



# 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 façades 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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