

HISTORY
HOLLYWOOD BRANCH LIBRARY
1936-1949

STAFF

BRANCH LIBRARIANS

Alice M. Scheck	1936-1945
Helen Spotts	1945-1949
Zada Taylor	1949-

ASSISTANT DEPARTMENT LIBRARIAN

Edna M. James	1936-
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CHILDREN'S LIBRARIANS

Hazel Francisco	1936-1937
Pauline Ames	1937-1943
Hazel Holt Becker	1943-1945
Alice S. Reese	1945-1946
Cecile Ritter	1946
Bess Wooten	1946-

LIBRARIANS

Helen Fitz-Richard	1936-1938
Eleanor Wade	1936-1944
Frances P. Williams	1938
Lillian Moyle	1938-1939
Elizabeth Matson	1939-1945
Ella May Coughlin	1945-1947
Mary T. Hugentugler	1947-
Helen Scherr	1947-1948
Riva Bresler	1948-
Hilda Dobrin	1948-

INTERMEDIATE CLERK TYPISTS

Miriam Webb	1946-
Henrietta Elsenberg	1946-

CLERK TYPISTS

Elizabeth Coryell	1936
Opal Estes	1936-1942
Elma Baker	1936-1942
May Louise Snowden	1936-1943
Cassell Perry	1936-1938
Henrietta Elsenberg	1937-1946
Alice S. Reese	1938-1942
Miriam Webb	1940-1946
Helen Bryan	1942
Agnes Dudgeon	1943
Dorothy Garner	1943
Flora E. Johnston	1944
Betty Jane Lysaght	1944-1945

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Etheline Valancia	1944
Beatrice Riess	1944
Evangeline Ruch	1944-1945
La Velle Nesper	1945
Luceal Reed	1945
Isabel Weisel	1945
Olive Mc Gowan	1945-1946
Rosemary Dougherty	1945-1946
Jeanne Granville	1946-1948
Genette Gibson	1946-1949
Shirley Guest	1947-1948
Joyce Miller	1947-1948
Dorothy Derby	1947-1948
Lucille Arson	1948
Raymond James	1948
Joanna Reeve	1947-
Joy Turney	1948
Mildred Moore	1949-
Karen Overgaard	1948-
Patricia Marshall	1949-

Reading the reports for the years between 1936 and 1949 of the Hollywood Branch Library has been extremely interesting and it has been fascinating to see that the growth and development of Hollywood as a community and Hollywood as a Branch Library have not only kept apace but that the interests and problems of both are much the same today as they were thirteen years ago. The years have, of course, accelerated and accentuated the interests and the problems but otherwise some part of each annual report thru these years could easily be this year's report of conditions and interests in Hollywood.

There is a refrain repeated thru the years which tells of the increased business activity in the community; the decline in the use of the Children's Room; the parking problem; the unfortunate separation of the adult and children's book collections and the problems that entails; the difficulties involved in keeping up with the ever increasing reserve requests of the patrons; the consistent

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and ever amazing use of the Library's reading rooms as a place for reading and reference; the lack of real community spirit and the consequent development of a metropolitan atmosphere; the unusual emphasis on periodical literature and the problems of the Balcony where that literature is housed; the overwhelming demands for everything on the arts; and the constantly accelerated reference work. These things are all part of Hollywood as a community and help make the character of the Hollywood Branch as it is now just as they have in years past.

Highlights from the annual reports give the history of the Hollywood Branch as it has developed for these thirteen years. The 1936 Annual Report states, "Business has been booming on the Boulevard this year. All sorts of remodelling and face-lifting has gone on and is still going on. A godly portion of the old eye-sores in the way of buildings has been removed and this adds greatly to the appearance of things." Big business was developing fast all around the library and the Branch Librarian was told that it was "against the best interests of business to have a spot like the library on a business street." However, an energetic and active group, "Women Painters of the West", under the leadership of a Miss Ethel Mill, renovated the Art Gallery at their own expense and opened the remodelled Gallery with a lively show. Some improvements were made in the library's grounds and the Branch Librarian made three talks to community groups during the year.

It was during 1936 that the Branch returned to all day opening on Saturday which seemed to be no particular joy to any but the "ever-present crowd of idle, homeless (or at least practically homeless) people who sit all day, everyday on those hard chairs, reading magazines and newspapers."

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This year showed a slight gain in registration, a large gain in reserves taken for request books even though the former 2 cent charge had been increased to 5 cents. There was a loss in circulation but not as large a loss as compared to the previous years' circulation. The last year to show a gain had been 1932-33 when Hollywood's peak circulation reached 430,002.

In 1937 the community continued to show an increased business activity and the parking problem became acute. Several suggestions were made to the Branch Librarian that the property belonging to the library was too valuable for business to be occupied by a library building.

The auditorium was not used during this year but the Art Gallery continued to have exhibits and numerous social activities were sponsored in connection with the exhibits.

The circulation continued to show a loss but a slight gain in registration was recorded and a heavy gain in reserves was noted. The pressure of reference work was keenly felt and the frantic "contest crazy" public made itself well known to the staff and added to their burdens of covering the desk and giving real service to more serious patrons.

The Catalog Department sent out a representative to supervise the taking of an inventory (the last one to date) and that was finished under the direction of Miss Jones. The pamphlet filed was completely revised and the W.P.A. and S.E.R.A. workers which had been added to the staff did their bit to clean up the book collection.

The following year saw the building of the big Broadway-Hollywood Department Store directly across the street from the library and the Branch found itself in the very middle of great activity, noise and uncomfortable neighbors with conditions within the building becoming

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exceptionally crowded and difficult for work.

Several special programs were held for the children in the Auditorium but otherwise it was not used though the Art Gallery still continued its shows under the auspices of the "Women Painters of the West."

The reference work increased daily and according to the 1938 report "all but swamps us" and there seemed to be a large increase in the number of telephone requests regarding certain titles which meant frequent trips to the basement, balcony or both and added to the already heavy duties of the staff. The telephone was apparently used then as it is now to save a trip to the library and the inevitable parking problem unless there is a certainty that the desired title is available on the shelves.

The W.P.A. workers were still with the library and did a splendid job of analyzing the music collection during this period. This group of analytics is still in use and though it has not been kept up thru the years still has much real value. They also were able to copy missing pages, reinforce the magazines, clean books and add a great deal to the upkeep of the library.

Apparently the year 1939 was one of just holding on to the regular routine with nothing special in plans for according to the trend of the report the Branch expected to move at any time and no plans for the future beyond that were made. It was recorded that there were definite signs of a let-down in business on the Boulevard and that some of the higher class stores were moving to other parts of the city and "B" grade establishments were taking over the vacated quarters of the first class establishments. Two large broadcasting companies put up buildings this year on Sunset and Vine and caused a great increase in activities in that particular vicinity for many of the related offices

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such as the advertising agencies moved off the direct Boulevard to be near the studios.

In May of 1939 the library stopped renewing books and the W.P.A. were there to help change many of the 14 day renewable books to 23 day. There was a lessening of the strain at the main desk with the release from the burden of renewals but no decline was noticed in the reference work. There was a continued loss in children's circulation with a considerable loss of enrollment in the schools as many of the small homes in the city gave way to business buildings.

A count of the people entering the Hollywood Branch was made on three separate days during the year - Saturday, October 8th 1,837 people came into the library and on Monday, October 10th, 1,954 and again on Thursday October 13th, 1,553 people were counted as having entered the library.

Quoting directly from the 1940 annual report - "The big news for this annual report is the fact that we are in our new building; that it is an achieved fact, after nearly a year of effort on the part of all concerned. Our sojourn ⁱⁿ temporary quarters at 6028 Hollywood Blvd., ended April 22nd, when we began moving into the new building. All day Sunday, April 21st, the staff under the supervision of the Branch Librarian and Miss Milspaugh, worked getting books in order on the shelves, shelves labelled and last minute details worked out so that when the Los Angeles Warehouse men, under Mr. Compton, arrived at eight o'clock Monday morning things were ready to go.

Miss Applegate from the Branches Department was at the new building with some of the Hollywood staff, while the rest remained in the temporary quarters. All the books had been "Blue-printed" on the shelves some time before, so that as the labelled and numbered boxes of books began to arrive Miss Applegate could supervise their placing in their

new locations. So quickly did the moving people work that practically everything was out of the temporary quarters by the end of the day. Only odds and ends of shelving, furniture, fixtures, etc. remained to be taken away and this was accomplished before noon on Tuesday. For the rest of the week and all day Monday, April 30th, the staff worked like beavers getting the books in order, and all the records in their new cases, the catalogue re-assembled and the borrower's files in their expanded and refinished cases in the elegant new desk. A detailed account of these operations would more than tax our space and time; needless to say, it was all accomplished, and the library was swept and garnished with lovely floral tributes, all ready for the "Grand Opening", scheduled for 8 o'clock Monday evening, April 30th, 1940.

Board members, Miss Warren, families of the staff, friends, all were in hand bright and early for this event, which was under the sponsorship of the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Hollywood. A committee headed by Mr. George Fitts and composed of Harlan Palmer, Jr., George Palmer, and Mr. Fowler, of Otto K. Oleson Company, planned the affair in cooperation with the Board of Library Commissioners, Miss Warren and the branch librarian. Mr. Oleson sent over his super-collossal lights to tell the world that there was a "premier" on in Hollywood: the committee also arranged for the public address system, as the program was given from the entrance of the library. All went well, and a large crowd of interested patrons and friends of the library inspected the building after the formal ceremonies were over. Mayor Fletcher Bowron accepted the key to the new building; Mr. Clark Bush, secretary of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce and Dr. von KleinSmid, president of the Board of Library Commissioners, were co-masters of ceremony."

After settling down to business in the fine new building

the next year recorded a gain in circulation over the very large loss of 1940 due to the move but otherwise the entire 1941 annual report is given over to a summary of the campaign for the Library's amendment on the ballot that spring. It was reported that a friendly attitude from the public was noticeable for the most part but apparently the campaign failed in the Hollywood district.

The following years of 1942 and 1943 were devoted to the regular and routine activities of running the Branch and there was no time for outside activities and the W.P.A. help on which the library had come to depend heavily was first cut and then disbanded so that all the burden of small things was added to the regular chores of the permanent staff. There was noted a pick up of interest and use in the Auditorium as two groups of ~~women~~, "The Book Overers Club" and the "Antiquarians," one interested in book reviews and the other in the collection of antiques held regular bi-weekly meetings in the library. Also the "League of American Penwomen" used the Club room for one of their groups and it was during this period that the school visits to the Library were resumed under the auspices of the Children's Room.

This same use of the library as a place for meetings was carried on in 1944 with several other groups using the room regularly. It was during this year that a concentrated effort was made to get the Hollywood Citizen News interested in the Library as news or as a means of supplying book notes to the public but with no luck. It was apparent that the same policy was in operation then as now and that the Citizen News was busy trying to be a real Metropolitan newspaper with little or no time or use or space for any so-called neighborhood column unless it was a newsworthy item of general interest to the City Editor.

Much the same type of activities were set down for the

1945 annual report of work in the Branch and there was no change in statistical figures for there continued to be a loss in circulation with the regular gain in registration and reserves recorded. Classes were visiting the Children's Room regularly but there also continued a loss in circulation in that department. This was the final report of Miss Alice Scheck as Branch Librarian for directly after the end of the fiscal year she was transferred from the Hollywood Branch to the Felipe de Neve Branch of the Library.

Helen Spotts was transferred from the Vermont Square Branch Library to the Hollywood Branch in 1946 and found it a stimulating and challenging place in which to work. It was a year full of problems for the Library with many staff changes, a 2.29 gain in circulation, a 51% gain in the money handled in the pay collection, a very large gain in the total fines collected and an overwhelming number of overdue books to be taken care of as best could be under difficult circumstances.

During the War years of 1942-5 great emphasis had naturally been placed on the needs and conditions of the times and with the increase in the use of the library caused by the ending of the war the large turnover in untrained staff did not help to make the work easier as adjustments to the post-war period began. The reserves and the reference work continued to the heavy side and it was a period of constant adjustment to meet the demands of the public with available staff and help.

1947 and 1948 continued with numerous staff changes though some of the better Messenger Clerks and Clerk Typists became settled employees the professional staff was unsteady until 1948 when it began to show improvement and welcome additions. There was an 8% gain in circulation during this period and the first signs of a tightening of the public's purse strings after the boom years with a loss in the amount of money collected for the pay collection.

In starting her report for 1948 Miss Spotts says, "This has been a most exciting and profitable year in the Los Angeles Public Library. The stimulus of a change in administration, of a course in supervision, of Surveys and Blueprints has penetrated the system down to each staff member in each branch. At Hollywood we are grateful for these challenges to routines in thinking and practice, and for the quickening of spirit and creative energy which have followed. We also appreciate the sympathetic attitude toward our branch and its problems; the time given by Miss Bowler to study our needs; the removal of the oak barrier between the circulation desk and catalogs (which has received much favorable comment from our patrons); the electric clock for our work room; and the added storage shelving on our balcony."

An attendance record was kept of the people entering the Library for one week and during that week a total of 8,294 people came into the building. A Reference count was also made this year and the total for the period was 11,840 questions answered which was larger than that of any single unit in the library system.

The next year the staff had a steadier record for the professional staff stayed the same thruout the year and the clerical staff had only the usual Messenger Clerk shifts and changes. The gains in all statistical departments continued as the use of the library increased in tune with the times and conditions of the country as a whole. Within the Branch building there were changes made in the rearrangement of the Reference Room with the reference and information desks and telephone combined at the front of the room to enable the professional staff to give better service and have better supervision of the entire building.

On February 1, 1949 Helen Spotts was transferred to the

University Branch Library and Zada Taylor was transferred from the John C. Fremont Branch to Hollywood Branch as the Branch Librarian.

In conclusion to these highlights gleaned from annual reports as recorded thru the years it is evident that Hollywood's part in the community has been a very definite one. It has not been, nor is it now, the kind of community that lends itself to the regulation community agencies and activities as they are generally thought of but the Library has adjusted itself to what has been demanded of it and has made a place for itself. The Hollywood area is metropolitan and the Hollywood Library is a "little main library" in that area. This is evident not only from six months of observation but from the fact that the recent Survey has recommended that this Branch become a Regional Branch.

There are community agencies active in the area, the Chamber of Commerce, the Co-ordinating Councils, the Woman's Club, etc. in which the Branch Library takes part by being represented at meetings, making book lists, book talks, and helping wherever it is able, however, these activities are on a different scale and from a slightly different angle than some of the smaller communities and the Library's part is not always a very glamorous one as it is in some of the more rural areas - we are just a part of the whole. Each Branch adjusts itself to its surroundings and its problems and it is felt that the character of this area and the character of the Branch Library are compatible to Hollywood.

The local people that use the Hollywood Branch are patrons either thru the nature of their business or because their business is located in the vicinity or lastly because they live in the approximate neighborhood. Many use this Branch from distant places

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because it is a fairly large library and will often supply their needs where a closer but smaller library will not and it saves them a trip into Los Angeles.

The public is impersonal and the nature of their demands makes the atmosphere of the Library much less informal than many branches yet our people take real interest in what goes on in the library and what happens to the library. We count among our patrons many really famous people, a vast number of would-be-famous people, and too many who were once temporarily famous but have been forgotten by the short memory of their public. We have those now riding the crest of the wave and we have the very dregs of humanity as regular patrons and inbetween are all the just ordinary hard working people who have great need for our services.

Hollywood is not only interesting - it is exciting! No brief history could give the picture of its challenges, its color nor the possibilities for its development.

Respectfully submitted,

Zada Taylor
Branch Librarian
July 1949