

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Old Records Tell Of Library's Beginning

At a meeting of the trustees of the Monterey Library Association held at the home of Mrs. J.P. Sargent on December 15th, 1905, the members voted to transfer all properties to the trustees of the public library. T.B. Hunter was the first president, Mrs. J.P. Sargent, treasurer; Clara Zimmerman, secretary and J.K. Oliver and Mrs. Rudolph Spence, members.

A room was rented in the Scholer block for \$30 a month, to house the 1,200 volumes received from the association. The secretary reported the most popular books of that month were: Graustark, Beverly of Graustark, Pam and Pam Decides.

On July 3rd, the trustees asked Mr. J.K. Oliver to confer with the city trustees and present to them the Carnegie communication and ask them to take action. At this meeting the library became a member of the California State Library Association. In October of 1908 Mr. Carmel Martin was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Mr. T.B. Hunter.

On August 21st, 1909, a special meeting was called to consider a library site. The Quartel property was most favored, with a second choice of the Martin lot on the corner of Madison and Hartnell street. On motion Mr. Martin, the president, was requested to confer with the city clerk and prepare statements to forward to Mr. Carnegie requesting a donation of \$15,000.

On December 23, 1909, a communication came stating that Mr. Carnegie offered \$10,000 for the Monterey Library as soon as a site was available. Mr. Martin was empowered to accept the offer on behalf of the trustees and communicate with Mr. Carnegie.

In February of 1910 Mayor Will Jacks offered the city, on behalf of the David Jacks Corporation, a site at the southeast corner of Scott and Pacific street and the trustees recommended acceptance. After the deed was returned to the corporation and a "site offered by Mrs. A.M. Freitas on Van Buren street, lot 80 x 120, next to the tennis court" was considered. On April 2nd, there appeared in the secretary's minutes the following "Trustee Martin stated that the city trustees discovered a flaw in the title of the Quartel property and by resolution had accepted the lot offered by Mrs. Freitas for the library site. It was moved and seconded that Mr.

Martin have authority to interview Mr. Weeks, the architect, and order preliminary plans for a Carnegie Library."

On May 26th, Weeks met with the trustees and presented two plans. Plan A was accepted, subject to Mr. Carnegie's approval. Present at the meeting were Carmel Martin, Mrs. M.M. Gragg and Mrs. Clara Peterson. The contract for the building of the library went to low bidder Robert Trost, at \$9,438.00.

On December 3, 1910, Mrs. J.P. Sargent resigned as trustee of the library and Dr. Sarah Hatton McAulay was appointed. Later that year Mr. Charles Salterbach and James McIntosh were added to the board.

The new library was opened June 29th when a "dish and the same engraved was presented to Mrs. Freitas as an expression of appreciation."

Mrs. Freitas lived in a little house on Jackson street near Van Buren, until she went to reside with Mr. and Mrs. John Colwell in 1922. She passed away on December 21, 1924, at the age of 82 years, eight months and 14 days. Mrs. Colwell recently gave to the Monterey History and Art Association a carved ivory fan which had belonged to Mrs. Freitas and which has been on display at the Custom House Museum.

Mrs. Ross Sargent recalls the old days of the Reading Club which later became the Monterey Library Association and remembers how the members had tea at the monthly meetings, taking cakes and sandwiches to the library rooms in the buggy of Mrs. B.V. Sargent, to which a beloved white horse was hitched. Mrs. B.V. Sargent was the mother of Mrs. M.M. Gragg, J.P. Sargent and Ross Sargent.

Miss Eckhardt was the librarian for 30 years and upon her retirement in 1927 she was presented with a hand lettered plaque by the city council with Mayor Emmet McMenemy making the presentation and the late Dr. Horace Wetherall, representing the library board.

The lot which was purchased from James Martin at the corner of Madison and Jefferson streets a few years ago as the proposed library site, is the same lot which was considered in 1909.