

Samuel Leask Sr. Played Key Role In Building SC Library



There is no age limit at the Santa Cruz public library, as four generations of Leasks have demonstrated over the years. Samuel Sr., born in Scotland on December 26, 1861, has been a regular Santa Cruz library

patron for many of his 102 years, as well as president of the board of trustees for more than 40 years. His interest was carried on by his son, Samuel Jr., seated right, on the state legislative level. Samuel III has declared himself to be

"fully cognizant of the need for a new and modern library building for the Santa Cruz of today." Samuel Leask IV makes a specialty of garnering library reading club certificates.

By Margaret Koch
Santa Cruz got the start of its first library — a handsome one — on September 29, 1903.

That was the day the cornerstone was laid by Masons of the Grand Lodge with a silver trowel. The stone was first anointed with wine, corn and oil. A box containing certain articles was placed inside a hollowed-out portion of the stone.

The ceremony was followed by an evening reception at the Free Library rooms and speaker for the affair was Mr. Layman, assistant librarian at University of California at Berkeley.

The formal Carnegie Library opening did not take place until April 14, 1904.

The new library — gift of Andrew Carnegie — was rightfully deemed a great educational blessing to the community... "Without intelligence this Republic would go to rack and ruin," stated a newspaper editorial.

No one could argue that. And in 1903 the building was not only handsome but perfectly planned in all respects.

Today — some 61 years later — county population growth has zoomed, educational standards are up too. More people are reading and there is more

brary of 1903 is still back in the horse and buggy age while astronauts and jets fly overhead.

But at the time of its cornerstone laying, the Carnegie building stood for a big step forward — progress in public education. Miss Minerva Waterman was librarian; Miss Doeltz the assistant librarian. Trustees included Dr. F. W. Bliss, Samuel Leask Sr., J. W. Linscott, Dr. C. L. Anderson and E. L. Williams.

Samuel Leask Sr. had played a key role in securing the Carnegie gift. In a September, 1902, issue of *The Sentinel*, an article tells of his trip to New York at his own expense and his talk with Carnegie. This visit, during which Leask Sr. explained that the actual population using the library would be much greater than that within the city limits, resulted in a \$5000 increase in Carnegie's initial gift.

Later Leask was to visit Carnegie again and convince him of the need for library branch buildings at Seabright where a tent had actually been in use for awhile, Eastside and Garfield Park. These branches also were built as gifts from the Carnegie foundation.

1940 but his interest and valuable advice have always been available and his years of service have left a lasting influence and inspiration on the libraries of Santa Cruz.

Sam Leask II entered the library scene as chairman of the State commission to aid libraries of California. Thus was the family interest continued through legislative measures he worked for.

Sam Leask III continues the family cooperation with the local library and his son, Sam IV, has been garnering reading club certificates since he was knee-high to a book.

Furniture was going to be needed for the new library and the months between October 1903 and March 1904 were devoted to fund-raising events. They included a lecture on "The Brahmins of India," a cantata entitled "The Rose Maiden," a display of ceramics, bronzes and brass, a display of travel posters which afterward were sold, and an Art and Loan exhibit put on by members of the Santa Cruz Improvement club.

Committees were set up to handle the many exhibits. Members were Mrs. F. W. Bliss, Mrs. H.



The way it looked at the official opening: Santa Cruz Carnegie Library was festooned and adorned with all sorts of collections labeled the Art and

Loan Exhibit during its official opening on April 14, 1904.

Loan Exhibit during its official opening on April 14, 1904.

Parker and Ralph Thompson.

While it was being completed the new Carnegie library received the promise of an important gift: the museum collection of Miss Laura Hecox, keeper of the Santa Cruz lighthouse.

Miss Hecox was the daughter of Adna Hecox, one of the early-day Alcaldes who later

became county treasurer and in 1864, the lighthouse keeper. When he died in 1883, Laura was given his post at the lighthouse. For many years she had collected relics of all kinds.

But the immediate need was still for... "round tables, and irons for the fireplaces, chairs, a clock and any article of literary

or artistic value to the library," according to an old *Sentinel* account.

And so one of the most exciting fund-raising projects was staged by young society women of Santa Cruz — the "Trolley Car Girls."

Continued next Sunday...



Democratic
Senior Citizens

FASHION SHOW

TUESDAY, MAY 19

WOMEN'S CLUB

306 Mission Street

Mrs. Alan Cranston

MAIN SPEAKER

- Door Prize
- Coffee Tea
- Cookies

Donation
\$1.00

Mrs. Irby Bourriague &
John Bushnell

Fashions by
Madelyn's
Casuals
Dress Shop

The Senior Mr. Leask served for more than 40 years as a Santa Cruz Library trustee and for a number of those years as president of the board. During this time he visited libraries all over California, checking operations and management, assembling the file of valuable material used in analyzing Santa Cruz library methods.

"He is known in library circles throughout the state — both for his appreciation of the great heritage of America to be found in its libraries, and for the opportunity for all to gain knowledge from their collections" commented Mrs. Geraldine Work, Santa Cruz county librarian.

Along with serving the library, Mr. Leask has been one of its best customers, according to Mrs. Work, using it for his varied interests as well as recreational reading.

He retired from the board in

M. Blackburn, Mrs. Louisa Drennan, Miss Waterman, Mrs. Samuel Leask Sr., Mrs. M. E. Fagen, Mrs. J. B. Moulton, Mrs. Henry Willey, Mrs. William Swinford and Mrs. C. B. Younger Jr.

In charge of the various departments were Miss Lillian Howard, Mrs. J. O. Wanzer, Mrs. J. W. Linscott, Mrs. Kate Cope, Miss Sarah Morgan, Dr. J. P.

Annexation Plan To Be Discussed

Aptos Seascape's annexation to the Aptos Sanitation district will be considered by the local agency formation commission Tuesday when the board meets in the city council chambers at 10 a.m.

Other matters to be considered by the LAFC will be a six-acre annexation proposal by the city of Capitola. The proposed annexation would lie north of the Highway 1 freeway, between Rosedale and Capitola avenue.

IMPORTANT!

TO THOSE RECEIVING OLD AGE SECURITY

PUBLIC NOTICE