

## *Introduction*

*My aspirations take a higher flight. Mine be it to have contributed to the enlightenment and the joys of the mind, to the things of the spirit, to all that tends to bring into the lives of the toilers of Pittsburgh sweetness and light. I hold this the noblest possible use of wealth.*

— Andrew Carnegie at the Dedication of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, November 5, 1895.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh first opened in 1895 — a gift from steel magnate Andrew Carnegie to the people and the city of Pittsburgh. While Carnegie provided the seed money to build the library, he did not endow its operations but expected the community to furnish financial support.

In addition to a central library and music hall, the original Main Library building included a department of fine arts and a three-room natural history museum. That original structure cost just in excess of \$1,000,000 — more than \$23.5 million by today’s standards. Even though the building was considered to have adequate space when it was dedicated, it quickly became evident that an expansion was necessary. Carnegie, with typical beneficence, upon hearing that the cost of the new and bigger Institute would be \$5 million (\$114 million today), said, “by all means we should have these plans.”

In 2002, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh launched its *Libraries for LIFE* Capital Campaign to begin to renovate and update the Main Library and its 18 neighborhood locations. Two years later the first floor of the Main Library was reopened with a re-designed entrance area, modern signage and a new café.

The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is rich with symbolism and deeper meaning. This self-guided tour will provide you with insight into Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh’s Main library, its key features and improvements made with modern renovations. Numbers listed below refer to the attached floorplan.

## The Front of the Building

- 1. Free to the People** – The inscription above the front door of the Library is Carnegie’s constant reminder to the community that the library is free and all are welcome. While he provided the community with a beautiful building full of gathered knowledge, Carnegie felt the Library was a necessity and left its operational and maintenance costs to the people of the community. The Library belongs to the public, and we are responsible for its care.
- 2. The Writers** – The names of 100 famous writers, philosophers and poets who Carnegie admired are engraved under the upper windows and stretch around the building.
- 3. Historical Landmark** – The plaque on the right side of the steps (when facing the Library) identifies Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Institute as a National Historic Landmark. The building was added to the National List of Historic Places in 1992.

*(Front of the Building continued)*

4. **Magee Memorial Fountain** – The Saint Gaudens tribute to Christopher Lyman Magee, one of Pittsburgh’s most influential political leaders. It was dedicated on July 4, 1908. Magee left his estate, located at Forbes and Halket Streets, as the foundation of a hospital named for his mother Elizabeth Steele Magee – now UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital.
5. **Commemorative Marker** – The Pennsylvania State Historical Marker commemorates the Library’s Founder and Benefactor Andrew Carnegie.

## First Floor

*To keep pace with increased demand for library resources and to address changing information needs, the Main Library has experienced successive renovations. The building’s most recent renewal was completed in 2004 and includes a partial renovation of the first floor.*

6. **Lobby** – To make the Library more inviting, more welcoming, and to minimize barriers, the original vestibule was opened up and the Customer Services desk was moved to the right-hand side of the First Floor. During the 2004 renovation designers left a portion of the building’s original ceiling design in front of the lift, intact to recognize the history.
7. **Hallway** – To the right, at the base of the staircase, mosaic floor tiles date from the 1895 building. These were uncovered in the process of renovation and offer insight into the anonymous craftsmen — skilled and unskilled plasterers, carpenters, woodworkers and painters — who turned Andrew Carnegie’s dream into a reality.
8. **Children’s Department** – The Children’s Department is the crucial heart of any public library, for here is where the Library’s future readers are nourished. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh was the first public library to offer a dedicated Children’s Department and developed a training school specifically for children’s librarians. A public sink was installed so the children could wash their hands before handling the books.
9. **Crazy Mocha Café** – This locally-owned coffee shop serves coffee, tea, lattes, sandwiches and pastries. The adjoining Library Shop sells gently-used books, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh items and merchandise featuring historic Pittsburgh photographs from the Library’s collections.
10. **Main Room** – The Main Room of the Library’s First Floor New & Featured Department underwent a major re-design making it welcoming, bright and cheery. Technology permits streaming electronic banners and changing digital displays that promote events and information about the Library. The First Floor is dedicated to “New and Featured” materials: popular titles in both fiction and nonfiction. You will also find the Library’s collection of cookbooks, short stories, GLBT, travel resources, foreign language, graphic novels and African American literature in this department. There are several comfortable chairs available for your reading and relaxing pleasure. The Quiet Reading Room is also a great place to escape into a book.
11. **Teen Department** – This award-winning space on the First Floor acknowledges that teens need a space of their own. They benefit from the guidance of professional librarians, who understand teens’ specific needs. Materials available include: books, graphic novels, magazines, teen series, video games and CDs. Teens have painted the shelf ends in the adjacent stack area.
12. **Stacks** – Enter the stacks through the door at the back of the main room or through the back of the Teen Department. The 11 story stacks date back to the Library’s 1907 renovation. Their most notable feature is the floors made of thick, opaque glass that permits natural and artificial light to pass between floors. More than 1.5 million print books, journals and maps are housed in the stacks.

*(First Floor continued)*

- 13. Deck** – This attractive, bamboo-surrounded, ipe wood deck is the site of music events, poetry readings, quiet reading and conversation.
- 14. Magazine Room** – This space holds approximately 300 of the Library’s newest and most popular magazines including foreign language publications.
- 15. Large Print Room** – This room holds large-print copies of fiction and nonfiction books. The hallway next to the Large Print Room features the “Gallery @ Main”, a constantly changing exhibit featuring works by local photographers and artists.
- 16. Director’s Office** – Through these doors is the office of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh’s President and Director. The display cases highlight staff milestones, Library events, activities and programs.

## The Second Floor

*As you walk up the marble stairs, take a moment to look down and notice that the stairs are worn smooth and are slightly indented by the soles of millions of library customers since 1907. These stairs are a testament to the long history and importance Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh plays in the lives of generations of Pittsburghers. Imagine famous Pittsburgh natives, such as August Wilson and Andy Warhol, who have walked these stairs.*

- 17. Second Floor Corridor** – Thirty murals decorate the arches and walls of the second floor. The murals were installed in 1907 under the direction of decorator Elmer Ellsworth Garnsey (1862-1946) who was also involved in the decoration of the Boston Public Library and the Library of Congress. The twelve lunettes, half-moon shaped murals, each depict a medallion showing a historic figure from the Renaissance period. Circular panels at each end of the corridor above the doorways feature cherubs bearing an inscription in Latin. Above the door to the Music/Film & Audio Departments is the inscription “Omne Labore”, translated as “Everything through work”. At the opposite end of the corridor the inscription reads “Vivere est Cagitare” which means “To live is to think” or “Life is thought” from the Roman orator and politician Cicero.
- 18. Reference Services** – Home to Main’s reference and nonfiction subject collections, this large reading room features green lamps on the large tables, replicas of the original lamps that graced this department. On the walls of the Reference Services Department are six large murals depicting early European printers’ marks. Printers’ marks function as trademarks do today — to guarantee that a book was the product of a certain craftsman or print house by identifying his work with a symbol. The murals on the left include the marks of Regnault Chaudiere, Balthasar Moretus and Thielman Kerver. The marks on the right are from the Etienne family, Jean de La Caille and Simon Vostre. Look up at the coffered ceiling and note that these were skylights painted over during the World Wars.
- 19. Second Floor Stacks** – In the very back of Reference Services is a door to the Second Floor Stacks. Make your way to the back windows to catch a glimpse of Carnegie Museum of Natural History’s new “Dinosaurs in Their Time” exhibit.
- 20. Music Department/ Film & Audio Department** – Located in the north wing of the second floor, this department served as the original art galleries for the Carnegie Institute. Note how the walls offer space to hang multiple paintings from floor to ceiling. Two departments now provide the Library’s vast music and audiovisual collections. The Music Department houses more than 85,000 books and scores; 28,000 recordings; 400 periodical, newsletter and serial titles; and 1,700 videos and DVDs. The Music Department adjoins Film & Audio, which maintains circulating CDs, DVDs, downloadable audio books, downloadable videos, electronic books and streaming music and spoken word.

*(Second Floor continued)*

- 21. International Poetry Room** – The International Poetry Room houses works of poets from Whitman to Collins and everything in between. The collection is funded by an A.W. Mellon endowment featuring world poetry. The room also serves as a quiet reading room and the location for larger public gatherings at CLP - Main.
- 22. Oversized Books and Scholarly Journals** – Oversized circulating books and current reference issues of scholarly and popular subject journals are available in this south wing room.
- 23. Job and Career Education Center** – The JCEC assists customers with books and resources on resume writing, career choices and educational testing. JCEC staff has assisted job hunters since 1978.

## The Third Floor

- 24. Pennsylvania Department** – The Pennsylvania Department houses materials related to Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania. This collection is an indispensable source of material for scholarly and popular research into local history. It is also home to the Western PA Genealogical Society and its collections.

An outstanding feature of the Department is the Pittsburgh Photographic Library (PPL), a historic collection of Pittsburgh photographs, dating from the 1860s through the city's Renaissance in the 1950s. The Department also maintains extensive clipping files of nearly 2 million pages on neighborhoods, crime and criminals, notable Pittsburghers, ethnic groups, sports, economics and politics and government for Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania.

- 25. Microfilm Unit** – The Microfilm Unit has thousands of microfiche and reels of microfilm. Magazines and newspapers, technical and government reports and even books are preserved on microfilm. The Library also maintains an extensive collection of Pittsburgh newspapers on microfilm from 1786 through the present. Heavily used by students, researchers and genealogists, this resource is frequently in demand by individuals looking to commemorate birthdays and anniversaries of friends and family. Many of the Library's paper-based materials — such as Pittsburgh city directories from 1813 through 1975, and Pittsburgh area phonebooks from 1880 through the present — have been transferred to microfilm in order to assure continued availability.
- 26. PC Center** – The PC Center is used for public instruction of various software programs. When not used for instruction, the Center often offers open work time for customers to use the computers.
- 27. William R. Oliver Special Collections Room** – Accessible by appointment, the William R. Oliver Special Collections Room contains rare books, manuscripts, personal papers, historic photographs and archives. Named after lifetime trustee William R. Oliver for his dedication to and support of the Library, this special environmentally controlled room was dedicated in 1991 to preserve fragile materials and maintain an institutional archive. The Oliver Room houses notable collections of Western Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh history, travel, exploration and Americana. Highlights of the collection include the following: Edward Curtis' North American Indian and Eskimo Photographs; John James Audubon's Birds of America (Bien edition); first editions in all disciplines; the Margaret Barclay Wilson Collection of Carnegiana; the Carnegie Scrapbooks; the Carnegie Music Hall Scrapbook; plat maps and atlases; Pittsburgh Board of Education records; and Andrew Carnegie's personal correspondence regarding the Library and Institute.

*Thank you for visiting Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh! We hope to see you again.*