

## The Tuscola Public Library

The first library in Tuscola was set up in 1897 after the Women's Club had raised \$400 and donations of \$1,275 were obtained from businessmen. With the funds, books and fixtures were purchased and placed in second floor rooms of the Reat building, southeast corner of south Main and east South Central Avenue. The mayor of Tuscola named the following to the first library board: A. B. Sawyer, president; Miss Blanche Caraway, secretary; Mrs. X. L. Wardall, Mrs. P. M. Moore, Mrs. A. L. Houk, J. L. Wortham, J. M. Walker, S. C. Reat and R. F. Hall.

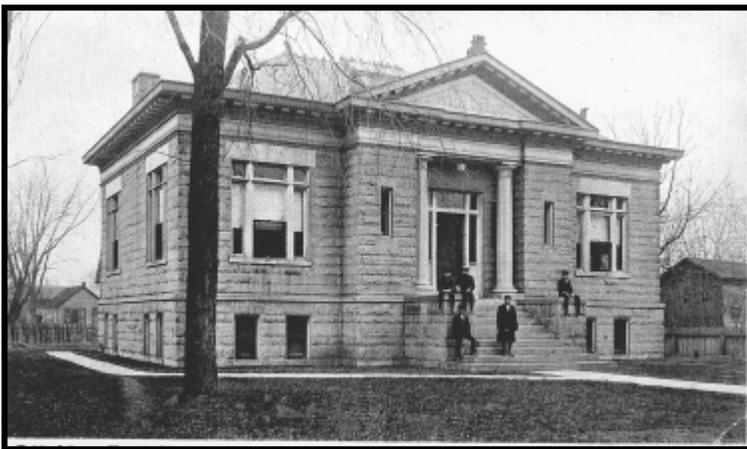
The present library, a one hundred plus-year-old facility is a Carnegie Library, funded in large part by Andrew Carnegie, the wealthy industrialist who systematically distributed his amassed fortune to a number of causes. Tuscola received its grant from the Carnegie Corporation in 1903, thanks to the continued efforts of Mrs. P. M. Moore and Miss Ethel Miller. Members of the Tuscola Woman's Club had learned of Carnegie's library largesse and mounted a campaign for funding of such an institute in Tuscola.

The \$10,000 grant was to pay for construction of the library, however, the town had to provide the real estate upon which it would sit, and pledge annual funding for maintenance of the building and its collections. The city responded, purchasing the Crawley property on East Sale Street for \$3,548. James P. Moorehead of Tuscola served as the contractor and Paul O. Moratz of Bloomington as the architect. Work began in the fall of 1903, and the library was completed in 1904.

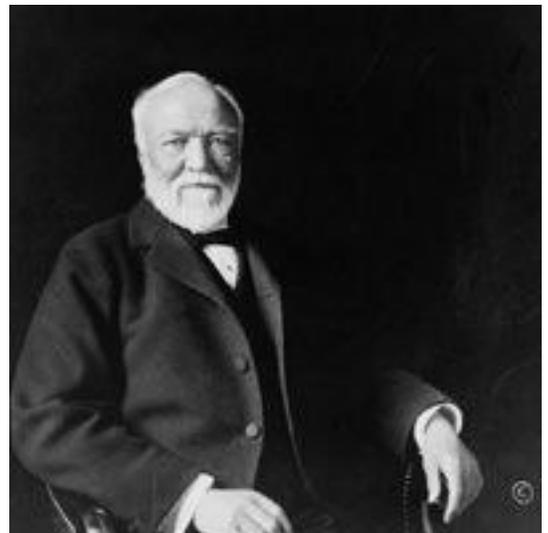
The Classical Revival style building underwent a renovation in 1997, with the addition of a handicap-accessible entrance, restrooms and elevator. A year later, new carpeting, a fresh coat of paint and rearranging of the collections completed the makeover.

Tuscola was but one of over 1,600 communities in the nation to benefit from Carnegie's library grants. Varying sources put the number of Carnegie libraries worldwide at over 2,500 – translating to expenditures in excess of \$56,000,000. In addition, this was just one (albeit a major one) of the causes to which the steel magnate directed his considerable wealth.

Open a book and expand your horizons was Carnegie's philosophy – or as he liked to see engraved over the doorways of his libraries – **“LET THERE BE LIGHT.”**



Early picture of the library.



Andrew Carnegie