

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

January 24, 1950

More About Beginnings Of Monterey Library

Yesterday we began a history of the Monterey Public Library from its first meeting under the direction of the "Ladies Circulating Book Club" in 1901, and today will continue until the building of the present library building in 1911.

At the second annual meeting of the Monterey Library Association held on January 29, 1903, there were 24 members present. The secretary-treasurer's report shows a gain of \$27,32 over the previous year, and a balance on hand of \$80.70.

In September of 1903 the board of directors of the Old Capitol Club sent a communication to the Library Association which read as follows: "That if the Library of the Library will open a free reading room that the club will give them a lease to terminate at the same time as the Old Capitol Club at a rental of one (\$1) dollar per year, and that if no free reading room be opened that the Library Association be given a lease to expire at the same time as the Old Capitol Club lease, 3rd Dec. 1906, at a rental of Five (\$5) dollars per month Mrs. J.P. Sargent, Mrs. Emily Fish (wife of the lighthouse keeper at Pacific Grove), and Mrs. Zimmerman were appointed a committee to investigate the proposition.

At the next meeting of the group Mrs. Sargent reported what the expense would be in establishing a free reading room and the trustees could see their way clear to establish one, but they did vote to open the library every Saturday and Wednesday from 2 until 5 p.m. On motion a reading corner was established free to the public and a vote of thanks was extended to Mrs. T. J. Field for a feather duster and a paper cutter.

Trustees present at the third annual meeting on January 28, 1904, were Mrs. M.M. Gragg, president, William Kay, Clara Zimmerman, J.P. Sargent, Ross Sargent, Emily Fish, T.J. Field, (former owner of the old adobe now Casa Munras) W.W. James, Sophia Harris and J. Moore. Thirty-six members were present. Receipts for the year showed a gain, the sum being \$198.00. There were 815 volumes. (At this date in 1950 there are 46,000 volumes.)

On June 9, 1904 the Library association held a garden party at the home of Mrs. J.P. Sargent, now known as the Gragg or Stokes adobe at the corner of Hartnell and

Polk Streets. Mrs. Sargent and Mrs. Johnson had charge of the program. Miss Pardee and Mrs. Little had the printing done, Miss M. Bergschicker did the decorating; Mrs. M. Harris and Mrs. A.B. Guzendorfer had charge of the cake table, Mrs. Zimmerman was at the gate, and Mrs. Henry Fonda and Mrs. Hollingsworth served ice cream; Miss Eva Doud, Miss Pardee, Miss Little and Miss Morey were pouring coffee and serving sandwiches, Julia Gragg and Antonette Field had the flower booth and Mrs. Schaufels served lemonade. That month they bought matting for the library floor.

At the fourth annual meeting, January 26, 1905, all the officers and trustees were present and the secretary reported 967 books on hand. Mrs. McGowan addressed the meeting on the necessity of a free reading room. Mrs. Abe Guzendorfer spoke of the fine library at Santa Cruz, and proposed that the association write to Mr. Andrew Carnegie. It was moved and seconded that the president write or appoint someone to write to Mr. Carnegie asking under what condition he would assist the association. Mrs. Gragg appointed the secretary, Mrs. Clara Zimmerman.

In April of 1907, Mrs. Zimmerman left for a tour of Europe and Mrs. J.P. Sargent asked her sister, Miss Etta Eckhardt, then a resident of Gilroy, to come to Monterey and be librarian during the secretary's absence. She came and remained for 30 years as the chief librarian of the Monterey Public Library. The present library was built in 1911 with Carnegie money, perhaps obtained partially as the result of the letter which went to him from "The Ladies Circulating Book Club."