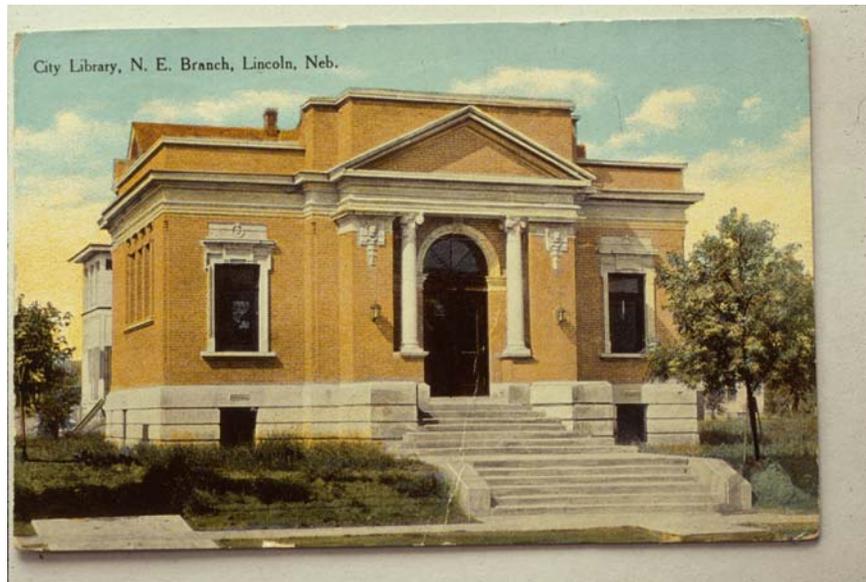


On October 5, 1992, a most unusual vehicle moved slowly up North 27th Street. With a cradle of steel I-beams beneath it, and over 100 wheels distributing its 920,000 pounds, the former Northeast Branch Library was pulled by four trucks about a mile from its original site on the southwest corner of 27th and Orchard, to the northwest corner of 27th and Center. What is this building, why was it built, and why was it moved?

Usually referred to as the "Carnegie Library," the Northeast Branch was the first branch library built by Lincoln City Library beyond its main location downtown. The old main library located at 14th and N Streets was built in 1902 with assistance from **Andrew Carnegie**, the American industrialist and philanthropist who gave grants to help build over 2,500 libraries in the early twentieth century. Neighbors in what was then the northeast part of Lincoln raised over \$1,000 to



purchase land at 27th and Orchard, and Lincoln secured another Carnegie grant of \$10,000 to build a branch library there. By 1908 the design had been accepted for a buff brick, Neo-classical revival style building with limestone trim. In the 1910s, Carnegie grants were also secured by the towns of Havelock, University Place, and College View, and town libraries were constructed in all those locations. When these towns were annexed into Lincoln between 1926 and 1930, their libraries were then merged into the Lincoln City Library, bringing the number of Carnegie-assisted buildings in the Lincoln system to five.

George Berlinghof (1858-1944), the architect for the Northeast Branch Library, later designed Carnegie-funded libraries for Beatrice and Chadron, Nebraska. He was a native of Germany who came to the U. S. in the 1880s and practiced architecture in Council Bluffs, Omaha, and Beatrice before relocating to Lincoln in 1905. He built many public buildings, including several courthouses, throughout Nebraska and the Midwest. In Lincoln his most prominent projects included Lincoln High School, the Miller & Paine Buildings, and the Security Mutual Insurance Building (now called CenterStone), designed during his partnership with Ellery Davis in the 1910s.

Berlinghof's Northeast Branch Library is a small gem of Neo-classic Revival architecture, with ornately carved limestone trim (including lion's heads flanking the entrance) and fine brickwork. Although the building measures only about 45 feet wide and about 30 feet deep, Berlinghof made it feel much larger by the generous scale of the main approach stairs, wide arched entrance, and large windows. When completed in 1909, the building demonstrated clearly both the importance of libraries and the contribution that fine public architecture makes to a city.



The Northeast Branch served as a library until 1982, the last of the city's Carnegie libraries to remain in its original use. The other Carnegie branches in University Place, College View, and Havelock had been closed about a decade earlier, when the larger Anderson and Gere Branches were built.

Strong neighborhood interest helped keep the Northeast branch open the additional years, and the Clinton Neighborhood Organization uses the building as its logo. This tradition, and the building's architectural quality, contributed to the decision to move the structure in 1992. After the closing of the library, various public service agencies officed in the structure. In the early 1990s, the neighboring East Lincoln Christian Church was eager to sell its building and move to a new location. **Tam Allan**, a Lincoln developer interested in building a Walgreen's pharmacy on 27th Street approached the church and the city, offering to buy the church and move the former library, which had shared the church's parking lot. The city negotiated an agreement to allow the library building to be moved, at the developer's expense, to a new site and placed on a taller, more usable ground story. The 27th and Center location, which was vacant, publicly owned land, was selected as the site that best met several objectives:



- keeping the library in its original neighborhood
- providing a prominent, visible site on 27th Street
- encouraging reuse by providing ample space for parking.



The removal of the library was accomplished by **Scrib's Housemoving Inc.**, of David City, Nebraska, in 1992. Completion of the foundation and basement was somewhat delayed, but in 1995 the City entered into an agreement with **Neighborhoods, Inc.** (formerly Neighborhood Housing Service), which provides assistance to homeowners in the central city neighborhoods, to locate in the building. The interior rehabilitation was completed in 1996 and the building was rededicated on September 14, 1996.

In 2009, NeighborWorks Lincoln is planning a new office and residential development in Antelope Valley (23rd to 24th Street, P to Q Street). Another Antelope Valley development, the Assurity headquarters, will utilize the current location of Matt Talbot Kitchen. The City's Urban Development Department is assisting all three projects. The former library (and the open land north of it) are an integral part of these developments, providing Matt Talbot agency with a the oportunity for purpose-built space on the north end of the 27th and Center property, and offices in the library. By designating the Former Northeast Branch Library as a landmark, the Preservation Commission will have a continuing role in the protection of this handsome, adaptable building.

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