

# Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture, 1890-1920

Abigail A. Van Slyck

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Familiar landmarks in hundreds of American towns, Carnegie libraries today seem far from controversial. In Free to All, however, Abigail A. Van Slyck shows that the classical facades and symmetrical plans of these buildings often mask a complex and contentious history.

"The whole story is told here in this book. Carnegie's wishes, the conflicts among local groups, the architecture, development of female librarians. It's a rich and marvelous story, lovingly told."—Alicia Browne, Journal of American Culture

"This well-written and extensively researched work is a welcome addition to the history of architecture, librarianship, and philanthropy."—Joanne Passet, Journal of American History

"Van Slyck's book is a tremendous contribution for its keenness of scholarship and good writing and also for its perceptive look at a familiar but misunderstood icon of the American townscape."—Howard Wight Marshall, Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians

"[Van Slyck's] reading of the cultural coding implicit in the architectural design of the library makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the limitations of the doctrine 'free to all.'"—Virginia Quarterly Review



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