 1900. Secondly, the applicant had to provide a site for the library. The sites tended to be one or two blocks outside of the community's main business district. Thirdly, the applicant had to provide an annual endowment for the maintenance and improvement of the library which amounted to at least ten percent of the initial grant from the Carnegie Corporation.

This last factor contributed to the ending of the Carnegie Library Building Program in 1917, although grants for books and other improvements continued for several more decades. An inherent problem for second class cities in Kansas was the .4 mill levy restriction for libraries, making it difficult for some communities to meet the annual ten percent maintenance appropriation solely through public dollars. In 1917 the Kansas State legislature increased the library levy to .5 mill for second and third class cities, an amendment which affected most of the communities in the State that had Carnegie Libraries. In 1916, large communities such as Topeka, Wichita, Hutchinson, and Leavenworth had library mill levies of 1.06, 1.2, 1.8, and 3.5 respectively. In Kansas, the average public library grant was $12,000 and the average college library grant was $37,000. These monies covered the cost of the building, the necessary furniture and fixtures, and the architects' fees.

Prior to 1910, the Carnegie Corporation did not provide design guidelines for the libraries that it funded and because the library was a relatively new building type, few architects and/or builders had experience with its design. Many of the early libraries were expensive examples of the Beaux Arts style with little focus on floor plan and space
efficiency. In 1910, Carnegie's personal secretary James Bertram developed model specifications and floorplans for proposed libraries, entitling his work *Notes on Library Buildings*. The *Notes on Library Buildings* provided the first widely circulated guidelines for library design in this country.

Bertram wrote:

Small libraries should be pland (sic) so that one librarian can oversee the entire library from a central position.... The building (sic) should be devoted exclusively to: (main floor) housing of books and their issue for home use; comfortable accommodations for reading them by adults and children; (basement) lecture room; necessary accommodation for heating plant; also all conveniences for the library patrons and staff. Experience seems to sho (sic) that the best results for a small general library are obtained by adopting the one-story and basement rectangular type of building (sic), with a small vestibule entering into one large room sub-divided as required by means of bookcases.... The rear and side windows may be kept about six feet from the floor, to giv (sic) continuous wall space for shelving. A rear wing can be added for stack-room (when future need demands it) at a minimum expense, and without seriously interfering with the library servis (sic) during its construction. The site chosen should be such as to admit lite (sic) on all sides, and be large enuf (sic) to allow extension, if ever such should become necessary.

The thirty-six Carnegie Libraries built in Kansas after 1910 reflect Bertram's precedents, exhibiting high space utilization, and often including full basements, although the raised basement is a design element employed in the earlier libraries as well. Most of these one-story libraries exhibit a three bay, Neo-Classical facade with a projecting central pedimented entry pavilion and are one bay deep. The use of native limestone is evident in some of the libraries but the most common material combination is brick with a limestone foundation. While there is some tendency toward a vernacular interpretation to the design ornamentation of these libraries, the general approach verges on high style.

Correspondence between the Carnegie Corporation and the library boards from the Kansas communities that received Carnegie Libraries indicates that the designs for these libraries were carefully scrutinized by Bertram and in many cases, were resubmitted several times before meeting his requirements. Upon the completion of a library, the library board was instructed to send a full set of blueprints and elevations of the building to the Corporation. However, recent correspondence between the Kansas State Historical Society and the Carnegie Corporation reveals that the Corporation does not have blueprints of the Kansas libraries. The Corporation does have some library photographs but the collection is not inclusive.
Three architects were particularly active in the design of Kansas Carnegie Libraries: George P. Washburn of Ottawa, Kansas designed nine, A. T. Simmons of Bloomington, Illinois designed six, and William Warren Rose of Kansas City, Kansas designed four. Washburn's libraries are primarily of the standard three-bay, Neo-Classical variety. His firm is credited with the Carnegie libraries in Burlington, Canton, Cherryvale, Columbus, Eureka, Halstead, Osawatomie, Ottawa, and Sterling. Simmons engaged in a more eclectic approach, designing libraries in Abilene, Chanute, Council Grove, Downs, Hays and Yates Center. Rose is credited with the classically inspired libraries in Argentine, Kansas City, Manhattan, and Newton. In Kansas, many Kansas based architects were commissioned to design Carnegie Libraries as well as architects from Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, and Texas.

Today, many of the state's Carnegie Libraries are facing serious space shortages. The alternatives of adding on or vacating both present preservation problems. Additions to these libraries must be such that the building's original character is not altered. Vacating the library for a larger facility leaves the problem of an empty building, in some communities county historical societies have inherited the empty Carnegie Library. In any event, when these buildings are no longer recognized from a design standpoint as Carnegie Libraries, their architectural significance ceases.
Inventory of Carnegie Libraries in Kansas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>INVENTORY NUMBER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Anthony Public (Carnegie) Library (Harper County)</td>
<td>c. 1911</td>
<td>77-0180-0003</td>
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<tr>
<td>104 N. Springfield</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthony, Kansas 67003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner: City of Anthony</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots 22, 23, 24; Block 34.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Burlington Carnegie Free Library (Coffey County)</td>
<td>c. 1912</td>
<td>31-0690-0015</td>
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<tr>
<td>201 N. Third</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burlington, Kansas 66839</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owner: City of Burlington</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots 8, 9; Block 35</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Canton Township Carnegie Library (McPherson County)</td>
<td>c. 1921</td>
<td>113-0790-0001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 336</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Canton, Kansas 67428</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner: Canton Township</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots 7, 8, 9, 10, 11; Block 2.</td>
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<td>4. Chanute Public (Carnegie) Library (Neosho County)</td>
<td>c. 1906</td>
<td>133-0870-0067</td>
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<tr>
<td>102 S. Lincoln</td>
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<td>Chanute, Kansas 66720</td>
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<td>5. Cherryvale Public (Carnegie) Library (Montgomery County)</td>
<td>c. 1913</td>
<td>125-0939-0006-</td>
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<tr>
<td>329 E. Main</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherryvale, Kansas 67335</td>
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<td>Owner: City of Cherryvale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lots 7, 8; Block 39</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Clay Center Carnegie Library (Clay County)</td>
<td>c. 1912</td>
<td>27-0980-0008</td>
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<tr>
<td>706 Sixth Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clay Center, Kansas 67432</td>
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<td>Owner: City of Clay Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lots 12, 13; Block 36</td>
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7. Coffeyville Carnegie Public Library Building (Montgomery County)  c. 1912  125-2676-0019
415 West 8th
Coffeyville, Kansas 67337
Owner: City of Coffeyville
Lots 7,8; Block 47.

8. Columbus Public (Carnegie) Library (Cherokee County) c. 1913  21-1100-0008
205 N. Kansas
Columbus, Kansas 66725
Owner: City of Columbus
Lots 9,10; Block 9.

9. Council Grove (Carnegie) Library (Morris County)  c. 1917  127-1180-0074
303 W. Main Street
Council Grove, Kansas 66846
Owner: City of Council Grove
Lots 1,2,3; Block 19.

10. Downs Carnegie Library (Osborne County)  c. 1906  141-1400-0002
504 S. Morgan
Downs, Kansas 67437
Owner: City of Downs
Lots 8-12; Block 28.

11. El Dorado Carnegie Library Building (Butler County)  c. 1912  15-1540-0004
101 S. Star
El Dorado, Kansas 67042
Owner: Dean Seeber
N 4' Lot 3, Lot 4; Block 4.

12. Anderson (Carnegie) Memorial Library (Lyon County)  c. 1902  111-1660-0002
The Way College of Emporia
1300 West 12th Avenue
Emporia, Kansas 66801
Owner: Way College of Emporia
Located on the Way College of Emporia campus.
SW, NE1/4, Sec.9, T19, R11, E. of the 6th p.m.,
running thence E. 76 rods, thence N. 80 rods,
thence W. 76 rods, thence S 80 rods to the
Anderson (Carnegie) Memorial Library (Lyon County) cont.

place of beg., except a tract beg. at the S,SW1/4
Sec. 9, thence N. 670 ft., thence E. 540 ft., thence
S. 250 ft., thence W. 374 ft., thence S. 420 ft.,
thence W. 166 ft. to the point of beg. in Lyon Co., KS
and Lots Numbered 61, 63, 65, 67, 71, and the N. 30 ft. of
Lot F all in Block numbered 3, in College Hill Addition
to the City of Emporia.

13. Fort Scott Public (Carnegie) Library (Bourbon County) c. 1902 11-1830-0016
201 South National
Fort Scott, Kansas 66701
Owner: City of Fort Scott
Lots 1, (N1/2) 3; Block 123

14. Girard Carnegie Library (Crawford County) c. 1906 37-2050-0003
128 W. Prairie
Girard, Kansas 66743
Owner: City of Girard
Lots 17, 18; Block 14.

15. Herington Carnegie Public Library (Dickinson County) c. 1915 41-2420-0006
102 S. Broadway
Herington, Kansas 67449
Owner: City of Herington
Lots 2, 4; Block 40.

16. Hutchinson Public (Carnegie) Library Building—
Labor Temple (Reno County) c. 1903-1904 155-2660-0011
427 N. Main
Hutchinson, Kansas 67501
Owner: Hutchinson Labor Building Association
Lots 13, 14, 15; Block 17.

17. Kingman Carnegie Library (Kingman County) c. 1914 95-2850-0006
455 N. Main
Kingman, Kansas 67068
Owner: City of Kingman
Lots 101, 103, 105; Original Town.
18. Lincoln Carnegie Library (Lincoln County)  
203 S. Third  
Lincoln, Kansas 67455  
Owner: City of Lincoln  
Lot 7; Block 32.  
c. 1914  105-3189-005

19. Lyndon Carnegie Library (Osage County)  
127 E. Sixth, P.O. Box 563  
Lyndon, Kansas 66451  
Owner: Valleybrook Township  
Lots 4-9; Block 22.  
c. 1911  139-3360-0003

20. Manhattan Carnegie Library Building (Riley County)  
Fifth and Poyntz  
Manhattan, Kansas 66502  
Owner: Riley County Board of Commissioners  
Lot 413; Ward 2.  
c. 1904  161-3490-0016

21. Osborne Public (Carnegie) Library (Osborne County)  
Third and Main  
Osborne, Kansas 67473  
Owner: City of Osborne  
All of Block 12.  
c. 1913  141-4230-0006

22. Oswego Public (Carnegie) Library (Labette County)  
704 Fourth Street  
Oswego, Kansas 67356  
Owner: City of Oswego  
Lots 1,2,3,4; Block 32.  
c. 1912  99-4250-0010

23. Peabody Township Carnegie Library (Marion County)  
214 Walnut  
Peabody, Kansas 66866  
Owner: Peabody Township  
Lots 80,82,84 on Walnut.  
c. 1914  115-4410-0024

24. Sterling Free Public (Carnegie) Library (Rice County)  
132 N. Broadway  
Sterling, Kansas 67579  
Owner: City of Sterling  
Lots 182,184,186,188 on Broadway.  
c. 1917  159-5225-0006
25. Washburn University Carnegie Library Building  
   (Shawnee County)  c. 1904  177-5400-0017  
   (Education Building)  
   Topeka, Kansas 66621  
   Owner: Washburn University of Topeka  
   SW1/4, NW 1/4, NE 1/4, SW1/4, S1,T12, R15E  

26. Wellington Carnegie Library (Sumner County) c. 1916  191-5730-0012  
   121 W. Seventh  
   Wellington, Kansas 67152  
   Owner: City of Wellington  
   Lots 13,14,15,16,17; Block 53.  

27. Wichita City (Carnegie) Library Building  
   (Sedgwick County) c. 1915  173-5880-0004  
   220 S. Main Street  
   Wichita, Kansas 67202  
   Owner: City of Wichita  
   Lots 24,26,28,30,32,34,36 & 1/2 Vac. Alley Adj.  
   on E. & Vac. Alley Ly. N. Lot 24 Exc. Beg. SE Cor.  
   Lot 34 W 33.98 Ft. N. 100.56 Ft. W. 16.75 Ft. N. 9 Ft.  
   NWly. 15.36 Ft. W. 6.5 Ft. N. 10 Ft. W. 49 Ft. S. 25  
   on E. Th. S. 115.56 Ft. W. 8 Ft. to SE Cor. Lot 30 S.  
   to Beg. Main St. Greiffenstein's Add.  

28. Yates Center (Carnegie) Library (Woodson County) c. 1912  207-6010-0007  
   218 N. Main  
   Yates Center, Kansas 66783  
   Owner: City of Yates Center  
   Lots 4,5,6; Block 27.
Carnegie Library Bibliography:


Topeka *Capital Journal*, 20 December 1916; 26 December 1916.
9. Major Bibliographical Reference

See attached sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property  Less than 1 acre  
Quadrangle name  Oswego  
Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification  The nominated property stands on Lots 1-4; Block 32 in Oswego, Kansas. The rectangular tract is bounded to the north by Fourth Street, to the east by Merchant, and to the south and west by adjacent property lines.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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<th>state</th>
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title  Martha Gray Hagendorf, Architectural Historian

organization  Kansas State Historical Society  date  April 15, 1987

street & number  120 West 10th Street  telephone  913-296-5264

city or town  Topeka  state  Kansas  66612

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

  _____ national  _____ state  X  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature  

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  date  April 15, 1987

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:  date

Chief of Registration
Carnegie Library Bibliography:


Topeka *Capital Journal,* 20 December 1916; 26 December 1916.
Oswego Carnegie Library
Oswego, Kansas
UTM Coordinates
15 312 870 4115 20C
Oswego Carnegie Library
Oswego, Kansas
Martha Hagedorn
April, 1986
Kansas State Historical Society
North Facade, East elevation, SW view
1 of 5

Oswego Carnegie Library
Oswego, Kansas
Martha Hagedorn
April, 1986
Kansas State Historical Society
North Facade, East elevation, SW view
2 of 5

Oswego Carnegie Library
Oswego, Kansas
Martha Hagedorn
April, 1986
Kansas State Historical Society
North Facade, South view
3 of 5

Oswego Carnegie Library
Oswego, Kansas
Martha Hagedorn
April, 1986
Kansas State Historical Society
South & East elevations, NW view
4 of 5

Oswego Carnegie Library
Oswego, Kansas
Martha Hagedorn
April, 1986
Kansas State Historical Society
First Level, North view
5 of 5