



# *Livermore's Carnegie Library*

A Brief History

## **ABOUT THIS BUILDING:**

**This Is**

### **THE CARNEGIE LIBRARY BUILDING**

**Andrew Carnegie was a scotsman born in 1835 who came to the United States when he was very young. He began earning a living when he was small and his family was poor but when he died he was one of the richest men in the world, owning hundreds of millions of dollars. He made his money in the steel industry.**

**He was a philanthropist who gave a great many library buildings to towns all over the United States and to some in other countries.**

**This building was opened in 1911 and it was the public library for Livermore until 1966 when a much larger building was needed and was built on South Livermore Ave.**

**In 1974 the Livermore Heritage Guild and the Livermore Art Association were given permission by the City to install and maintain exhibits in the upper floor of the building.**

**There is a portrait of Andrew Carnegie on the east wall of the building entrance.**

## THE CARNEGIE LIBRARY BUILDING

In 1902 Livermore was the first community in the state to take advantage of a new state law allowing Sixth Class cities to organize tax-supported, municipal libraries. In the same year, having heard of the grants being made to libraries by steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, the Library Board made an initial attempt to gain such a grant. The project simmered until 1908 when Mrs. Dell C. Savage became President of the Library Board. Mrs. Savage worked resolutely to keep up interest in libraries and led the campaign to obtain a Carnegie Building for Livermore.

Funds were raised in the community and by the spring of 1909 a lot at the corner of Fifth and K streets had been purchased and the Town Trustees had agreed to contribute \$1,000 a year for ten years to support the library (the latter a proviso required by Carnegie). Approval of the grant from Carnegie was accomplished in October 1909 and a bond election was scheduled in December of the same year. The bond election passed with only 18 dissenting votes. There followed months of planning and consultations to design a building and to have the design (by architect William H. Weeks) approved by Carnegie.

Since opposition had developed to the 5th & K St site another site nearer the center of town was selected: the McKeaney Block (the present site). Work began on the building in June 1910 and it was completed and opened for use in May 1911.

The building remained the Livermore Library until Labor Day weekend in 1966 when the books were moved (by the staff and by members of the Job Corps) to a new building on South Livermore Avenue in the Civic Center.

Since September 1974 the Carnegie Building has housed the Livermore Art Assn. Gallery and the History Center of the Livermore Heritage Guild.

The portrait of Andrew Carnegie which hangs to the left of the main entrance was donated to the building by the Livermore Library from its new quarters.

At one time there were over twenty-eight hundred Carnegie Libraries in English-speaking countries around the world. Many of the buildings have been demolished. Livermore's Carnegie Building is one of a very few remaining the in Bay Area.