

From a twelve by twenty-four foot building to its present attractive Italian Renaissance structure, Wilshire Branch Library, 149 North St. Andrews Place, has shown constant growth since it opened December 6, 1920.

The first quarters, store building on Second and Hobart Streets the smallest ever occupied by any branch library, housed only 1,000 books. Its growth was rapid; consequently after three years the branch was moved to more spacious quarters on Western Avenue.

More evidence of the branch's popularity is shown by a third move, in August 1926, to a large double store building on Western and Council. A small town atmosphere of friendliness and cooperation was in evidence, as merchants along Western Avenue posted signs recommending books and reminding passers-by of the library's location. That circulation increased rapidly is an understatement: Every book, including bound magazines and all Reference books circulated 6 1/4 times during November, 1926.

1927 was a banner year for Wilshire. It marked the completion of the present library, attractively ornamented with carved stone, some individual designs copied from 12th century Italian originals. Serenity and dignity are part of the charm of this building.

From time to time the library has sponsored experts who have lectured on their particular field -- there was Richard Neutra who discussed architecture; Don Blanding who read his poems; George Palmer Putnam who wrote "Death Valley and its Country" -- and other luminaries. Children's story hours continue to attract.

Today the library continues to grow -- despite paperbacks, TV, California sunshine and lack of parking space.