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630 West Fifth Street

For information call  
Jane Meyer, MU. 5241  
Ext. 35

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The cultural growth of the West Los Angeles area has kept pace with its physical growth. In addition to its many fine schools and colleges, two branch libraries have sprung up to serve the residents of the area, the Venice Branch at 610 North California Street in Venice, and the West Los Angeles Branch located at 11354 Santa Monica Boulevard.

The Venice Branch was added to the Los Angeles Library System by annexation in July, 1926. Before the annexation Venice was served by the Los Angeles County Library. The first location of the Los Angeles Public Library was in a large store building at 1110 Washington Blvd. This was in a very thickly settled district and close to the Westminster School, the largest school in Venice. There was no pioneer work necessary in Venice. From the start the public poured in, especially the children, and the first year the circulation was 113,833 of which 51,722 was juvenile. All of the books on the shelves were new, at first, but the number of volumes was woefully inadequate. As time went on, and the need was seen, a very generous book appropriation made it possible to build up a good collection.

Mrs. Lucille Holliday was the first branch librarian and she remained with the branch from July, 1926 until Jul., 1933. Her-

In March, 1930, the library moved to its own spacious and beautiful building, on California Street, only four blocks from its old location. On the evening of April 7, dedicatory exercises were held, at which Mrs. Otto J. Zahn, chairman of the Branch Libraries Committee of the Board of Library Commissioners, presided. The library building, designed by Witmer and Watson, is Italian in style, with a large rectangular reading room and two wings, one for a story hour room, and one for staff quarter, with a patio between.

After the establishment of the branch in its own dignified building, the adult circulation increased rapidly and steadily until there was a proper ratio with the juvenile. Circulation continued to gain while the city of Venice grew through the development of the aviation industry. In 1941, there was a turn in the tide. The war scare became apparent - there was an exodus from the community, and the dimout further discouraged the use of the Library. The branch weathered the storm, and the circulation began to reassert itself.

The Library has taken a part in civic affairs, with representation on the Coordinating Council.

Other branch librarians have been Marion McGrew (1933-1938), Mary Helen Peterson now head of the History Department, Central Library, (1938-1940), Mrs. Genevieve Thompson, now branch librarian of Mark Twain Branch (1940-1945), Zada Taylor, now Hollywood Branch head librarian (1945-), Miss Althea Jillson, now Memorial Branch Librarian (1945-1947), and the present librarian of the Venice Branch, Miss Elizabeth Watson, who carries on the work with a staff of five.

The Venice Branch was antedated by the West Los Angeles Branch by several years. It began as the "Sawtelle" Branch.

In June, 1918 the dream of a few prominent club women of Sawtelle was realized when a library was established and opened to

the public. Housed in a small room in the Woman's Club House it was centrally located in the heart of a small park at the corner of Oregon Avenue, later re-named Santa Monica Boulevard, and 106th Street. The first custodian of the library was Mrs. J. W. Wearne, the well-known and popular president of the Woman's Club.

Annexed to the city in July, 1918 there was at this time some question as to the political status of Sawtelle and, therefore, the library was both a city and a county library. With this situation existing Sawtelle enjoyed a double library for several months, for the County had what was considered at the time an ample collection of books.

Trouble began to loom again over the annexation question in the fall of 1921. In October, Sawtelle withdrew from the city. Thus, temporarily, it ceased to be a part of Los Angeles. As a result all of the books and equipment were withdrawn. Mrs. Wearne still remained in charge of the few county library books at the same location.

Early in 1922 the citizens of Sawtelle voted to re-enter the city. With this turbulent condition of local affairs, the library lost ground. Swapped back and forth as it was from County to City the young branch had difficulty keeping its balance. Consequently, the annual report of 1921-1922 showed a loss rather than a much hope for gain.

~~But~~ In December, 1923 a new civic building was proposed for Sawtelle. The plans were examined and the library needs were considered.

The new building was completed in December, 1924. A grand celebration took place and all the departments housed there including the library were invited to take part in the parade.

In 1926 the first professional librarian was appointed, Miss Fannie B. Dorman. \* When the name of the Sawtelle Post Office was officially changed to "West Los Angeles," the Library followed suit, and became the West Los Angeles Branch in June of 1930.

Simultaneously it acquired a new branch librarian, Miss Martha Wynne Abell, who served in that capacity until July, 1946.

\* The change in name of the community seemed to mark a new era of growth for it. The principal factors making for development were: a rapidly growing residential community, location of U.C.L.A. in Westwood, enlargement of seven elementary schools, enlargement of University High School, location of Fox studios between Santa Monica Blvd. and Pico, growth of Douglas Aircraft plant, organization of West Los Angeles Coordinating Council, enlarged library facilities, additional personnel, increase in book and periodical funds for the library.

The years 1930-1940 witnessed a steady expansion of the book collection which began the decade with 8750 volumes and doubled in the ten-year period. The use of the library by student, writers, and playwrights became increasingly evident. For this reason special attention was directed to the building of a strong reference collection.

Although funds for the library were greatly reduced in the years/1933-1937, years of the depression, the branch experienced its greatest use in its history. The year 1934 closed with the largest circulation - 176,127 volumes.

The advent of the Great War presented new problems. Space was given up to war needs, staff was reduced by <sup>(cut)</sup> library service was extended. Home libraries were installed in Westwood, a canteen library was established and a drive for books netted 1000 volumes for the local canteen.

A branch advisory board was organized which included such outstanding leaders in the community as Mrs. Stephen W. Cunningham, Mrs. Paul H. Daus, Dr. H. M. Hales, Rev. Mark Hogue, Mr. Edward R. Stoner. The board was primarily concerned with the possibility of selecting a site for a library building. Public meetings were called to feel out the sentiment of the people in respect to the proposed locations and plans. Nothing ever came of the planning done during these years.

After the war there was a flow of new borrowers, children and adults, from the new residential sections as well as the old. The return of hundreds of G.I.'s to their homes as well as the influx of veterans attending the schools in the area increased the needs and services of the library.

During the years the children of this community have profited by the expert service of the outstanding children's librarians at the branch. Mrs. Louise Knudsen served from 1929 to 1940 followed by Miss Marie Pinney who remained until 1948. Mrs. Harriet Riedel has the position at the present time, coming from the New York Public Library where she had worked six years as children's librarian. Story hours, school visits, classes at the library, book selection, reference service and aids to parents are the particular contribution of these librarians.

The Cluga Book Club was organized in the early '30's under the guidance and leadership of Mrs. Mary Abell, mother of the branch librarian. The club has continued to meet at the branch twice a month through the years reviewing and discussing the books of the day.

In July, 1946 Miss Abell transferred to the La Cienega Branch and Mrs. Eleanora Crowder became the branch librarian.

The present book stock includes 23,000 volumes, 7000 of which are juvenile titles. The annual circulation will total 130,000 this year being taken out by over 10,000 registered borrowers. The branch has advanced from 23rd place in the 40 branches of the system to the 9th place in the point of books taken for home use in the past 2 years. Demand is greatest for factual material and serious works. Readers represent every type making a diversified book collection a necessity.

Recently the interior has been remodeled and redecorated. Every effort has been made to expand the shelving to accommodate more books for the growing public.

While the past is a record of growth and community service the future for the library in West Los Angeles is very bright.

In October, 1947 Miss Althea Warren retired as city librarian and Harold L. Smill was appointed. An analysis of service and objectives was in order: a survey which has been in progress for over a year by the Bureau of Budget and Efficiency. It was found that West Los Angeles ranks high in present use and potential growth. The survey recommends that this branch be designated as one of the six in the entire city system to give maximum library service on a regional basis. Tentative plans for regional branches include longer hours of service, mechanical charging, augmented reference service, larger book collections, speedier interlibrary loans, bookmobile routes to remote sections and complete coordination of library service in the whole western area of the city. All of this will be particularly welcome to the residents of this community for the great distance between West Los Angeles and the downtown Central library or any other large city branch makes the need here great indeed.

The Brentwood community profited by the generosity of one of its pioneer residents when Mr. Jacob Horsch gave his home at 11820 San Vicente Blvd. for a library in July, 1938. Brentwood station now houses about 3000 books and has a circulation of 1000 books a month. Mrs. Alma Corbin with years of library experience is in charge and gives excellent service despite the small collection and limited loan facilities.

- 30 -

Well remembered staff members other than librarians mentioned are Albertine Stone, Alice Farr, Blanche Albright, Florence Way, and Maxine Heuberger most of whom live in West Los Angeles. Present staff members are; Eleanora Crowder, Helen Smith, Jane Boyer, Harriet Hiedel, Jeannette Clark White, Lily Remmler, Martha Uhl, Ann Colwell, Gertrude Bartlett, Marilyn Irving, Virginia Kerley, Pat Loeffler and Jerry Gardner.

the Bureau of Budget and Efficiency <sup>found that what</sup> ~~recommends~~ that this area be given regional service. This will mean mechanical charging, augmented reference service, larger book collection, speedier inter-library loans, bookmobile routes to remote sections, <sup>openings</sup> ~~more~~ book outlets and complete coordination of library service in the whole western area of the city.