

HISTORY OF THE MEMORIAL BRANCH  
of the  
LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY

The history of the forty-ninth branch of the Los Angeles Public Library logically begins with the acquisition of the site upon which the building stands. In 1923, the fiftieth anniversary of the Los Angeles High School, the student body and alumni purchased the property between Muirfield and Mullen Avenues, from Olympic Blvd. half way to Ninth Street, and deeded it to the City as a Memorial Park for the alumni who gave their lives to their Country in the World War. Six years later, the Park Board gave to the Library Board the right to erect a branch library. Considerable red tape had to be unwound, however, before the space allotted could be increased to adequately accommodate such a building.

Erected and equipped at a cost of \$47,621, it is 96 feet long by 63 feet wide. It is of red brick with gabled slate roofs and weathered oak furnishings. Austin and Ashley, architects, selected Tudor style to harmonize with the High School building, which they also planned. Thus the library seems to complete the fine group of buildings on the opposite side of Olympic Blvd. At their request, the students were given the privilege of placing a memorial window in the south end of the adult reading room. This beautiful window, adapted from those in the Parliamentary Building of London, was made by the Judson Art Studios of Los Angeles, at a cost of twenty-five hundred dollars.

An amusing episode occurred in the choice of a name for the new branch. The Library Board felt constrained to depart from their recent custom of perpetuating California's historical characters and decided to christen it the Ralph Waldo Emerson Branch. The School objected emphatically. A compromise pleasing to all was affected by using the name of the park surrounding it and it became officially the "Memorial" Branch.

It was a very quiet launching that took place on Wednesday, April 16th; she just slipped off the ways without waving of banners or blare of trumpets; but her staff (crew--if we are careful of our metaphor) were thrilled when they counted their initial circulation.

On the evening of April 29th, Mr. Orra E. Monnette, President of the Board of Library Trustees, presided over the formal opening. The program included music by the orchestra and glee clubs of the Los Angeles High School, brief addresses by representatives of the Library Board, the Board of Education, the American Legion, the Board of Park Commissioners, and the Alumni Association and the Student Body of the High School. It was concluded with Taps for the twenty men memorialized in the lovely window, and the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner."

The next afternoon the children of the neighborhood were the invited guests and Mr. Hugh Lofting their speaker. Friday morning saw the entire student body of the Los Angeles High School gathered in Memorial Park for their own especial dedication of their gift window.

Memorial Library has a community largely made up of people above the average middle class. There are almost no apartment houses, and the majority probably own their own homes. There are a great many Jewish families; not the poor, omnivorous reading type but the wealthier, sophisticated Jewish people. There is no foreign speaking community, and very few books in other languages are called for.

Two improvements in the efficiency of the routine at the charging desk were the introduction of the Detroit charging system in December, 1930, and the erection in February, 1932, of railings to assist keeping patrons in line when entering and leaving the building.

#### STAFF:

The original staff of Memorial numbered six: Nettie M. Guiwits, branch librarian; Agnes Melissa Aldrich (later, Mrs. James Cassy), librarian; Mrs. Frances W. Bryson, children's librarian; Ruby Papermaster, clerical library aid; Ralph McArthur, page; and Joseph Apall, janitor. The last two were both half time employees.

There have been six changes in janitor personnel: July 1, 1930, Charles Coe was appointed. October 1, 1931, he was succeeded by Hal R. Flanner. Flanner was followed by John L. Caldwell February 1, 1932, who was superseded April 1st by Ernest Hanson. In September, 1934, came Harold A. McClure but he was transferred three months later. George Branner began January 1st, 1935, on a twenty hour a week schedule.

Ralph McArthur resigned as page almost immediately, and the position was given to George Papermaster. George resigned October 1, 1931, and was succeeded by George Witham. May 22, 1933, Memorial was granted an additional quarter time page, in the person of George Powell; and six months later he was made a three quarter time page and George Witham transferred elsewhere. February 1, 1935, Virginia Andrews was added to the staff as a quarter time page. George Powell resigned in April, 1935, and Richard A. Brower came on half time, Virginia being raised to half time also. Upon the resignation of Virginia, July 12, 1935, Mary Condon became page; and February 12, 1936, Robert Holcomb was appointed to fill the place of Richard Brower, resigned.

Memorial has been fortunate in being able to keep Miss Ruby Papermaster, clerical library aid, to the present time (June, 1936). The branch librarian has not been changed, and but one change has occurred in each of the other professional positions. June 30, 1933, Mrs. Melissa Aldrich Cassy resigned and Mrs. Helen D. Virginia came by transfer to assume the position of librarian. On August 31, 1935, Mrs. Frances Bryson resigned as children's librarian. During the following September, Miss Lily S. Koivisto (under appointment elsewhere) acted as substitute; and October 1st Miss Courtney Crawford was regularly appointed to the position.

Among the senior substitutes who have been at Memorial since its founding are Margaret L. Hendrickson (April 6, 1931), Mrs. Dorothy D. Pratt (July 13, 1931), Leslie J. Chilson (September 17, 1934).

Of C.L.A. substitutes, the following names have been kept: Martha H. Jamison (July 1, 1930), Margaret Gray (July 1, 1932), Mildred T. Peterson, Mrs. Thelma Douglas, Sylvia Ober (April 23, 1935), Arline M. Hagest (February 24, 1936).

From the Library School came numerous students to practice branch work. Of senior class members were Lois Christley in 1930, Dorothy L. Stevens and Edyth A. Fay in 1931, Marjorie Utt in 1932. Miss M. Davis, specializing in children's work, was at Memorial in 1932. From July 18 to August 15, Isabel Avakian did practice work for the junior course.

The Bureau of County Welfare, S.E.R.A., and W.P.A., from time to time have sent workers to Memorial: Mrs. Laura Moorcraft (April 25-29, 1932), Mrs. May Kimble (May 2-6, 1932), Mrs. Pearl (three days a week during December, 1932), Evelyn M. Leippe (November 10-21, 1933), Sarah Furman, and John Perry Jr. (April 14, 1936, to date, June 1936).

#### BOOK COLLECTION:

A unique feature of Memorial is that its original book collection was entirely new. The reference collection was unusually complete for so small a library and has had few additions during the six years since. The original book and serials fund was \$10,000; from which 5,000 volumes were purchased and fifty magazine subscriptions placed.

During the succeeding years, the appropriations for books and serials have been as follows: 1930-'31, \$4,500.00; 1931-'32, \$3,370.00; 1932-'33, \$2,126.67; 1933-'34, \$1,166.40; 1934-'35, \$740.00; 1935-'36, \$1,444.52. The collection now numbers (June 30, 1936) 15,409 volumes, of which 101 are bound magazines.

There have been a goodly number of books received by gift, including several large sets. The Los Angeles High School is sending its Semi-Annual Blue and White every six months; also its Anthology of Student Verse and its Anthology of Short Stories.

In 1933, the crowded condition of the book shelves in the adult room necessitated the erection of three stacks under the mezzanine balcony. Additional shelving was also built in the work room.

During the spring of 1936, the first systematic campaign of book cleaning for Memorial's collection was pursued by John Perry, Jr., an S.E.R.A. worker.

The first book mender who served Memorial was Mrs. Flora Liles. When she resigned to become Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Dorothy Davis took her place.

#### LOS ANGELES HIGH SCHOOL:

The first two years, the cooperation between the High School and the Library was so close that would-be adult patrons often mistook it for a school library. The hygiene department used the clubroom for classes three days a week. For the Pericleans (honor students), the reading rooms were study hall every day. When, in 1932, it became necessary to close the branch to the public until 1:00 P.M., all this special school use had to be discontinued.

Armistice Day, 1931, the Student Body held patriotic exercises in the Park, and presented Memorial with a large silk flag in a brass standard.

Beginning in 1931, the Periclean Society has held its annual Memorial Day observance in the Library. The first year, a potted fern and wooden plant stand were their gifts. In 1932, an Italian leather portfolio to care for biographical data regarding the men whose names are on the memorial window and a large wrought iron fire screen were brought. Then came a large blue and white basket; and each succeeding Memorial Day this has been filled with flowers by them.

Through the courtesy of the music department a borrowed radio enabled the children gathered in the library to hear the American School of the Air program broadcast one Book Week. Several times the same department also loaned a small phonograph for use in the clubroom.

The privilege of lunching in the teachers' cafeteria has always been extended to Memorial's staff.

#### CLUB ROOM:

In addition to its use for classes from the various schools and for story hours, the clubroom has been used as follows:

1931. A series of lectures given by Dr. Adams of U.C.L.A., under the auspices of the committee on adult education was not well attended.

A stereopticon talk on Mexico and Central America by Mr. H. R. Leonard of Foster and Kleiser Co. marked the first anniversary of Memorial and brought out a goodly number.

1932. January 29th, Miss Katherine C. Carr entertained a group of fifty-two for an hour and a half with an account of her previous summer's experiences in China. She is the head of the department of journalism of the Los Angeles High School.

In February the bicentennial anniversary of Washington's birthday was observed. Music was furnished by members of the A Capella choir of the High School; there was a solo minuet with flute accompaniment; several ladies of the D.A.R. came in costume; Mr. Lannes McPhetridge described informally his experiences in search of old and rare books about Washington; and fruit punch and wafers were served. Beside those on the program and their escorts, eight people were present!

March 25th, Miss Gladys Caldwell of Central Library gave a delightful talk on her visit to Warsaw and Moscow with Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, to an audience of ten.

In March, Mrs. W. L. Widman, a native of Johannesburg, South Africa, told the John Burroughs Junior High School book club about her experiences, illustrating her talk with specimens of native handcraft. Mrs. Widman is a cousin of Sarah Gertrude Millin.

April brought the second anniversary of Memorial. It was made the occasion of a special story hour for the children. Madame Grishina-Givago, introduced by Miss Gladys English, was the guest speaker.

1933. Mr. Solomon Davis, an authority on the Japanese, gave a charming talk illustrated with colored slides for the boys and girls.

1934. On the evening of August 23rd, a S.E.R.A. ladies string quartet gave an excellent concert of chamber music to an audience of fourteen.

During the fall, the children were addressed by two guest speakers worthy of particular note: Miss Mildred Ruell reviewed Norwegian books and folk ways, and Mrs. Irene Robinson fascinated them by her tales of prehistoric animals.

The Christmas party for the children had the honor presenting Mrs. Jack London as speaker.

1935. In April, the library's fifth anniversary was celebrated with two delightful parties. For the boys and girls, Mr. Atanas Katchamakoff made the country of Bulgaria a reality; and then he and his wife joined the staff, Miss English and other adult guests for tea and a lively discussion of the teaching of art to young students.

The adult party was a more ambitious affair. After Miss Althea Warren, City Librarian, had reviewed a number of books in her own inimitable way, the guests repaired to the mezzanine for tea. Hostesses at the table were Mrs. Betsey Foye Veazey and the Branch Librarian. Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. George Barker, well known artists, Miss Wolverton, girls' vice-principal of the Los Angeles High School, and Miss Hurst, librarian of the John Burroughs Junior High School.

#### PUBLICITY:

Newspaper publicity has never been successful. The local papers have been subject to frequent changes in management, and their interest in book matters has not been of long duration.

Window cards have been obligingly received by shop keeps but only shown for very brief periods.

Other efforts at publicity would include the following:

1931. Three hundred blotters distributed through stationery departments in local stores.

An illustrated folded leaflet of information about the branch was prepared by Mrs. Hyers and presented to interested visitors.

The book drive was well advertised and 1000 volumes besides many magazines were brought.

1932. 230 dodgers, "Have you a library card?", were distributed through the P.T.A. of the Carthay Center School and at the doors of homes in that vicinity.

The branch librarian gave two book talks for local women's clubs. The children's librarian spoke before Girl Scout and Campfire Girl groups.

1933. The Adams-Wilshire Coordinating Council was organized this autumn; and the branch librarian has made it a point to attend its meetings whenever possible.

1934-'35. The children's librarian was guest speaker at a meeting of the Y.W.C.A. of the University of Southern California. By special request, she also gave numerous talks for P.T.A. groups and school class rooms.

1936. Two shops on Wilshire Blvd. gave window space for exhibits of books and posters from the library. Burnett's Gift Shop has been particularly kind and cooperative in this respect.

## MEMORIAL BRANCH LIBRARY

Completed and dedicated: April 29, 1930.

Architecture: English manor style of the Tudor period.

Architects: Austin and Ashley.

Material: Red brick with gabled slate roof and weathered oak furniture.

Lot: Built on site owned by Board of Park Commissioners, which was originally purchased and given to the city as a memorial park by the student body of Los Angeles high school.

Cost of building and equipment: \$47,621.

In 1923 the Student Body and Alumni Association of the Los Angeles High School purchased the property between Muirfield and Mullen Avenues from Olympic Blvd. halfway to Ninth Street, and deeded it to the City as a Memorial Park for the alumni who gave their lives to their country in World War I. Six years later, the Park Board gave the Library Board the right to erect a Branch Library. The architecture was chosen to parallel that of the High School, which is the scholastic type of the Tudor period.

### ALUMNI MEMORIAL WINDOW

At their request the students of the high school were given the privilege of placing a memorial window in the south end of the adult reading room. This beautiful stained glass window is adapted from those in the Parliamentary building of London, and is designed in the Heraldic style and in harmony with the architecture of the library. It was designed by the Judson Studios, L.A.

The symbols and insignia are shown as decoration on the shields and in the top row of windows represent the various armed forces -- the Infantry, Field artillery, Navy, Marine Corps, Engineers and Aviation.

In the second row of windows the tower of the old L.A. High School, the seal of the city of L.A., the coat of arms of the United States, the California state flag, the coat of arms of the L.A. High School and the tower of the present L.A. High school building are represented.

The lower row of light (two center panels) have the memorial tablets giving the names of the alumni who died in the service. The shields on either side carry the emblem of "Sacrifice", pictured by the legend of the Pelican in Piety, and on either end is an heraldic arrangement of the poem "In Flanders Field."

Across the base of the window is the inscription "Dedicated to the Alumni of the Los Angeles High School who died in the World War. 1914-1918. May the sacrifice of these lives contribute to the establishment of peace among nations."

In consideration of the educational purpose of this library, there has been scattered throughout this window on the geometrical field pictorial illustrations of the arts and sciences.

#### Memorial Branch is launched:

It was a very quiet launching that took place on Wed., Apr. 16th: she just slipped off the ways without waving of banners or blare of trumpets,- those came later; but the four members of the new staff (crew - if we are careful for our metaphor) were thrilled when they counted their initial circulation.

#### Formal opening:

On the evening of Apr. 29th occurred the formal opening of the new branch library, the forty-ninth in the branches system. The attendance was most gratifying, about four hundred being present. The rooms were gay with choice flowers from many friends of the library, and flags flanked the memorial window to left and right.

Mr. Orra E. Monnette, President of the Library Board, presided over a program including music by the orchestra and glee clubs of the Los Angeles High School, brief addresses by representatives of the Library Board, the Board of Education, the American Legion, the Park Commission, the Alumni Association and the Student Body of the Los Angeles High School; and concluded with taps and the "Star Spangled Banner." The presence of members of the Greayer Clover Post of the American Legion and relatives of the twenty young men memorialized in the lovely window, with the impressive dedicatory observances added a touching and unusual interest to the library's housewarming.

#### Los Angeles High School program:

A program especially for pupils of the High School was given Fri. morning May 2nd. At first the school was massed in the park in front of the library between two long lines of the R. O. T. C.; but all were soon driven indoors by a brisk shower of rain. Those taking part came into the library while the rest of the young people heard the program from the school windows, thanks to the amplifiers used. The program followed much the same order as that of Tues. evening, except that it was shorter and that Don Tatum, President of the Student Body, presided.

#### School visits and visitors:

The branch principal accompanied the children's librarian on her first visit to the elementary schools of this district.

Principal Oliver, Mr. Vander Bie (principal of the Evening High School), the librarians and numerous teachers of the High School have visited the library, in addition to their attendance upon the formal openings and the visits of their classes.

Mr. I. D. Perry, the head of the English department of the High School, has arranged with the branch principal to have the English classes come, one at a time, to get acquainted with the library and to have the significance of the window explained to them. As practically the entire school takes English, this is going to take a long time to complete, especially as Wed. and Thurs. of each week has to be omitted. It means not only extra work but often extra hours for the branch staff, but it seems very well worth while.

#### Discipline:

Both the faculty and student governing boards are

aining the quiet and dignity so essential to the proper functioning of a library; and we believe that tact, patience and firmness will keep this branch as orderly as any other in spite of the larger number of lively youths in the rooms at a time.

The janitor:

Joseph J. Apall, janitor, is deserving of a word of appreciation in this report for his untiring, conscientious and intelligent care of the building during these days of openings and other irregularities. He no more than gets the rooms in order that tables and chairs are pushed about for some emergency. The dug-up condition of the grounds close about the whole building together with the rains of the last week have kept the floors in a dirty condition that is enough to try the soul of a full-time caretaker. Mr. Apall has given Pio Pico its full quota of hours per week and still spent an average of eight hours daily at Memorial. It seems too bad that, under the circumstances, he could not have been paid for his extra time. It would have been impossible for the staff to have gotten along without his help, although they never asked him to remain iver time.

Children's room:

Report submitted by Mrs. Bryson, children's librarian:

Promise of an interesting work with children is shown by the enthusiasm of the children, principals and teachers of the Memorial Branch district. Parents and teachers are so grateful and pleased to have a library in the neighborhood. The schools have been visited and already requests to have classes visit the library are being sent by the teachers.

The formal opening for the boys and girls was held Thursday afternoon, May 1st. Mr. Hugh Lofting told the children an unpublished story of his. Mr. Lofting's quiet, charming manner delighted the boys and girls. There were over a hundred children and many of them waited to have Mr. Lofting autograph their books. He was most gracious and did not leave until the tiniest tot had been given a picture of the inimitable Dr. Doolittle.

The Book collection is a very usable one, the non-fiction being well balanced. Our fiction shelves are almost barren, and we feel that it will be necessary to stress the purchase of fiction titles for the coming year."