

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Hughes, Frank, Memorial Library

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

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street & number: 210 East Franklin Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Liberty

vicinity: N/A

state: MO

county: Clay

code: 047

zip code: 64068

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Public - Local

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

\_\_\_\_\_ buildings

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ sites

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ structures

1

\_\_\_\_\_ objects

0 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: "Historic Resources of Liberty, Clay County, Missouri"



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7. Description  
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Architectural Classification:

Classical Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Asphalt  
walls Brick other Wood  
Limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance  
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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture  
Social History  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1940

Significant Dates : 1940

Significant Person(s): N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Wight & Wight, Architects  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References  
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See continuation sheet.

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 -- Specify Repository: Clay County Archives (Liberty, MO)

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10. Geographical Data  
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Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing      Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>377680</u>	<u>4344950</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description:  See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification:  See continuation sheet.

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11. Form Prepared By  
=====

Name/Title: Deon K. Wolfenbarger

Organization: Three Gables Preservation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Street & Number: 9550 NE Cookingham Telephone: 816/792-1275

City or Town: Kansas City State: MO ZIP: 64157

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Hughes, Frank, Memorial Library

Page 1

**SUMMARY:** The Frank Hughes Memorial Library is located at 210 East Franklin in Liberty, Clay County, Missouri. The Neo-Classical library, completed in 1940, was designed by the Kansas City architectural firm of Wight & Wight. It is a one-story, rectangular brick structure set on the northwest corner of East Franklin and Leonard streets. The front portion of the building has a gable roof with a wide elaborate cornice line, as well as other features common to this architectural style. The rear (north) portion of the building has a combination hip and flat roof. Steps lead from the sidewalk up to the main entrance on the south, and to a basement entrance on the east. The library is in excellent condition, and has remained virtually unaltered since its construction. It therefore retains a high degree of integrity in all areas of consideration, and is an excellent representative of the "Civic Buildings" property type, as defined in the Multiple Property Submission "Historic Resources of Liberty, Clay County, Missouri".

**ELABORATION:** The Frank Hughes Memorial Library was built in 1940, as directed by the will of Frank Hughes, in "as far as practicable some colonial design" (Liberty Chronicle, 21 October 1937). The will also stipulated that the exterior should be of brick. Classified today as "Neo-Classical" architecture, the design utilized many stylistic elements which were patterned after classical features: The library is representative of a later phase of the Neo-Classical style in America, which lasted from about 1925 to the 1950's (McAlester, 1984). This emphasized side-gabled roofs and porches which often had square columns.

The exterior is comprised of two portions - a front section, facing East Franklin, which five bays long and three bays wide, and a rear section, which is also five bays long, but only two bays wide. The full basement is concrete below ground, and brick above ground, as the first floor is approximately three feet above grade. A stone belt course around the entire building separates the basement from the first floor. The brick pattern on the exterior is composed of a row of flemish bond separated by five rows of runner bond.

A prominent feature on the front (south) elevation is the full-height, central bay portico. It has two engaged square pilasters, and four square panelled columns. The flat-roofed portico feature a wide, simple wood entablature topped with a rooftop balustrade with square posts and turned spindle balusters. An original iron and glass porch light hangs in the center of the portico ceiling. The main entry door is wood with

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Hughes, Frank, Memorial Library Page 2  
=====

a lower panel and nine glass lights. It is surrounded by a wood and glass frame. The transom above has six lights, and the sidelights each feature four rectangular glass lights with wood panel below. Within this central bay, the entry door is flanked by two small, narrow wood frame windows. The windows are four-over-one, double-hung sash, and have simple stone sills, and stone flat-arched voissoirs with keystones above. On either side of the central bay are two twelve-over-one, double-hung wood windows. These windows feature a slightly more elaborate keystone set in a flat-arched stone voissoir. Beneath the windows are recessed wood panels which extend down to the stone belt course. Each gable end of the front portion of the library has three identical windows. In addition, the central section of the rear (north) portion also has three windows identical to those on the front. The remaining windows on the rear portion are also twelve-over-one, double-hung wood sash, but have only a simple stone sill and no decorative lintel.

The gable roof on the front portion of the Frank Hughes Memorial Library features a boxed cornice with little overhang. A detailed entablature on the south elevation has the characteristic ornament of the Doric frieze, consisting of triglyphs alternated with plain metopes. The gable ends of the front portion have returns with a triglyph underneath. The roof of the rear portion of the library is divided into three parts - two flat sections on the west and east, and a cross-hip roof in the rear central bay. This roof also features a slight overhang with a plain, wide wood entablature. The roof is sheathed in composition shingles. An interior brick chimney extends well above the rear roofline on the northwest corner.

Due to the long-term tenancy of the public library, the Hughes building also retains virtually all of its historic interior features, including the finely crafted built-in furniture and "slotted type" metal shelving. The charging desk is located directly opposite the front door and is the focal point of the main entry room. Constructed of red birch with a linoleum countertop, the charging desk functionally separated the public business from routine library operations; a wood railing on each side of the massive front desk further emphasized this function. Behind the charging desk are several rows of parallel metal shelving and, further back, two small side rooms.

The wings extending off both sides of the main room (to the east and west) were once used as reading rooms. Wood shelves were custom-built between the windows on the east and west walls.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Hughes, Frank, Memorial Library

Page 3

Woodwork throughout the building -- some of it credited to the Costello Lumber Company, a local supplier who also served as the finish contractor -- reflects the same attention to classical detailing as was used on the exterior. Window and doorway trim, wainscoting, and heavy crown molding in the front room are all articulated with channeling, recessed panels, and other details. The deep cove moldings in the secondary rooms also dramatize the formality of what is an otherwise modest community building. Woodwork in the main room and east reading room has been painted; wood trim in the west reading room is naturally stained. Original modern-style light fixtures of brushed aluminum and opaque glass are both wall-mounted and hung from the ceiling.

The basement, used as community meeting space, is composed of two large rooms, with restrooms, mechanical rooms, and a kitchen serving the functional needs of the building. Naturally finished birch trim -- simpler than the upstairs detail -- is also used throughout the basement. All floors have been carpeted.

From the sidewalk along East Franklin, a double set of concrete stairs, with a central iron railing, leads to a platform with a flagpole. From here, the steps narrow to a single set with iron rails on both sides. The portico also has an iron rail balustrade. A sidewalk on Leonard leads to concrete steps down to a basement entrance on the east. These steps have iron rails on either side, and a canvas barrel-roof canopy above.

The library is set back from the street, nearly in the center of the lot. The lot is slightly elevated from East Franklin Street on the south, but is virtually on grade with Leonard Street on the east. Mature deciduous flowering trees line the south and east streets. Clipped yews serve as foundation plants along the south facade.





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ational Park Service

ATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
ONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Hughes, Frank, Memorial Library Page 1  
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**SUMMARY:** The Frank Hughes Memorial Library, 210 East Franklin, is significant under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE. It is a virtually unaltered example of the Civic and Public Structures property type (see "Historic Resources of Liberty, Clay County, Missouri"). Utilizing the Neo-Classical style, it retains numerous design features which not only represent this particular style, but which are symbolic of the sense of permanence and history which were typical of revival-style architecture. It is significant, as well, as a good example of the work of the Kansas City architectural firm of Wight & Wight, whose designs in the area were well-known for their classical references. Under Criterion A, it is also significant in the area of SOCIAL HISTORY. The building, provided as a gift by local businessman Frank Hughes upon his death, housed the first public library and reading room established in Liberty. The Frank Hughes Memorial Library is also significant as one of the most visible and enduring examples of public philanthropy in the Clay County community.

**ELABORATION:** Frank Hughes was a local Liberty businessman who provided for many philanthropic projects during his lifetime. Upon his death in 1937, one of Hughes' bequests was the establishment of a \$57,000 trust fund for a library and reading room, which would be free for public use. Hughes' will also bequeathed the approximately 100' by 100' lot on the northwest corner of East Franklin and Leonard streets as the site for the library. The site and the library fund was given to the city, "vested in the mayor, councilmen and the citizens of Liberty." (Liberty Chronicle, 21 October 1937).

The fund for the library was the largest single bequest in Hughes's estate, whose value was estimated at nearly one half million dollars (Ibid). It remains the key example of civic philanthropy in Liberty to date. While donations from other individuals in Liberty have been made to special causes, churches, and in particular, William Jewell College, no other philanthropic project in the community has resulted in a use and a building which was available to the general public. The Frank Hughes Memorial Library, therefore, is significant as a example of philanthropy dedicated to the betterment and enjoyment of all Liberty residents.

Of the original trust fund, \$37,000 was to be used for the construction of the building and its furnishings. The library, according to Hughes' will, was to be constructed of brick, "inso

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Hughes, Frank, Memorial Library Page 2  
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far as practicable some colonial design . . . it being my desire that said building shall be representative of the early day colonial type of buildings in Clay county, Mo." (Ibid.) The trustees of the library chose an area architectural firm which was well known for its classical designs, Wight & Wight. Examples of their work in Kansas City included the Kansas City Life Insurance Company Building (1923), Federal Court Building (1939), and the Nelson-Atkins Gallery Museum of Art (1933).

When completed in 1940, the Frank Hughes Memorial Library was a small, but elaborately detailed example of the Neo-Classical style in its later period. The front elevation is dominated by the full-height porch, with simple square columns representative of the latter period of this style. The side-gable roof is also typical of later examples of this style. Although not truly representative of "early day" buildings in Clay County, the classical elements found on the library carried with them a symbolic association to America's past. As such, the unaltered library retains its integrity in the critical areas of association and feeling for the Civic & Public Structures property type. Located on the edge of the square, the design and scale of the library also bridges the transition from the commercial and public structures on the square, to the residential neighborhoods which surround it.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Hughes, Frank, Memorial Library Page 1  
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

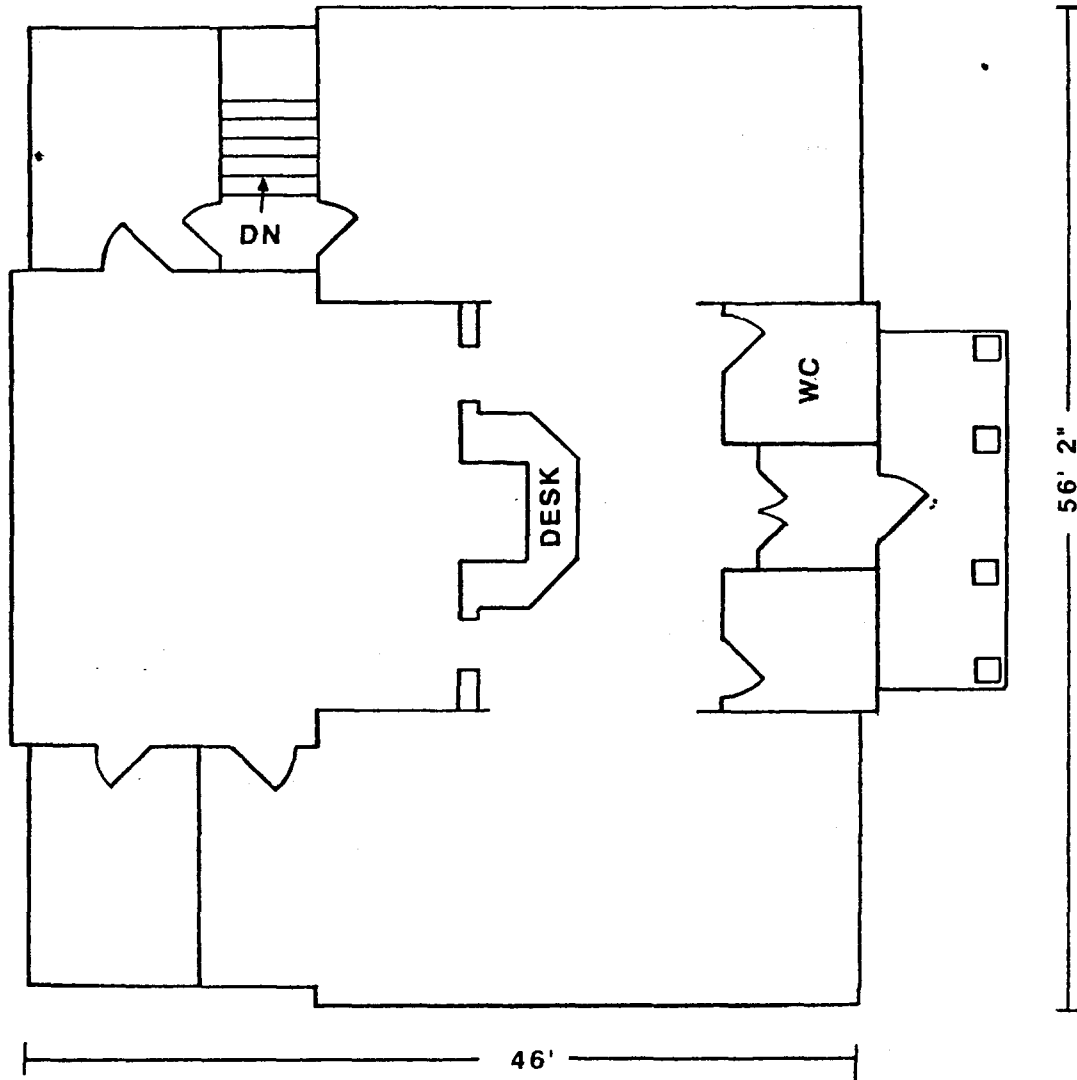
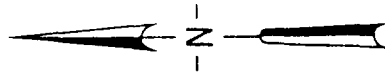
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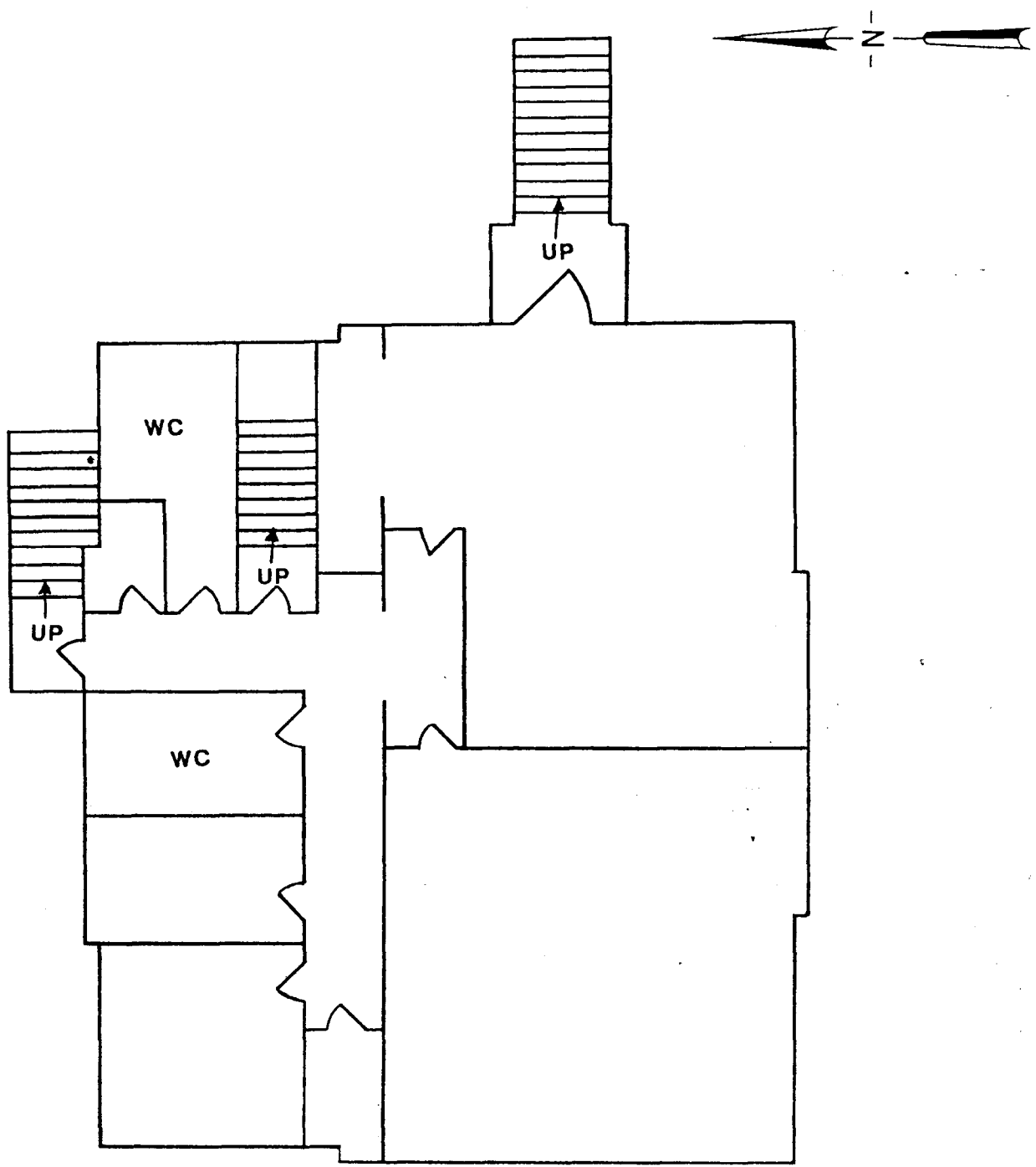
# HUGHES, FRANK, MEMORIAL LIBRARY



1st Floor

Liberty, Clay County, Missouri

Scale:  $\frac{3}{32}'' = 1'$   
(approx)



Basement

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 10

Hughes, Frank, Memorial Library

Page 1

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The south 100' of Lot 5 and the South 100' of the east 40' of Lot 6, Curtis Subdivision, City of Liberty, more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of East Franklin and Leonard Street, proceed west 92' along the right-of-way of East Franklin Street; then proceed north 100'; then proceed east 92'; then proceed south 100' along the right-of-way of Leonard Street to the point of beginning.

**Verbal Boundary Justification:**

The boundary includes all those portions of the two city lots which have historically been associated with the property.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number Photographs Hughes, Frank, Memorial Library Page 1  
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The following information is the same for all photographs listed below:

LOCATION OF SITE: Frank Hughes Memorial Library at 210 East Franklin Street,  
Liberty, MO

NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Bob Askren

DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH: 19 December 1991

LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: State Historic Preservation Office, Jefferson City, MO

List of Photographs

1. Front (south) elevation.
2. Southeast elevation.
3. Southwest elevation.
4. Rear (northeast) elevation.
5. Charging desk in main entry room, looking northwest towards back of building.
6. East reading room, looking northeast.
7. Detail of lighting fixtures, east reading room.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

FEB 18 1993  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
PROGRAM

RECEIVED  
FEB 17 1993  
DPRHP/DO  
*HPP*

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92001676      Date Listed: 12/28/92

Hughes, Frank, Memorial Library      Clay      MISSOURI  
Property Name:      County:      State:

Liberty MPS  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Rubinieth Rice*  
for Signature of the Keeper

12/28/92  
Date of Action

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#### Amended Items in Nomination:

In consultation with Missouri SHPO, criterion A has been added because social history is indicated as an area of significance.

The nomination is officially amended to include this information.

#### DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

















