

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Library Beginnings**

The history of the Monterey Public Library has been a fascinating subject to write about.

I will begin today with February of 1910 when Mayor Will Jacks offered the city, on behalf of the David Jacks Corporation, a site on the south-east corner of Scott and Pacific streets and the trustees recommended acceptance.

Later 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 courts' was considered.

On April 2, there appeared in the secretary's minutes the following: "Trustee Martin stated that the city trustees discovered a flaw in the title of the Cuartel 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 26, 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 Trust, at \$9,438.

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

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

Mrs. Freitas lived in a small house 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 later presented to the Monterey History and Art Association a carved ivory fan which belonged to Mrs. Freitas and which has been on display at the Custom House Museum.

Mrs. Ross Sargent recalled to me the old days of the reading club which later became the Monterey Library and remembered 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. Gragg, J.P. Sargent and Rose Sargent.

Miss Eckhart 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 Emmett McMenamain making the presentation and the late Dr. Horace Wetherell 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, it the same lot which was considered in 1909.

The Monterey History and Art association extends a cordial invitation to the members, friends, and to out of town visitors to visit Casa Serrano, the association headquarters on Pacific street, on Saturday or Sunday afternoons from 1 to 4 p.m. At present, a special exhibit of old lace and jewelry, some of which was made in Monterey in the early days is on display.

The exhibit also includes some very handsome old glass, recently presented to the association by Mrs. Winifred Wolf of Gonzales, who is a descendant of former Monterey residents for whom the town of Gonzales was named.