

JOHN C. FREMONT

1949-1959

Ten years have passed since 1949 when I came to John C. Fremont as Branch Librarian. At that time Fremont could have been called an experimental Branch as it was the first in the system to use Recordak charging and was a guinea pig for the overdue procedures which resulted from this use. All this is a far cry from that day of December 20, 1912 when a small Branch was opened on Santa Monica Boulevard and Vine street, stocked with 1132 volumes loaned by the Hollywood Branch. It is a far cry too from June 1, 1927 when the present building was opened to the public. A celebration was planned complete with speeches but because of the failure of the furniture to arrive, the addresses were postponed indefinitely and John C. Fremont settled down to business without benefit of oratory! Incidentally, the cost of the site was \$9500 and the building, equipment and furniture \$35,502. Compare this with the cost of the recently opened West Hollywood Branch to be reminded how times change.

In 1950 a crisis arose. Because of a lack of adequate funds John C. Fremont was one of several Branches threatened with closing. The response from the public was heartening. Many of our patrons circulated petitions and wrote to city councilmen asking that the library be allowed to stay open. For almost two months we lived in an atmosphere of apprehension and were greatly relieved when the necessary funds were granted. This was the year that the large Metropolitan Life Insurance project called Park LaBrea was nearing completion. Many of its residents use the Branch today but are looking forward to the time when there will be a library near the Third and Fairfax area.

In 1951 Fremont had a busy, rewarding year despite a drop in circulation. A general feeling of unrest and uncertainty which was nation wide, caused less reading. Two weekly classes sponsored by the Board of Education were held in the Club Room. We were thankful to receive additional catalog drawers for the adult catalog during this year.

In 1952 the emphasis seemed to be on the use by Branches of their Regional Library. All inter-library loans were channeled through Hollywood and I stressed the value of the regional meetings held after each book order meeting at Central Library.

In 1953 illness was a great deterrent. Both the Branch Librarian and the Librarian were absent from work for two months. This created a difficult situation not only for the Branch but for Hollywood. The loss of a half-time clerk typist was keenly felt, especially in this time of stress. In May, 1953 the Los Angeles Unit for the Recording for the Blind opened an office in space donated by John C. Fremont. The room was equipped by the Ford Foundation and staffed by the Junior League of Los Angeles. Recordings of books were made and sent to the blind all over the United States. This work is still going on here though the Junior League withdrew in 1956. It is now run by the Los Angeles Unit of the National Committee for Recording for the Blind with headquarters in New York City.

In the year 1954 there was little change. The district served by John C. Fremont is a static one. However progress was slow but steady.

In 1955 we again stressed the changelessness of the district. This is a community of home owners. It is solidly built up and there is no community activity. While we suffered a small loss in circulation this year we had more card holders than in the previous year. Black-Foxe Military School a scant two blocks away, began sending classes regularly and we had more patronage from Marlborough School for girls at Third and Rossmore. During this year the Branch Librarian was again absent for more than two months because of illness.

In 1956 we took a new lease on life with a paint job inside and out. The results were pleasing to the staff and public alike. The staff was inspired to do a wholesale house cleaning. The Children's work at Fremont has always been a large part of our service and this year there was a gain in circulation of 3014, all juvenile. This year we became aware of an increase in the number of small studios in the district, dealing with various branches of motion picture and television. An excellent Book Fair at Central brought enthusiastic use of the Branch by parents and children.

In 1957 the work at Fremont was greatly increased by the closing of Wilshire Branch for extensive repairs. We were hard put to find enough books for the new patrons and the old. We began to be aware of rising book costs this year. We noted with alarm a publisher's note that they were trying to hold down the price of a fall novel to \$6.95! On June 30th of this year Mrs. Louise Knudson retired from John C. Fremont as Children's Librarian. Mrs. Knudson was here for

seventeen years and built up an excellent book collection as well as making many friends for the Branch. The children using this Branch are blessed with good economic and educational backgrounds and will be the future leaders in the community. We like to think that the Public Library will always be a part of their lives and of their childrens. For that reason we feel it is very important that we have a competent children's librarian.

In 1958 we had that "this is where we came in" feeling as West Hollywood Branch was closed while a new building was erected, and we had its patrons and our own to satisfy. This meant too that the extra load of work made it necessary to do the essential things and everything else had to wait. After eight months when the new West Hollywood Branch was opened, we heaved a sigh of relief and settled down to getting back to normal. We appreciated an increase in book funds this year and were able to replace worn out copies of standard titles. Miss Angelina Garcia came to Fremont in September of 1957 as Children's Librarian. She has done a very good job with parents and children who frequent the Branch, and has worked hard with the schools in the district. This summer she will have a Story Hour for pre-schoolers as well as school age children and plans are under way for a summer reading program. It has been very gratifying to me to have many parents compliment Miss Garcia for her work with their children.

Essentially John C. Fremont remains what it was ten years ago--a neighborhood Branch in an above average district educationally and Economically ecomically. Its people are pleasant, intelligent, even erudite--and a joy to serve!

Respectfully submitted,

---

Branch Librarian