



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

CAMPAIGN TO PRESERVE
THE
Carnegie
Libraries

Historic Districts Council's Campaign to Preserve the Carnegie Libraries

When steel magnate Andrew Carnegie sought to donate much of his wealth to worthy causes, he made the clear distinction between philanthropy and charity. Carnegie only favored the former and had no interest in helping anyone who would not help themselves. The construction of public libraries was a perfect focus for his philanthropy for, as Carnegie explained, libraries gave “nothing for nothing. Youths must acquire knowledge themselves.” In total over 2,500 libraries throughout the English speaking world were built with his funding, 1,600 of them in the United States. The day after he sold his corporation in 1901 to J. P. Morgan for \$500 million, Carnegie announced a \$5.2 million donation to the construction of public library buildings throughout New York City.



Bedford Branch.
496 Franklin Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11238
1902, Lord & Hewlett

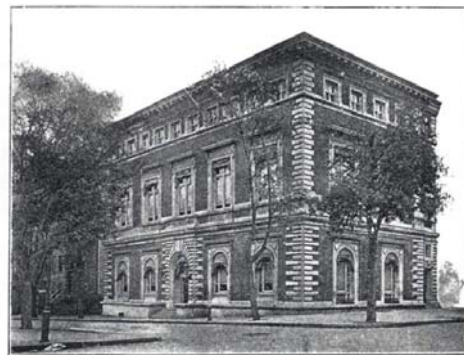
New York City's collection of Carnegie libraries is the largest of any city in the country. Of the 67 built, 57 branches are still standing. The libraries range from three-story, limestone Renaissance Revivals in Manhattan to small, free-standing, brick Classical Revivals in Staten Island, with all of them retaining many high-style architectural elements. While there have been additions, roof replacements and window changes over the years, most of the libraries still maintain their distinctly "Carnegie" look.



Current & Historic Photo: Yorkville Branch, Manhattan, 222 East 79th Street, between 2nd & 3rd Aves.
1902, James Brown Lord, NYC Individual Landmark



Current & Historic Photo: Mott Haven Branch, The Bronx,
321 East 140th Street, 1905, Carrère & Hastings
Located in the Mott Haven Historic District



Still, today the vast majority of New York's Carnegie Libraries are unprotected from inappropriate alterations or demolition. Only 17 of the current libraries are protected by local landmark designation or listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Official recognition of these historic buildings also makes them eligible for special funding for capital needs.

HDC has now launched a campaign to raise awareness about the significant history of New York City's Carnegie Libraries and help protect them for future generations. Please join us!

HDC is currently conducting in-depth research, photography and documentation on the significance of the Carnegie Libraries. We plan to produce an informational brochure, tours and lectures highlighting the important architecture and history of these institutions. The campaign will culminate in a nomination of all of the Carnegie Libraries to the State and National Register of Historic Places.



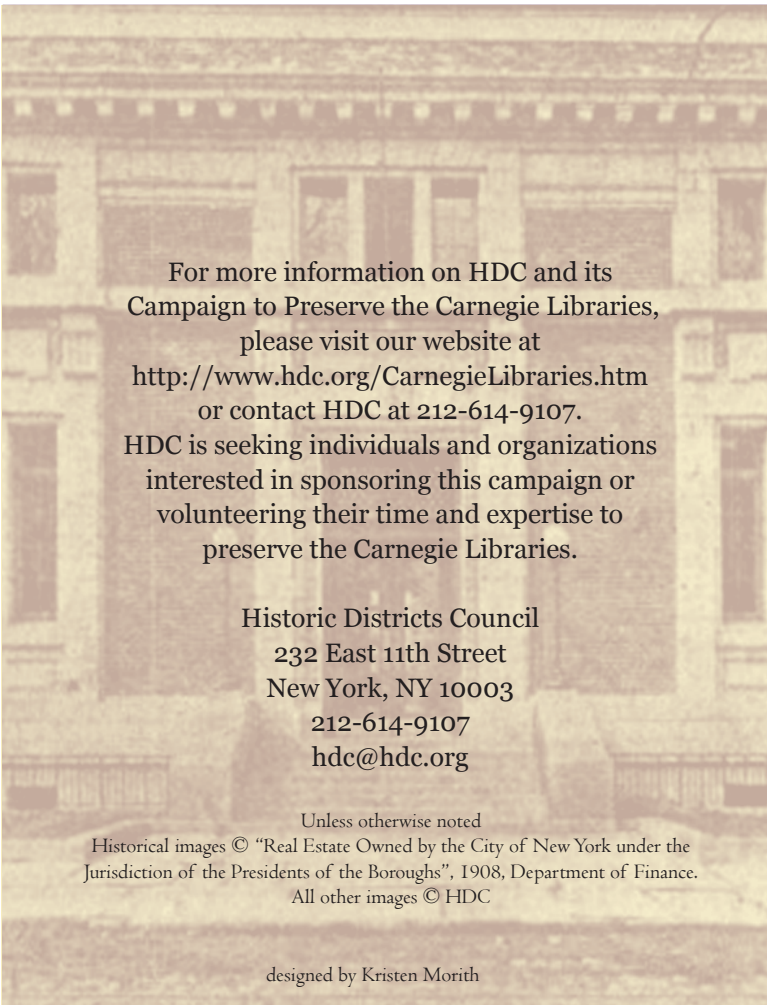
Carnegie Library, Richmond Hill, L.I.C., N.Y.

Richmond Hill Branch, Queens, 118-114 Hillside Avenue, 1905, Tuthill & Higgins
Historic and current photo courtesy of Nancy Cataldi



Tottenville Branch, Staten Island, 7430 Amboy Road, 1905, Carrère & Hastings. NYC
Individual Landmark. Historic and current photo courtesy of Tottenville Historical Society





For more information on HDC and its
Campaign to Preserve the Carnegie Libraries,
please visit our website at
<http://www.hdc.org/CarnegieLibraries.htm>
or contact HDC at 212-614-9107.

HDC is seeking individuals and organizations
interested in sponsoring this campaign or
volunteering their time and expertise to
preserve the Carnegie Libraries.

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