

The City of Santa Clara Library

“There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away
Nor any coursers like a page
Of prancing poetry”
- Emily Dickinson



CITY OF SANTA CLARA
CENTRAL LIBRARY

Santa Clara, California

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It isn't just reading to the baby; it's reading as a family"*
-Jan Lieberman

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Near the entrance of the library there's a plaque. I've never thought much of it before, just a bunch of names and a date. What I never realized was that it symbolized a new beginning. It was created at a time that I can only imagine, a time when the Central Library didn't exist. It's hard to conceive of a period when a resident of Santa Clara couldn't go to the library. There was no ban on going to libraries it's just that one simply did not exist. Over the past hundred years the City of Santa Clara has gotten it's library and with it are the thousands of benefits that any city takes when it educates it people and does it as well as Santa Clara has. Its history is rich in memories and beginnings.

Memories Lost in Time

The building that is ingrained in most peoples minds as the library of Santa Clara City is Located at 2635 Homestead Rd. It would be a shock to most of the people that visit the library, that there was once was no library. Small independent libraries were around and different organizations like the Santa Clara Book Club, the Literary Union and the Christian Temperance Movement ran them. (Kat 22-26) Unfortunately none of these libraries lasted very long either because of lack of interest or lack of funds. The only libraries that where of any significance seemed to be the Santa Clara College library and the University of the Pacific's library. (United States Bureau of Education. Public Libraries in the United States of America, their history, Condition and Management. 762-767)

“Libraries had existed in Palo Alto, San Jose, Gilroy, Los Gatos, Mountain View and Sunnyvale. (Eddy, Harriet. County Free Library Organizing in California. Pg. 42) So why was there no library in the city of Santa Clara? The lack of money and the need for more patrons seemed to be the two main factors in the inability to get any type of ‘real’ organized library to be formed by the city. The same problems that faced the small independent organized libraries also plagued the city itself. When these conditions are met a library is born, “ A library appeared when the community was economically able to support it, when public education was provided, and when social libraries existed.” (Summarized by Kat from Steig. 6)

In March of 1902 a public library ballot was voted down by a vote of 222 to 196. (“Proceedings from the board of trustees”, Kat 31). It was around this time thought that Andrew Carnegie began his process of sharing his wealth with the whole of the United States. Carnegie argued that, “...the rich had a moral responsibility to plow back their wealth into the larger society.” (Andrew Carnegie, “Wealth”. North American Review 1889) With that in mind Carnegie became one of the worlds leading philanthropists by building halls, museums and most of all, libraries. One of Carnegie’s main themes was that he would build a library but the people had to fill it with books, “...[to] help those who help themselves; to provide part of the means by those who desire to improve may do so...” (Review, 1889). The library could be built in Santa Clara but the thousand dollars a year fee would exceed the paltry tax of three cents that could be used for the library, “...an amount entirely inadequate.” Wrote library trustee D.O. Drofell in 1902. (Kat. 32) Lack of funds prevented the city from capitalizing on Carnegie’s good will.

Still the library was around in one form or another servicing the small group of people who wanted books but couldn’t make it to the collage libraries. The ‘library’ leased rooms in the back of the Franck Building for a small fee of 15 dollars a month and there it stayed till 1914

when it assumed a more permanent place on the second floor of City hall. ("A Brief History of the Library. 11) The first librarian there was a man by the name of William Beattle; (although there is a conflict as to if it was Shelby Dodson or William Beattle) who ran the library for a year around 1903. The following year a new librarian was appointed, a woman named Ms. Mary Mulhall. Ms. Mulhall was one of the most unusual people and tales still fly about one of the cities earliest librarians. She locked up most of the books so children couldn't get them and read them lest they ruin the book or soil their minds by what was contained inside their covers. If the children where able to get there hands on a book they would have had to have read it inside the library because under Ms. Mulhall's reign children where unable to have Library cards.

Ms. Beryl Hoskin took over as Librarian for a brief period of time for Ms. Mulhall. She made several changes from the way Ms. Mulhall had done things. She cataloged and organized the collection, which was in dire disarray. Children were allowed to have library cards and a story hour was put on by Ms. Beryl while the adults got to check out more then one item at a time.

The Library board of trustees got together and helped outline a new program of library service got stated. (Revised Kat. Donald Fuller) the City Council approved the building of a new library that could hold up to 26,000 volumes. By this time there was a new librarian, Ms. Frances Klune, the first trained librarian. The library put up stakes at the Main and Lexington streets. Before the 'paint could dry' the library had already become too small for it's expanding number of patrons. Ms. Klune, the librarian at the time, worked hard along with the Friends of the Library to try and get the 800,000 dollars that the bond held. In 1959 a new bond measure was passed and plans started for the development of a nearly one million-dollar library building after bonus funds had been procured.

On September 27, 1965 ground was broken for a building that was to become, what the architects had planned to be a building that, "...[was of a] quiet dignity, possessing distinctive architectural quality, warmth and friendliness." The architects had it right the library became a building with a life of it's own and an ever growing, expanding collection of books satisfied it's rising number of patrons. The Library even ended up adorning the cover of the 1968 telephone book. With the number of patrons on the rise and the large number of books circulating, led the City Council and the City Manager to approve an expansion of the library in the early 1980s. Under the eyes of only the fifth librarian Mr. Donald Fuller watched his library grow to handle the shelving capacity for 250,000 volumes! The library continues to grow and expand even today with a new library on the way.



The current Central Library, after the 1980s reconstruction. Noted by the lack of flagpoles out in front. (Figure 1)

A Place with More than Just Books...but there are those too.

The idea that a library is only a place to read died long ago and may have only had some truth to it in the days of Ms. Mulhall. The library has always been about books and about reading and educating but it also is the home of some of the best programs around. Programs range from the Children's story hour to the San Jose opera stopping by. Along with the multitude of

programs for children there have arisen things for adults including workshops, adult fiction writers and library related programs like, the Friends of the Library and the Genealogy Society.

Ms. Klune knew the key to the library was held in the children, “The Library distributes in many ways what is the most valuable commodity in a busy city, - Books, enlightenment, facts, information, new ideas, new ambitions and inspiration- intellectual and spiritual nourishment, without which a person does not develop to the peak of his personality.” (Klines Report on Kids.1). While Ms. Klune ran the library the number of kids who had library cards jumped up by leaps and bounds, a trend that happily continues still.

Ms. Klune also introduced the vacation reading club where children who completed a certain number of books over the summer break received certificates. Today the program is called the Summer Reading Program and kids of all ages and the parents that help them out, can receive not only a certificate but also a free book of their choosing. Different gifts have also been included at times including vouchers for free Giants tickets and discounts on other attractions in and out of Santa Clara. In the summer of 2000 the Summer Reading Program was changed slightly with the ability of the participants to choose their own reading goal. As one Library Assistant put it, “ It allows children to feel good about being able to read at their own pace and be able to participate even if they can’t read the usual ten books in the summer.”

A program called READ (Reading for everyone to achieve and develop) was established in the early seventies with grants from the government. READ was formed to help stop illiteracy. Many people don’t know how to read or just know enough to get by. Kathy St. John, who currently heads the program says, “ Our literacy program works with adults who can converse in English but read and write below an eighth grade level.” (Latest at the Library. Feb 26, 2001). The READ program gathers volunteers to be tutors to those who can not read or write or only to

an elementary level. The program has become dependent on the need for volunteers. The only reason the program stops is because of the need for more people to come in and help out. Today the only problem seems to be making sure the 'perfect match' is found between tutor and tutoree. The program is now centered, at what used to be the 1955 main library, the Mission Library. Being able to walk into a library and know you can read any book you want, because you can read, is a very powerful feeling the program provides.

Story time is an activity put on by the Children's Librarians. Its aim is for young children and their parents. Each event is packed with kids and their parents who are trying to get in to some of the most original programs put on by the talented librarians. Other talented people come into Story Time to share their talents to the program with things like singing, dancing and puppet shows. One of the newer programs is the DIAL-A-STORY. It's put together by the Children's librarians and funded by the Friends of the Library. By simply dialing the number, (408) 241-1611, anyone can call in and hear the story of the week. The service provides children and their families to listen to stories even if they can't get away to the Library. Another new program, started in 1995 by Children's Librarian Jan Lieberman, was something called RAPP. No music involved though, just the ability for high school and elementary students to get together and read as 'reading buddies'. The program allows for the youngsters to improve on reading and get a close up role model.

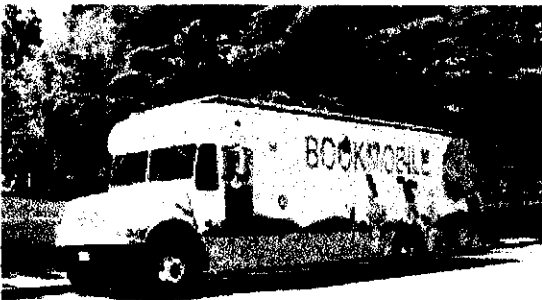
During the summer when kids are let free from their schools the library has always set a series of event each year for the young adults. The activities have garnered rave reviews from not only from the teenagers and their parents but also from staff who are amazed at some of the things the young adults do every summer. Many of them are seen sneaking away to grab a few minutes of the shows and how to demonstrations. While heavy in summer events the Young

Adult program goes year round, poetry readings, magic shows and book talks are just a few. Heading the program, along with another Librarian, is a council of teenagers, which help decide which activities should go on in the Library. Having teenagers decide what teenagers want, is a great way to ensure the success of the teen programs.

One of the earliest Young Adult programs was the Underground Library, which began at the Mission Library in 1967. The main point of the program was to loan items that weren't traditionally used in the public libraries. The program soon became a smash and became too large for its surrounding. The whole program was soon moved to leased rooms in the Franklin Mall. One patron of the Library said it was so popular because, "...there's no little old lady with glasses telling you everything's a no-no." (Mercury News. Nov 24, 1968) In fact the library was less about being quiet and more about talking with other people. There wasn't even a check out procedure, instead the books were given out on the honor system to be returned or passed on to a friend. The program came under speculation from parents and other adults because of the teenager's ability to listen to rock music and sit on cushions on the floor. Also the name 'Underground Library' was questioned by parents as to if it was really a library- which it was- and the name was soon changed to the YAP.

The number of young adults and kids had increased quite rapidly in the 1960s and the library commissioned what was to become the very first Bookmobile. The bookmobile served all the people in the outlying suburban areas. The Bookmobile has served large numbers of patrons, of the 50,000 books checked out in 1964, 45.5 percent came from the Bookmobile, an astonishingly high number. (The Lamp. V1, number 2. Dec 31, 1964.) It would have been very interesting if that bookmobile had lasted till today but in the mid- 1970s a new Bookmobile was received at Central Library. Since then the newest of the Bookmobiles, the third dedicated in

1993. At thirty-five feet long artist Todd Mayfield paints the Bookmobile with a vivid and colorful of children playing. The Bookmobile has expanded from the suburbs to a place where all children must eventually go, school. This bookmobile services 34 schools in the year 2001 and it also hits special Children's and city functions on the side. The Bookmobile started has a new award system for kids who return all their books on time and receive no fines; they each receive a certificate for their great work. This system is becoming increasing popular and teaches the kids a sense of responsibility for their books.



*The 1993 Bookmobile. Painted
by Todd Mayfeild. (Figure2)*

Organized in 1959, a group of 115 people got together to help support the bond measure for the yet to be built Central Library, together they where to become the charter members of the Friends of the Library. They began to publish a letter to all the Friends called *The Lamp*. In the first volume the first president of the Friends, Thomas Skinner put down their purpose simply, "The Friends of the Library have only one purpose: to assist the public library, to improve and extend Library services in this city." (Thomas Skinner. *The lamp*. V1, number 1. Nov 14, 1964) The friends didn't simply disappear after the formation of the Central Library, instead they stayed on to become some of the most helpful, non-paid, individuals at the library. Then Librarian Donald Fuller said of the Friends, " Libraries, like people need friends in order to prosper and

prosper and grow.” For the past forty years they have helped put together and organize the massive amounts of donations the library receives every year.

One of the events the Friends helped sponsor was an Annual Art Show, started in 1967, it was co-sponsor for ten years with The Mission City Arts. Local artists would paint on the theme ‘Santa Clara: Past and Present’. First prize was a hundred dollars and the winning painting would be added to the Libraries collection, which was sometimes lent out to City Hall and the Senior Center. (Revised Kat, Donald Fuller/Mary Hanel. 8) Their book sales, under the tutelage of the head Friend, have brought in a lot of money to get items that the Library can’t cover get with its regular budget. This year the very last outside book sale was held at the Santa Clara Library and until the new Library building is built there will only be inside book sales. As much money as the outside book sales garner the inside library, headed by a new head friend the indoor book sale has become the most profitable and successful drive bringing in thousands of dollars each month for the Friends and the library.

Along with the Fiends of the Library, another group to call the Central Library home was the Genealogy society. In 1966, the Genealogical society signed an agreement to for a meeting space and enough room for its genealogy collection. With the large success of the movie ‘Roots’ people began to really clamor to the Genealogy section. “People woke up to the fact that time is fleeting and history can disappear unless it’s recorded.” Said the head of the Society, Avis DeGregory. (Santa Clara America. March 22, 1978). The group, which was founded in 1957, has an amazing collection with a knowledgeable staff. The collection includes, How to Genealogy books, census records from the 1800s, historical atlas’s and much more. The Friends of the Library often help out this non-profit organization so that they can continue to ‘study the story of

history and genealogy'. Many people still come into the Genealogy rooms to find out about themselves and their past generation.

One program to come out of the Library is the SOS (Special Outreach Services) which received funding in the late 1960s with the hope to bring books and other materials to senior citizens in convalescent homes, shut-in's, and the physically challenged. Even before funding for the program came, volunteers had done the task of delivering books out. The Santa Clara Junior Women's Club would get books from the library and take to them to anyone who needed them, their generosity of time and effort even earned them an award. (Santa Clara Journal, Nov 20, 1968). The outreach program still continues to deliver books, by way of volunteers, to those who can no longer make it to the library.

The collection of books the libraries has is the biggest reason people go to the library. The library has a wide selection of books and is always adding more to their collection. Patron requests for books can be given to librarians or on-line and the library gets money to buy books! They want to get all the stuff you'd like them to get because they you and other patrons will come in and check them out. In fact, between April 2000 and March 2001 there were 1.5 million items circulated.

Books aren't the only things the library has. Included in it's nearly 300,000 collection are periodicals, videos, CD's, books on tape, and of course fiction, non-fiction (hardback and paperback), large print, new arrival, art, children's, and foreign language books. When Ms. Klune was Librarian phonorecords and listening tables were added along with 8 and 16 mm films. (Revised Kat, Donald Fuller). Sometimes the library has to make leaps of faith. Can records actually be replaced by eight tracks? How about music cassettes to CD's? The library is a long way away from the time of 8 and 16-mm films but there are quiet rumors of adding a DVD

collection since it has caught on big with the rest of the population. Only time can tell were the library's massive collection will move on to.

Into the Future: Technology and the Library

In 1996, the Santa Clara Library Strategic Plan came up with five vital areas necessary for delivering caliber library services for the people of Santa Clara; "library staff, library facilities, library collections, community support, and current technology." While the library has a lot of the first four it has found a way to constantly keep on the cutting edge of technology.

The card Catalog at the Library had been the only way to find anything in the Library short of asking a Librarian. The cards were 4 by 8 inch cards (see figure 3) with the title and the authors name plus any addition information that may have been necessary. In the early 1990s the library closed for two weeks to install a new system that would become the libraries Online Public Access Catalog. And in the blink of an eye the card catalog went the way of the dinosaurs. Like old fossils anyone can find the remains of the old card when they sit down at one of the catalog terminals and need to write down the location of the book somewhere. All those cards are being nicely recycled by patrons as scrap paper.

At the 2000 Library Convention, held in Santa Clara, the Santa Clara City Library became a show case library for their check in system. The Checkpoint system is a brand new way to check in, and out books. Instead of wandling the barcodes of each individual book, the Checkpoint system allows for the book to be simply waved over a Checkpoint pad. The book instantly becomes checked out to the patron or as quickly checked in. One Library page exclaimed, " It's sooo nice! We can check in things a lot quicker and accurately, it's like the

future of checking in books.” For now only books can be checked out with the new checkpoint system but the tags for the rest of the audio/video collection is on the horizon. Another major plus to the new system, which is (so far) exclusively used at only the Santa Clara Library, is the self check-out feature, soon to be open to the public. The self-checkout terminals will allow patrons to check out their own materials in a very effortless way. After the patrons have checked out their books a receipt (figure 4. Pg.15) will print out telling the patron when the materials are due and how many they have checked out. The check out desk is already using receipts, doing away with the old system of stickers (figure 5. Pg. 15) which saves the books and provides the patrons a simpler way of finding out when their books are due.

A grant from the State Library a few years after the installation of the INOPAC system allowed a staff member to be trained in the next biggest thing, the Internet. Along with the grant the Library received an Internet Access Workstation to train the public in this thing called the Internet. (Revised Kat/ Donald Fuller) Soon the revolution in the way people got on-line came along and there was a major buzz about the Internet. The INOPAC system had made it accessible (for anyone who knew how) to get online to the library catalog in the early ‘90s and renew their books but now easier access was available for everyone. A set of sixteen networking computers were donated by Intel and 3Com for public access onto the Internet. After the terminals went in there was a 35 percent increase in usage. (Santa Clara Weekly. Nov 18, 1998) The Internet system was run in the beginning by the honor system, then the failure of that and the following time cards system led to the advent of using the patrons own library cards. All the time used on line is recorded on the library cards and the usage can’t exceed an hour, allowing for all the library patrons to have access to the Internet.

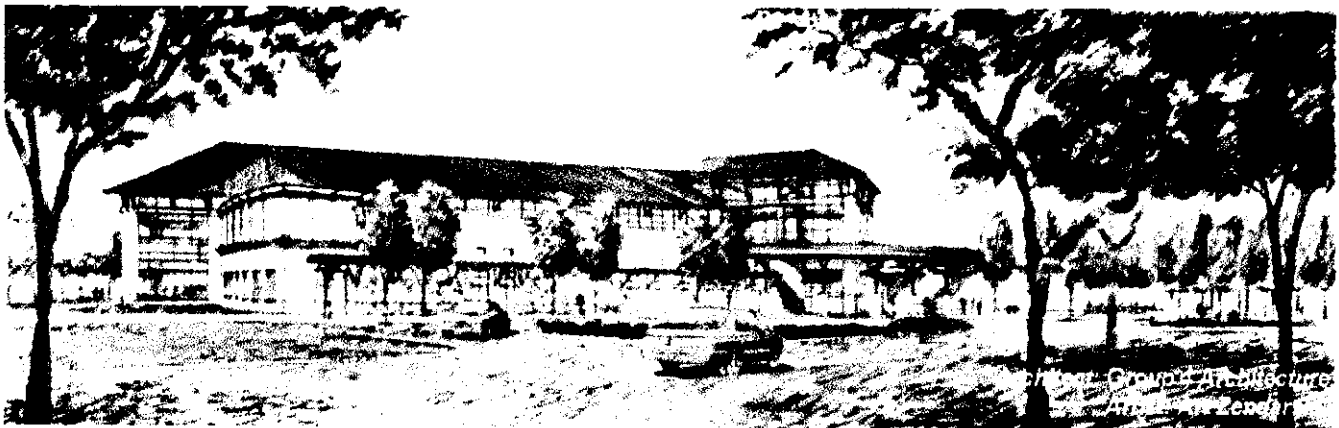
A year later, 1997, the library started it's own web page with another version of the catalog. The web site, www.library.ci.santa-clara.ca.us.html, provides more than a quick way to renew and look for items there's also a bounty of information available to anyone wishing to know what's going on at the library. Everything is just a click away, from finding out all the locations of where the Bookmobile will be stopping to finding out what who will be stopping in to do a Children's program. Information on the new library, current events and the latest on the new library are constantly updated when more information comes in. One of the more interesting highlights on the web-site is the *Ask a Librarian* feature. Just by typing in a question and sending it in allows Reference Librarians at the Library to find the answer. It's then set back in a matter of days without the patron ever having to stop in, a real 24 hour Librarian. New links will include a homework help site and cool pages for the teen's section.

A Brand New Place to Read

On June 27, 2000 the Santa Clara City Council approved almost 45 million dollars to be spent on a new Central Library. While there were plans to simply renovate the thirty-three year old Central building it seemed that too much work would have to be done to make it up to the high standards that the Council was looking for. The heating and cooling systems were out of date and the new for new handicap facilities is needed. The new building will be on the cusp modernization. The library won't even be at a new address, since the old building is being torn down, the new building will be built a top it, keeping it's close vacinity to the park.

location for a while. The Curtis School Site on Lochnivar Street will house the Library and all it's staff till their new building is ready to be moved into. The Curtis site is slightly smaller than the current library and the Friends of the Library will have a short period without anymore out door book sales but the indoor book sales will continue at the temporary site. Some of the periodicals that are currently in storage will not be making the trip over to the temporary site but the Library expects little problems since most of the items are already in the computer databases.

Santa Claran's have expected nothing but the best from their City. The new library building is only continuing the long tradition of being the best around. From it's humble beginnings in a couple of back rooms, to a brilliant new facility the Santa Clara Library has given it's patrons and the citizens of Santa Clara everything it has to offer. It's programs are numerous, beneficial, educational and some of the most enjoyable things to be seen and it's all free. While taxes are paid into it, the Library has repaid every dime in its lifetime by the quality of everything it gives back to the people. The library has given so much and continues to offer a City as intelligent and diverse as Santa Clara, the best.



The Santa Clara City Library; newly named the Central Park Library. (Figure 6)

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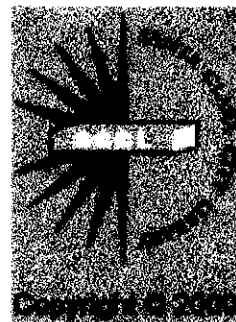
Two: taken from the Santa Clara Website.

Three: from the Santa Clara Library.

Four: from the Santa Clara Library.

Five: from the Santa Clara Library.

Six: taken from the Santa Clara Website.



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