NPS Form 10-900
Oct. 1990

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library
Other name/site number 185-5210-0004

2. Location

Street & number 108 N. Union Street ☐ not for publication
City or town Stafford ☐ vicinity
State Kansas Code KS County Stafford Code 185 Zip code 67578

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patrick Zollner DSHPO 5/31/06

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of commenting official /Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I herby certify that the property is — Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other, (explain:)

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
- ☒ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Education: Library

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education: Library

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Concrete basement
Walls: Brick

Roof: Wood shingles, plywood, felt & tar

Other:

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library
Name of Property

Stafford Co., Kansas
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from it original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education
Agriculture; Industry
Architecture

Period of Significance

1905-1955

Significant Dates

1905-06; 1936 & 1942; 1955

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Joseph D. & Angeline O. Larabee

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect attributed to Charles E. Shepard
Lew Dellinger, Brick Layer

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:
- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☒ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library

Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library
Name of Property

Stafford Co., Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3,953.7 square feet

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1
Zone: 14 | Easting: 422490 | Northing: 4201500

2
Zone | Easting | Northing

3
Zone | Easting | Northing

4
Zone | Easting | Northing

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Dr. Pamela D. Kingsbury

Organization: Historic Preservation Consulting | Date: 06/10/05

Street & number: 224 North Crestway | Telephone: 316-686-1731

City or town: Wichita | State: Kansas | Zip code: 67208-3840

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Name: Dixie K. Osborn, Librarian, Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library

Street & number: 108 Union Street | Telephone: 620-234-5752

City or town: Stafford | State: Kansas | Zip code: 67578

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16) U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

DESCRIPTION

The **Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library**, located at 108 North Union Street in Stafford, Kansas, is a one-story brick building measuring 30 x 40 feet, with a partially finished, full basement (Plate 1).[1] The red brick, tinged with purple exterior of the library, is laid in running bond with flush mortar joints. According to the *Stafford Courier* the brick is "Pittsburgh vitrified paving brick."[2] The front elevation of the library faces west onto Union Street, the first brick street in Stafford, connecting the Santa Fe Depot at its northern terminus to the Missouri Pacific depot at its southern terminus and one block west of Main Street, the town's major commercial thoroughfare.[3] Construction of the library, which was built to be fireproof, began with excavation work in December 1905. The brickwork for the library was laid by Stafford resident Lew Dellinger (b. 1858), and the library was completed at the end of 1906 for an estimated cost of $5,000.00.[4]

The three-bay west, front elevation sits upon a limestone watercourse surmounted by a series of four projecting brick courses alternating with four single recessed brick courses repeated on all four elevations. Above is a limestone string course wrapping around the library and serving as the sill for the library's fenestration. The first floor corners have brick quoins that terminate at the entablature of the Corinthian cornice. Stairs, flanked by brick pedestals sitting on a limestone base and capped with limestone slabs, lead to the library's entrance (Plate 2). The entrance door, which is original to the building, opens to a shallow vestibule leading to an inner entrance door. Both

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[1] *Stafford Courier*, 10 May 1906.
[2] Ibid.
[3] The Larabee Memorial Library is located on the north 60 feet of Lots One, Two and Three of TyrrellÕs Sub-Division of Block Number Two of the original site of the City of Stafford, ÒWarranty Deed,Ó fol. 423.
[4] *Stafford County Republican*, 7 December 1905.

are glass doors flanked by beveled leaded-glass lancet windows decorated with stylized flowers on long stems. The transom window above the outer entrance has a stained-glass window with the word "Memorial" at its center as well as beveled leaded-glass panes above the lancet windows decorated with stylized flowers. By contrast, the transom window above the inner door has beveled lead glass decorated with stylized flowers (Plate 3).

Between the entrance and the elevation's only window is a brick surface with a concrete tablet bearing the inscription: "Erected in Memory of Nora E. Larabee by Her Father and Mother." The building history of the Larabee Memorial Library is a history of migrating windows. The original six-part window on the front elevation consisted of a one-over-one sash window in the center flanked by beveled, leaded-glass lancet windows decorated with abstract flowers on long stems. Above the lancet windows were small panes of beveled, leaded-glass decorated with abstract flowers. The stained-glass transom window above the central window bore the word "Library," and complemented the word "Memorial" in the transom window above the entrance door. Today, the window occupying the space is the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Window with Nora's portrait at its center, donated by Nora's brothers Frank Sheridan Larabee (1864-1921) and Frederick Delos Larabee (1868-1920) in their sister's memory (Plate 4).[5]

Originally, the Larabee Memorial Window was situated in the northeast corner of the east, rear elevation of the library, where it could be seen through the outer and inner glass entrance doors. We do not know when or why the window was removed from the rear elevation to its present location on the library's front elevation. A 1913 postcard view shows the Larabee Memorial

[5] Nora's portrait in the stained glass window was taken from an oil portrait, based on a photograph, donated to the library by the family. The practice of making oil copies of portrait photographs was a common practice in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Window still in its original location on the rear elevation. At some point before 1963, when the Richardson wing was added to the rear elevation, the Larabee Memorial Window was moved to its present location on the library's front elevation, displacing the original window consisting of beveled, leaded-glass lancet windows and a transom window bearing the inscription "Library." This window was placed on the library's south elevation, displacing the window on that elevation. This displaced window was installed in the opening left vacant by the Larabee Memorial Window located in the northeast corner of the library's rear elevation

Capping the entrance as well as the Larabee Memorial Window is a tin Corinthian cornice painted white and supported by four tin Corinthian consoles, also painted white. The aluminum awning over the entrance is not original to the elevation and obscures a view of the entrance's stained glass. Terminating the front elevation is a finely detailed tin Corinthian cornice painted white that wraps around the building. A tin gargoyle rain spout is located at the northwest corner of the Corinthian cornice over the entrance and another gargoyle is located at the northwest corner of the cornice on the library's north elevation. A pyramidal roof completes the building (Plate 1).

With minor exceptions the north and south side elevations were identical. The library's original south elevation was demolished in 1974-1975, when a new wing was added. Unlike the south elevation, the north elevation is defined by three basement windows that intrude on the water table and a steel coal chute door sitting on top of the water table. With the exception of the Larabee Memorial Window, the side elevations have the same fenestration as the library's other windows and, like them, are terminated by a plain a Corinthian entablature supported by a pair of consoles. Completing both side

elevations is the finely detailed, tin Corinthian cornice painted white (Plates 1 & 5).

The original east, rear elevation of the library was replaced in 1963 by the Richardson Wing, a 29 x 36 foot addition, given by Mrs. William E. Richardson in memory of her husband.[6] Stafford contractor Marvin Dierking (b. 1923) began work in June and the addition was dedicated on September 21, 1963.[7] The Richardson Wing increased the library's floor space by half, providing room for shelving, reading and a study area.

The east elevation's original fenestration was removed and inserted in the Richardson Wing,[8] and the bricks for the new wing were made to order so they would match the library's elevations.[9] In other significant respects the new wing differed from original east elevation, The Richardson Wing is without a basement and sits upon a concrete slab. Gone is the limestone string course that acted as the lintel for the elevation's original windows as well as the Corinthian cornice, and the pyramidal roof that was replaced by a flat roof (Plate 6). The north and south side elevation's of the Richardson Wing are now solid brick walls, with quoins at the corners and limestone band below the roof line (Plate 5). The one-room interior of the Richardson Wing is one step lower than the rest of the library and has plaster walls to match the original library walls.[10]

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[6] *Stafford Courier*, 10 January 1963, p. 1.
[7] Ibid., 19 September 1963, p.1.
[8] Ibid. 10 January 1963, p. 1.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., 19 September 1963, p. 1.

The last alteration to the library's exterior was in 1974-1975 (Plate 1) At that time a 20 x 40 foot wing was added to the south, side elevation of the library to store children's books.[11] Originally the children's books were stored in the basement until water seeping into the basement caused their removal to the Richardson Wing where they were placed on temporary shelving. The architect of the new south wing was Winston A. Schmidt (1918-1977) of Mann and Company, Hutchinson, Kansas[12] and the contractor was Bernard Bartlett (1929-2003) of Stafford. The cost of the south wing was $22,500.00, all of which was raised by public donations.[13] The new wing was opened to the public with a library open house on Sunday, June 9, 1976.[14]

The new south wing is without a basement and sits on a concrete slab. The addition is not quite as tall as the library's elevations and is slightly recessed from the library's west, front elevation. The addition has an abbreviated Corinthian cornice that wraps around all three elevations and has a flat roof. The only opening on the new south elevation is a door reached by a brick ramp providing access to the library for the disabled. When the new addition was added to the south elevation, the large window with stained glass lancets and transom bearing the inscription "Library" was removed and installed on the west, front elevation of the 1974-1975 addition (Plate 7). Although it was not returned to its original site now occupied by the Larabee Memorial Window, the two inscriptions are once again united on the Library's front elevation for all to see. The east, rear elevation of the 1974-1975 addition is a solid brick wall and on the north it abuts the south wall of the Richardson Wing (Plate 6).

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[11] *Stafford Courier*, 27 August 1975, p. 1.
[12] Conversation with the Hutchinson Librarian, 10 June 2004.
[13] Ibid., 20 March 1975, p. 1.
[14] Ibid., 9 June 1976, p. 1.

The interior of the library consisted of a furnished reading room and a stack room both retaining their twenty-foot high pressed tin ceilings originally painted white, but now rendered in ivory (Plate 8). The library had an unfinished basement with a dirt floor and a furnace located in the north part of the basement. A door in the vestibule leads to the basement. An article in the May, 1906 *Stafford Courier* stated that the two-room library "will contain a commodious and elegantly furnished reading room and stack room"[15] The quarter-sawn oak bookcases with lidded glass fronts lining the walls of both rooms were made by the Globe-Wernicke Company. There were quarter-sawn oak Arts and Crafts tables and chairs and a Stickley rocking chair. Much of the original furniture has been dispersed. The Stickley rocking chair, much of the Arts and Crafts furniture and the Globe-Wernicke oak bookcases were donated to the Stafford Museum, now housed in what was the Larabee family's Farmers National Bank. One set of Arts and Crafts table and chairs is still in the library, but has been given a limed oak finish (Plate 9).[16]

Through the years, the tradition of a memorial library encouraged other memorial gifts, greatly enhancing the library. In 1936, the first of many improvements occurred. The library board undertook the finishing of the southern half of the basement, left in an unfinished state at the library's completion in 1906. The job of finishing the southern half of the basement was undertaken by Charlie Thompson of Stafford. A concrete floor was laid, a composition board ceiling installed, and two windows were cut into the south wall and one in the east wall. The new south basement room was used for magazine storage and other library materials.[17] In the spring of 1942 the northern half of the basement was finished. The labor was donated by the

[15] *Stafford Courier*, 10 May 1906.
[16] Conversation with Dixie K. Osborn, Librarian of the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library, 1 August 2004.
[17] *Stafford Courier*, 27 February 1936.

employees of the Stanolind Oil & Gas Company, and the cost of materials was donated by Stafford's citizens.[18]

In 1945 during the waning months of the Second World War, the library was the recipient of the Nancy Charlotte Donnelly Memorial Fireplace located in the Children's Room in the southern half of the basement. In 1944, three-year-old Nancy C. Donnelly, the daughter of Lt. and Mrs. Richard Donnelly stationed at Fort Knox, Kentucky, died of polio.[19] In her memory, Richard Donnelly's fellow officers of 211th Ordnance Battalion, Fort Knox, Kentucky, donated the funds for a tile fireplace, illustrating popular nursery rhymes, to be placed in the Children's Room (Plate 10). The fireplace's tile surround was probably made by the Mosaic Tile Company (1894-1972) of Zanesville, Ohio.[20]

A small, but much needed addition, was a balcony erected in the east part of the north half of the library behind the check-out desk. The balcony, which provided shelving for books, was donated in 1955 by Charles Wright (1901-1968) and Lila A. Larabee (1906-1988) in memory of Charles's parents Frederick D. (1868-1920) and May Wadsworth Larabee (1869-1946).[21]

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[18] Ibid., 26 March 1942, p. 1.
[19] Ibid., 26 October 1944, p. 4.
[20] I am grateful to my friend and colleague, Vance A. Koehler, Curator of the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works, Doylestown, Pennsylvania for his attribution of the tiles in the Donnelly Memorial Fireplace, Letter of 30 July 2004.
[21] *Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library Balcony Dedication*, 6 April 1955.

Summary

The **Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library** is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion B** because of the significant cultural and economic contributions that Joseph D. and Angeline O. Larabee and their family made to the process and welfare of Stafford, Kansas. The Larabee Memorial Library also is being nominated under **Criterion C** because the library's design can be attributed to Charles E. Shepard, one of the leading architects practicing in Kansas and Missouri during the first third of the twentieth century. With the exception of the Carnegie Libraries that were architect designed and were erected from the beginning of the twentieth century, most Kansas library were not designed by architects. Rather they were located in churches, schools, women's clubs and in Main Street store fronts.

Stafford, Kansas

Stafford is located in Stafford County in west central Kansas in the fifth tier of counties lying south of the Nebraska border and in the sixth tier of counties lying east of the Colorado border (Plate 11).[1] Although Stafford is the largest town in the county, it is not the county seat. That honor goes to St. John, located a few miles to the northwest. Like so many Kansas counties, the town and county as well were named for a Union soldier in this instance Captain Lewis Stafford (ca. 1833-1863). Captain Stafford was a Vermont native who settled in Grasshopper Falls, now Valley Falls, Kansas, and was killed in 1863 at the battle of Young's Point, Louisiana.[2]

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[1] This nomination would not be possible without the gracious assistance of Dixie Osborn, Librarian, of the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library, who shared her wealth of knowledge about Stafford and Stafford County

[2] Initially the town was called Sod Town. *Stafford County Kansas 1870-1990.* (Stafford, Kansas, 1990), p.6.

With the mandatory three-hundred residents, Stafford was incorporated as a third class town on September 10, 1885. Agriculture has always been the town's main source of revenue. The sandy soil is for ideal growing conditions for such crops as corn, broom corn, cotton, flax, millet, sorghum and winter wheat. Stafford was a major grain depot for the county with two grain elevators, one at the north and the other at the south end of town. In 1887 two railroads came to Stafford: the Chicago, Kansas and Western, which ten years later became the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, and the Denver, Memphis and Atlantic, which became the Missouri Pacific. Their depots were located at either end of Union Street, the Santa Fe at the north end and the Missouri Pacific depot at the southern end of the street.

From 1930 through the 1950s the oil industry was a major economic factor in Stafford's economy. On April 10, 1930, oil was discovered in the Richardson Field, followed rapidly by another well in the Zenith Field. During the heyday of the county's oil production, there were as many as eighteen oil companies pumping crude oil out of the ground. Although oil is still being pumped from Richardson #1, today there is little active drilling in Stafford County.

Agriculture remains the primary source of income, but it too is no longer the economic giant it once was. Stafford has lost one of its two grain elevators and one of its railroad lines along with both depots. The Missouri Pacific depot was demolished in 1984 and its brick was used for planters lining Main Street. The handsome Santa Fe depot still stands, but is windows and doors are boarded shut. Today, the city's major employers are schools, rest homes, a hospital and an alfalfa processing plant. The county's population has steadily dwindled from a high of 9,824 in 1900 to an estimated 4,589 citizens in 2003.

Larabee Family

The Larabee family is responsible for bringing Stafford into the modern world. Joseph D. Larabee with his wife, two sons and daughter settled in Stafford, Kansas in 1886. Wasting no time, Larabee established his own bank, the Farmers Bank by May, 1886, with correspondent banks in Kansas City and New York. At 100 South Main at the intersection of Main and Broadway, he erected an elegant two-story brick building with a full basement and limestone trim. He installed himself as the bank's President, with his oldest son Frank as the Vice President and his youngest son Fred as the Cashier.[3] In 1897 Larabee purchased the major interest in the old Farmers Bank, known as the Stafford Bank, and ten years later in 1907, he obtained a charter as a national bank and changed the name of his bank to the Farmers National Bank.[4] In 1904, the Larabees joined with J. C. Charles to found a bank in Hudson, a small Stafford County farm community that still mills and sells its flour throughout the state.[5]

Joseph D. Larabee and his two sons Frank S. and Frederick D. built a financial empire in Kansas and the surrounding states. With the Farmers National Bank as their base of operations, they branched out into the milling business. In 1897, Frank and Fred acquired the defunct Stafford Milling Company and with it forged a mini-empire under the umbrella of the Larabee Flour Mills Corporation, with mills in Hutchinson, Wellington, Marysville, Kansas, Clinton and St. Joseph, Missouri and in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. In addition to their milling business, the brothers owned many grain elevators in Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Missouri.[6] Four years before his death in

[3] *Stafford County Democrat*, 20 May 1886, p.1.
[4] *Stafford Courier*, 25 October 1978. Today, the Farmers National Bank is Stafford's only banking institution, but the Larabee family no longer owns it.
[5] The Stafford County Flour Mills Company, the last independent flour mill in Kansas, celebrated its one-hundredth anniversary in December, 2004. *Wichita Eagle*, 3 December 2004, p. 4B.
[6] *Stafford Courier* , 16 June 1921, p. 1.

1909, Joseph was one of the wealthiest owners of farm land in the state, owning fifty quarter sections of land estimated to be worth $278,000.[7]

Joseph and his two sons were also responsible for introducing modern conveniences to Stafford, creating the city's first electrical system and building the first outside telephone system. Stafford's first manually operated telephone exchange started in about 1896 in the home of Mrs. Worral. Around 1899 the Larabee brothers had the first outside plant constructed. This manual system was replaced in 1900 by an automatic system owned by the Larabees. In about 1906, they installed their phone company in a building addition at the rear of their bank. In 1908, they sold their telephone company to the Arkansas Valley Telephone Company.[8]

The Larabee brothers established Stafford's first electricity company. In 1899 they installed a generator in their flour mill and ran electric lines to their homes as well as their father's for lighting. By 1904 they erected a plant to provide electricity for Stafford. They operated the plant until 1911, when they sold it to the city of Stafford.[9]

Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library

The most enduring legacy the Larabee family gave to the citizens of Stafford is the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library. At the death of their only daughter Nora of tuberculosis in 1904, her father and mother offered to build and furnish a public library in her memory. As a condition of the gift, the family asked the Stafford City Council to approve a two-and-a-half mill levy to

[7] *Stafford County Republican*, 14 January 1909, p. 1.
[8] *Stafford, Kansas 1885-1985 Crossroads of Time*, (no publisher & no date), p. 8.
[9] *Stafford Courier*, 16 June 1921, p. 1.

maintain the library building and provide for a staff.[10] No vote was taken on the requested mill levy until the library was completed in the spring of 1906.

And there the library sat, unoccupied and engulfed in controversy. At the May 14, 1907, meeting of the Stafford City Council, the mayor and council members refused to accept the Larabee's library, incensed by a clause inserted into the deed of gift. Angered by attacks on them by Nate E. Reese, the editor of the *Stafford Courier*, the Larabee family stipulated that "Owing to certain unwarranted attacks made by the *Stafford Courier*... it is made a condition of the deed that the present editor of said newspaper, or any of his family shall at no time be a member of the said board of directors."[11] In addition to being the editor of the town's leading newspaper, Reese also was a city council member, and was able to convince the mayor and his fellow council members to refuse the gift of the Larabee's library. The citizens of Stafford were furious. A petition was signed requesting the council accept the library or resign. The council members and mayor resigned.[12] At the September 12, 1907 meeting, an acting mayor and new council members accepted the Larabee Memorial Library on behalf of the citizens of Stafford as the town's free, public library.[13]

Mrs. E. L. Peacock was selected as the first librarian of the Larabee Memorial Library at a weekly salary of three dollars.[14] Not only did the Larabee family pay for the construction of the library, they generously purchased the

[10] *Stafford County Republican*, 29 July 1904.
[11] *Stafford Courier*, 5 September 1935, p. 8.
[12] Ibid.
[13] *Stafford County Republican*, 12 September 1907, p. 1.
[14] Ibid., 14 May 1908, p. 1. The Larabee Memorial Library has had seven librarians all of whom have been women.

library's furniture and bookcases, and they donated six hundred dollars for the acquisition of books. In memory of Nora E. Larabee, the Chrysanthemum (sic) Club, of which Nora had been a member, donated four hundred dollars for the acquisition of books.[15] With these two donations the library was able to purchase fifteen hundred volumes to place on the shelves when the library opened to the public on May 26,1908.

Through the years the Larabee family continued to support the library. During the First World War Frank S. and Frederick D. Larabee gave two thousand dollars to the library for the purchase of books in memory of their parents Joseph D. and Angeline O. Larabee[16] In 1955 Charles W. and his wife Lila A. Larabee gave funds to construct a balcony to provide more shelf room for books in memory of Charles's parents Frederick D. and May W. Larabee.[17]

Attribution of the Larabee Memorial Library to Architect Charles E. Shepard

There are no extant drawings, blueprints or any other documentation citing an architect of the Larabee Memorial Library. The well-designed character of the original library building and the self-assured handling of the Corinthian entablature dominating the library suggests it was designed by an architect. When the Larabee's Farmers Bank was destroyed by a fire in the winter of 1905, Joseph hired the Kansas City, Missouri, architect Charles E. Shepard (1868-1932) of Shepard & Farrar to design the new bank building.[18] Shepard designed an imposing Neo-Classical, two-story brick building defined

[15] Ibid., 12 March 1908, p. 1.
[16] *The Story of the Akers Family Biography and Autobiography [1764-1924].* (George W. Akers, n. d.), n. p.
[17] Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library Balcony Dedication, 6 April 1955.
[18] One of two extant sheets of copies of blueprints of the 1905 Farmers Bank building bear the name of Shepard & Farrar. The copies of the blue prints are in the possession of the Farmers National Bank of Stafford.

by a distyle-in-antis Ionic entrance portico supporting a full Ionic entablature that wraps around the building (Plate 12). The marked similarity in the use of classical orders on both the bank and library would seem to indicate that Shepard was the architect of both buildings (Plates 2 & 12).

Kansas City, Missouri was a major financial and agricultural center for the south central Midwest. Joseph Larabee made frequent business trips to the city as did his two sons, who eventually settled there to be near their largest mill in St. Joseph, Missouri and other mills in the upper Midwest. Joseph Larabee undoubtedly met Shepard, who was an established architect in Kansas City by the beginning of century. Shepard, born in Iowa and educated at the University of Iowa, came to Kansas City in 1887 during the city's building boom of the 1880s. He became a prominent architect with a succession of partners, while remaining the principal designer. His firms were very versatile, designing in a variety of building types and various revival styles.[19] Shepard also worked in Kansas. One of his best known buildings is the Eldridge Hotel (ca. 1925-1928) located on Massachusetts Avenue in the heart of downtown of Lawrence, Kansas.[20]

In all likelihood, Larabee hired Shepard to design the library at some point after his daughter's death on June 8, 1904, although its foundation was not laid until December of the following year. What intervened between June 1904 and December 1905 was the devastating fire of February 1, 1905, that started in the basement of the Larabee's Farmers Bank, ultimately destroying all the commercial buildings on the east side of South Main Street as well as

[19] *Historic Kansas City News*, December 1980-January 1981, pp. 4-5.
[20] Martha Gray Hagedorn, National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, 10 September 1986.

other buildings in the vicinity.[21] The Larabee family vowed to erect a new bank building on the same site as soon as possible. At this point, Larabee halted work planned for the library and hired Charles E. Shepard to design his new bank building. Shepard hired Lew Dellinger, who was the brick layer for the library, as the contractor of the bank building. The new two-story brick bank building opened November 11, 1905, to great public approval. This sequence of events would explain why the foundation of the Larabee Memorial Library was not begun until December 1905, when Shepard and Lew Dellinger were free to begin the library's construction after completing the Farmers Bank building.

Kansas Libraries

In the state of Kansas the tradition of the public library began with the establishment of the Kansas Territory in 1854. The federal act authorizing the Kansas Territory also included a provision for a territorial library. At the initial meeting of the Legislature in 1855 an act was passed for the "regulating and managing of the Territorial library" by the auditor of the territory. The Territorial library formed the core of our present state library.[22]

After Kansas became a territory there were a proliferation of libraries. The first circulating library in the state was begun in 1859 in Coal Creek by two seventeen-year-old young women, who with their parents had recently arrived from New England. In 1859 the state's first subscription library was opened in Vinland in Douglas County. Libraries were opened in Seneca in 1863, Lawrence in 1865 and Blue Rapids in 1871. Almost all of the early libraries in Kansas were founded and maintained by women, working alone or

[21] *Stafford Courier*, 2 February 1905, p. 1 & 8.
[22] Allen Gardiner, *Kansas Libraries from Abilene to Zenda: A Concise History*. (Topeka, Kansas: State Library of Kansas, 1982), p. 1.

in clubs and organizations. The Topeka Public Library was begun in 1870 by the Ladies Library Association, and the Blue Rapids Library was begun in 1871 by a group of women.[23] Ultimately, most of the libraries established by women became municipal tax-supported institutions.

The Carnegie Library named for its patron, the industrialist Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), was another major source for the funding of library buildings in the state. These library buildings were erected during the City Beautiful Movement in the first part of the twentieth century. Andrew Carnegie personally, not the Carnegie Foundation, provided the funding to erect library buildings. To qualify a town or city was required to pledge an annual budget to maintain the library based on ten percent of the library's construction costs. In Kansas Carnegie erected fifty-nine libraries in fifty-eight communities located in forty-six Kansas counties.[24]

The first Carnegie library in the state was the Neo-Classical Leavenworth library erected in 1900-1902, designed by M. R. Sanquist, and now on the National Register of Historic Places. Others followed in quick succession in small towns and cities throughout the state. The Burlington Public Library that originated in the rear of a bookstore in 1875 received a Carnegie grant in 1911 for a library building. The Lincoln library was established in 1880 and received a Carnegie grant in 1913. The City of Wichita erected its Carnegie Library in 1915 to a design by Anthony A. Crowell, who designed other Carnegie libraries in Kansas and Oklahoma.

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[23] *Ibid.* , pp. 1-3.
[24] George S. Babirski, *Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on the American Public Library.* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969), p. 17.

Yet another funding source of Kansas libraries is the memorial library in which the library building is given as a memorial to an individual by the family. The Rae Hobson Library in Republic County, given by Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Hobson in 1921 in memory of their son who was killed in action in World War One, is an example of a memorial library. There are only a handful of memorial libraries in the state. Most of the seventeen memorial libraries listed in the 2004 State Library web site are not memorial libraries in the traditional sense of the word.[25] The majority of the libraries on the State Library web site are named either for a donor who left an endowment to the library, or libraries that were created by a public election and honor a long standing supporter of the library.

Stafford County is unique in the state of Kansas in that it has two memorial libraries, the Ida Long Goodman Memorial Library in St. John, the county seat, and the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library in Stafford. Of all the libraries in the state of Kansas none has been as well supported by a family as the Larabee Memorial Library. For half a century and through three generations the Larabee family funded and supported the Larabee Memorial Library. The Larabee's generosity undoubtedly provided the incentive for other donors to support the library. Many Stafford residents gave books and volunteered their time. The library has been significantly enhanced by such gifts as the Donnelly Memorial tile fireplace, the Richardson Wing, given by longtime Stafford residents, and the addition of the south wing, funded by Stafford residents.

An important aspect about the Larabee Memorial Library is that it was probably designed by an architect. Commissioning a major architect such as Charles E. Shepard from a large metropolis like Kansas City, Missouri to

[25] "Directory of Public Libraries in Kansas," Kansas State Library Web Site, July 23, 2004.

design not one but two of Stafford's major buildings was not typical of a small agricultural town on the Kansas prairie during the early years of the twentieth century. The Larabee Memorial Library and the Larabee Farmers National Bank may well be the first two buildings in Stafford to be designed by an architect. During the early twentieth century in Kansas architectural practice was still in its formative stages, most buildings in small Kansas towns were erected by builders and contractors. In the countryside, where some still lived in sod houses, farmers with the help of their neighbors erected houses and farm buildings.

The Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library functions as the Larabee family intended, with local tax support, community participation and now augmented by a modicum of state funding. The library stands as a symbol of Stafford's leading family, its generosity and belief in the efficacy of learning and an educated citizens as the mainstay of a democracy.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library occupies the north 60 feet of Lots One, Two and Three of Tyrrell's Sub-Division of Block Number Two of the original site of the City of Stafford, Stafford County, Kansas.

Boundary Justification

The boundary contains all property historically associated with the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library in Stafford, Kansas.

Photographs

Plate 1.
Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: ca. 1913
Location of the Original Negative: Unknown
View and Direction: West Front and South Side Elevations of the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library

Plate 2.
Photographer: Pamela D. Kingsbury
Date of Photograph: August 30, 2004
Location of the Original Negative: Pamela D. Kingsbury
View and Direction: West Front and North Side Elevations of the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library

Plate 3.
Photographer: Pamela D. Kingsbury
Date of Photograph: August 30, 2004
Location of the Original Negative: Pamela D. Kingsbury
View and Direction: Interior View Looking Out of the Entrance Doors of the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library

Plate 4.
Photographer: Pamela D. Kingsbury
Date of Photograph: August 30, 2004
Location of the Original Negative: Pamela D. Kingsbury
View and Direction: Interior View of the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Stained Glass Window in the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library

Plate 5.
Photographer: Pamela D. Kingsbury
Date of Photograph: August 30, 2004
Location of the Original Negative: Pamela D. Kingsbury
View and Direction: North Side Elevation of the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library

Photographs

Plate 6.
Photographer: Pamela D. Kingsbury
Date of Photograph: August 30, 2004
Location of Original Negative: Pamela D. Kingsbury
View and Direction: East Rear Elevation of the Richardson Wing and the 1974-1975 Addition

Plate 7.
Photographer: Pamela D. Kingsbury
Date of Photograph: August 20, 2004
Location of the Original Negative: Pamela D. Kingsbury
View and Direction: The West Front and South Side Elevations of the 1974-1975 Wing of the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library

Plate 8.
Photographer: Pamela D. Kingsbury
Date of Photograph: August 30, 2004
Location of Original Negative: Pamela D. Kingsbury
View and Direction: Tin, Coved Celling in the Interior of the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library

Plate 9.
Photographer: Pamela D. Kingsbury
Date of Photograph: August 30, 2004
Location of the Original Negative: Pamela D. Kingsbury
View and Direction: Looking Northeast into the Reading Room in the Richardson Wing with Some of the Library's Original Furniture in the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library

Plate 10.
Photographer: Pamela D. Kingsbury
Date of Photograph: August 30, 2004
Location of the Original Negative: Pamela D. Kingsbury
View and Direction: The Nancy Charlotte Nancy Donnelly Memorial Fireplace in the Basement of the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library

Photographs

Plate 11.
Photographer: None
Date of Photograph: Not Applicable
Location of the Original Negative: Not Applicable
View and Direction: Map of Stafford, Kansas

Plate 12.
Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: Unknown
Location of the Original Negative: Unknown
View and Direction: West Front and North Side Elevations of the Farmers National Bank

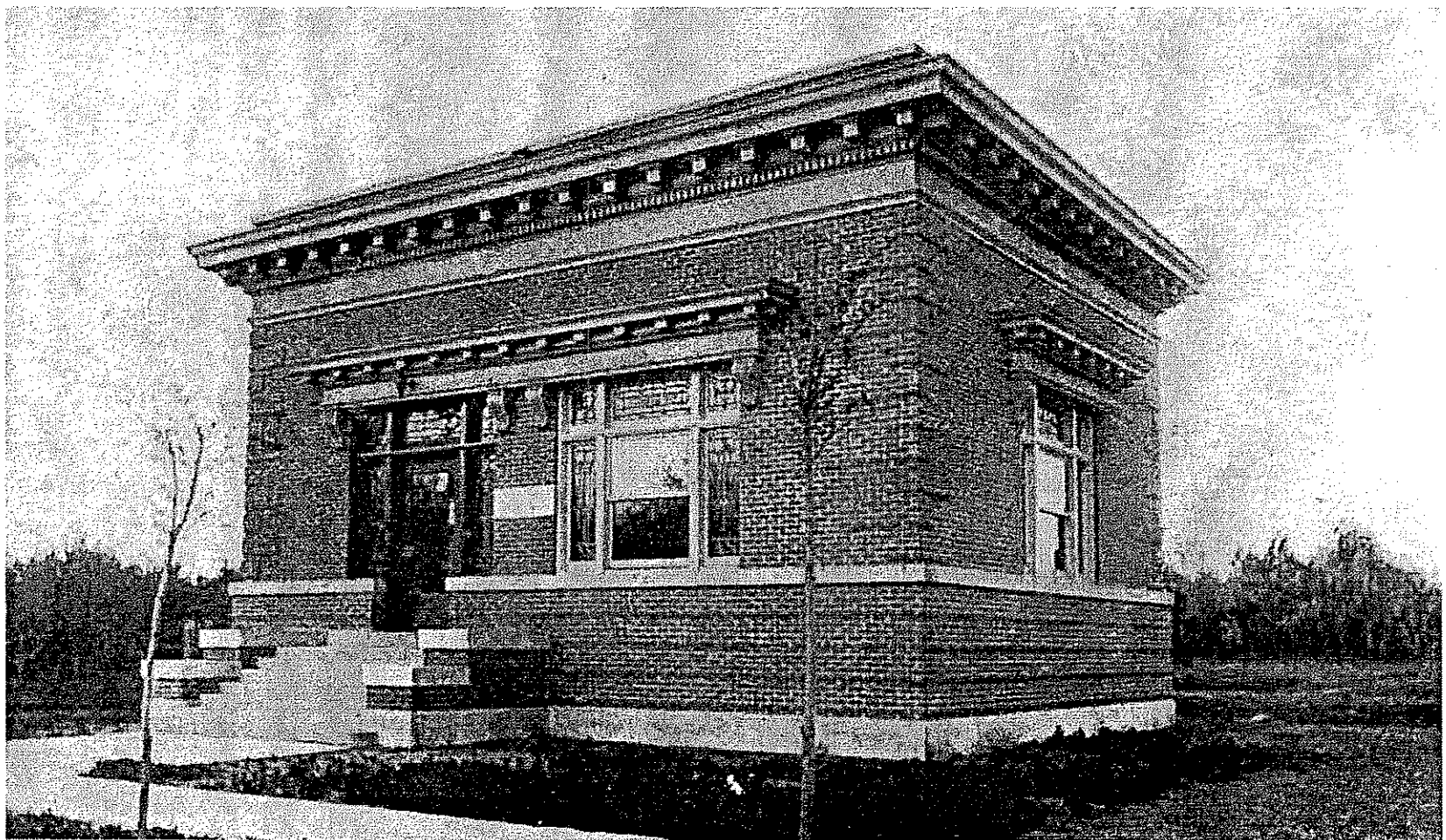

Plate 1. West Front and South Side Elevation of the Nora E. Larabee Memorial Library, ca. 1913.

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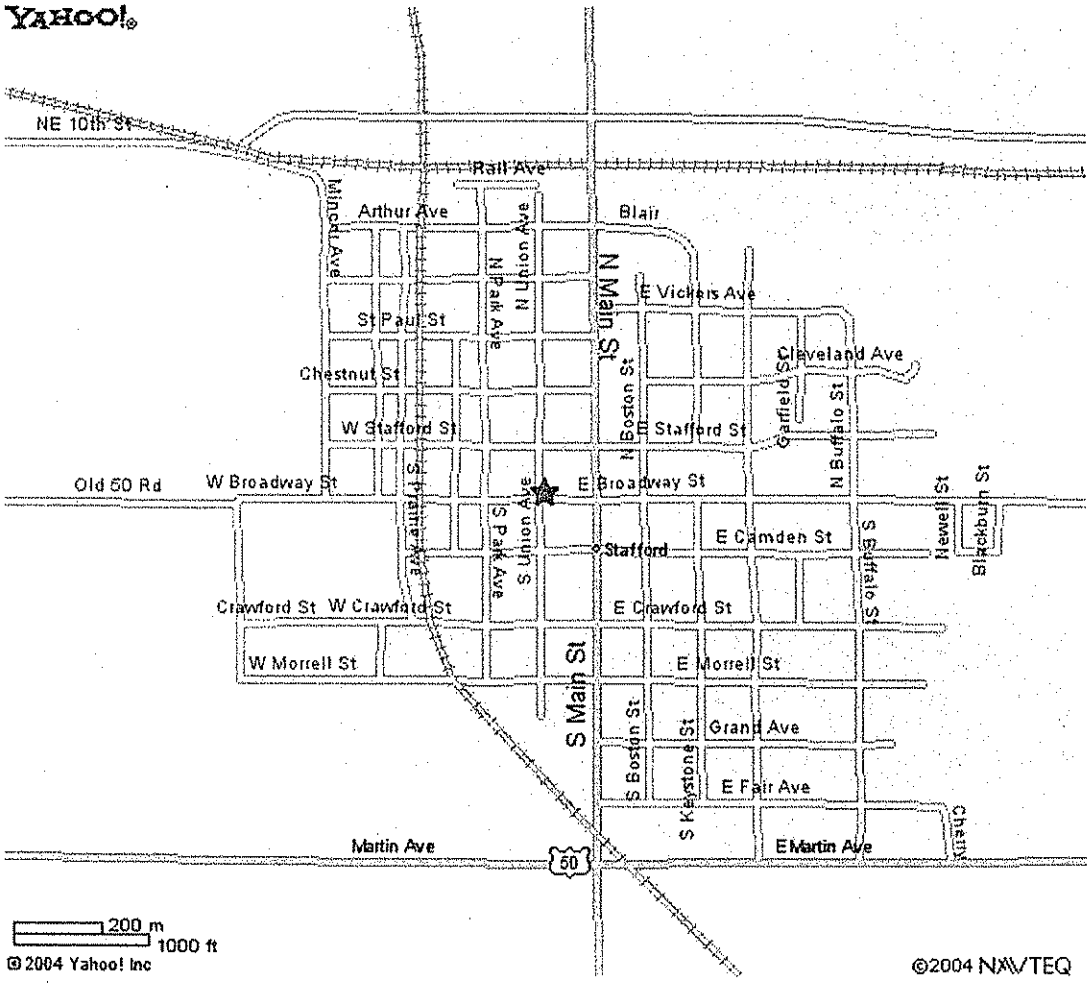

When using any driving directions or map, it's a good idea to do a reality check and make sure the road still exists, watch out for construction, and follow all traffic safety precautions. This is only to be used as an aid in planning.

Plate 11. Map of Stafford, Kansas.

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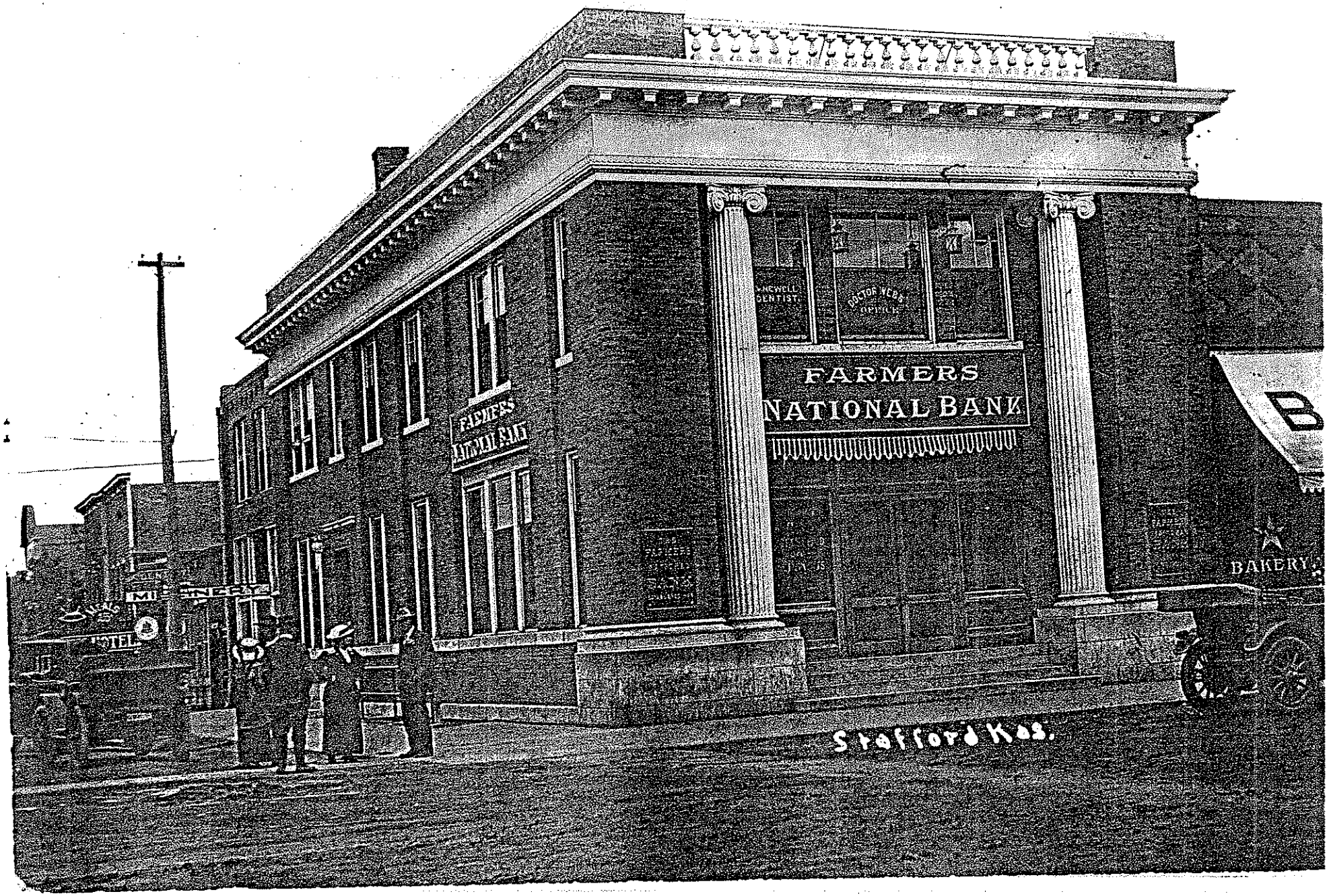
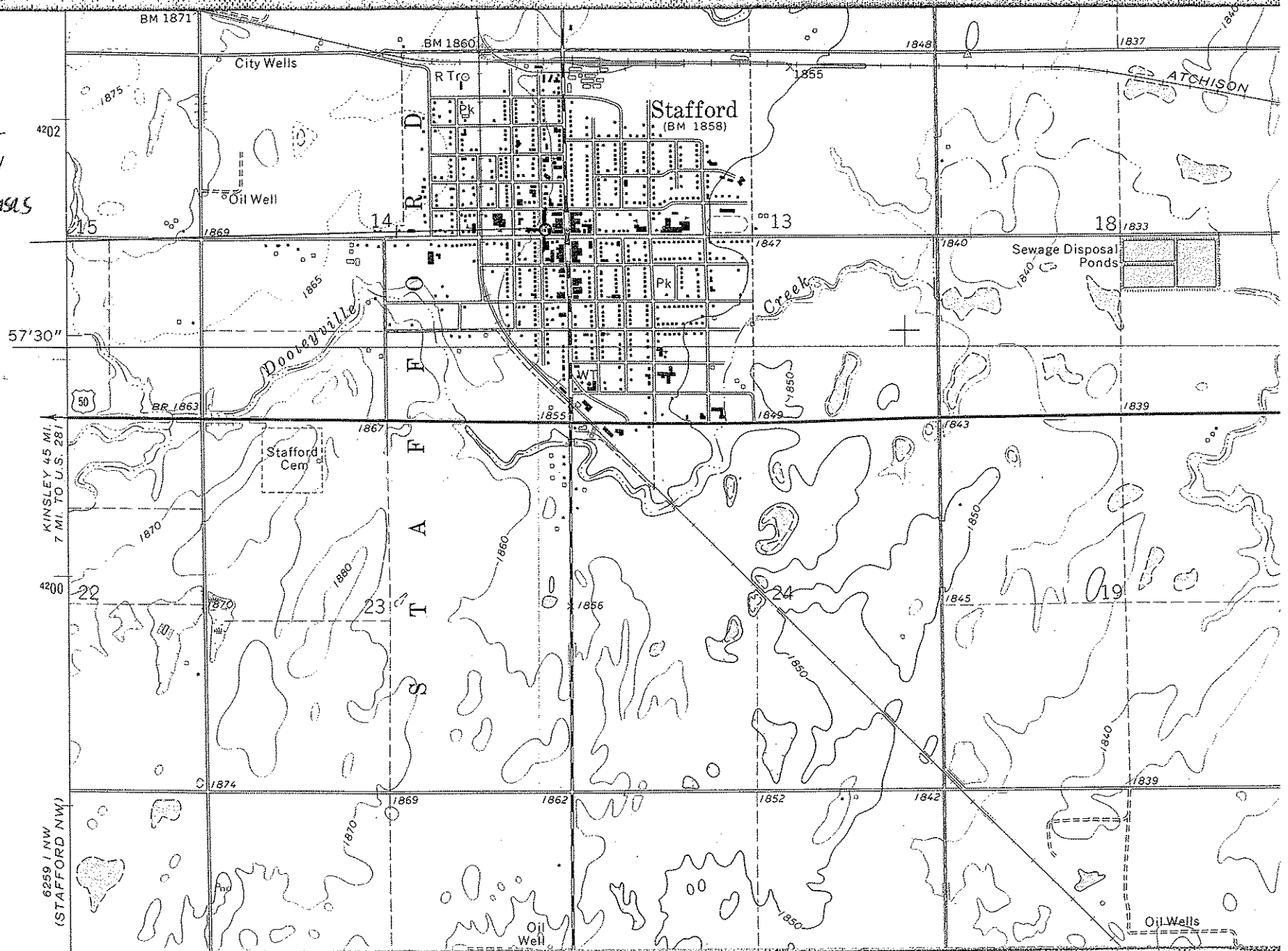


Plate 12. View of the West Front and North Side Elevation of the Farmers National Bank.

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