

Meet Ellen Naylor—Certified Brailist

By MARGARET KOCH

The boy opened the large book.

Its pages lay broad and flat and he passed quickly over the first few introductory leaves. Then he settled down to serious reading.

He was blind.

His fingers were his "eyes." He was reading the tiny raised dots on the surface of the sturdy paper pages. This boy is going to college, thanks to

people like Ellen (Mrs. Wilfrid) Naylor of 320 Oxford way. She is a certified Brailist. She copies the books into Braille that he must have for his course of study.

There is no pay for her work — it is all volunteer. But she will smile and show certificates of appreciation from the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Naylor transcribes books for the Library and for

individual students. But she really prefers the latter.

"It is more satisfying to help a student — I can see where my work is accomplishing something," she said.

Last year she worked on 14 Braille volumes of the Spanish language (she doesn't have to know it in order to transcribe it into Braille), 11 volumes of Huckleberry Finn, four on psychology and two on the "American Republic."

Waiting for her attention now is "Rhetoric of the Sentence" which will go to the boy who is at college.

She also soon will transcribe a book for Temple Beth-El sisterhood whose members will present it to the Jewish Braille library in New York. Mrs. Saul Spodick is in charge of arrangements.

Books for the Library of Congress are beautifully and permanently bound by the American Red Cross Braille division in Berkeley. Books for students are much less expensively bound into plastic binding with cardboard covers.

It all starts with a machine

'TYPING' at her special Braille - writing machine, Ellen Naylor, cerified Brailist, transcribes the printed word into a page of raised dots which will eventually be added to others and bound into a book for a blind college student.

that looks like a typewriter but has only six keys. The Braille writer machine costs about \$90.

Mrs. Naylor receives her assignments, which may be several chapters of any book that is needed, or a whole pamphlet or smaller publication. She "types" it off into Braille, the machine punches the rows of tiny raised dots that can mean the difference between a dark or an enlightened mind for a person without sight.

Then she proof-reads her work. Mistakes are corrected on the wooden slate by hand, with a stylus or an "eraser." If a dot has been left out and must be added, she puts it in with the stylus. If one must be erased, she flattens it with another little wooden tool. No holes must be punched in the pages as this would destroy their usefulness.

The books then are checked again before being bound and the pages are shellacked for better wear. Books for the college student go to Mrs. Sylvia Cassell at the San Jose Blind center.

An ordinary length best-seller fills about six volumes of Braille. There are 90 to 100 pages to one Braille volume, as recommended by the Library of Congress.

Mrs. Naylor first became interested in Braille when she worked as a Red Cross volunteer in San Francisco and met Miss Hilda Iles, a blind teacher of Braille.

After a year's training and several more years of work at it, Mrs. Naylor completed a test assignment for the Library of Congress and was certified in 1953. In 1961 she — and all Braille writers — were re-certified by passing a test letter they still refer to as the "Dear Pearl letter."

"It was full of tricky words," she explained.

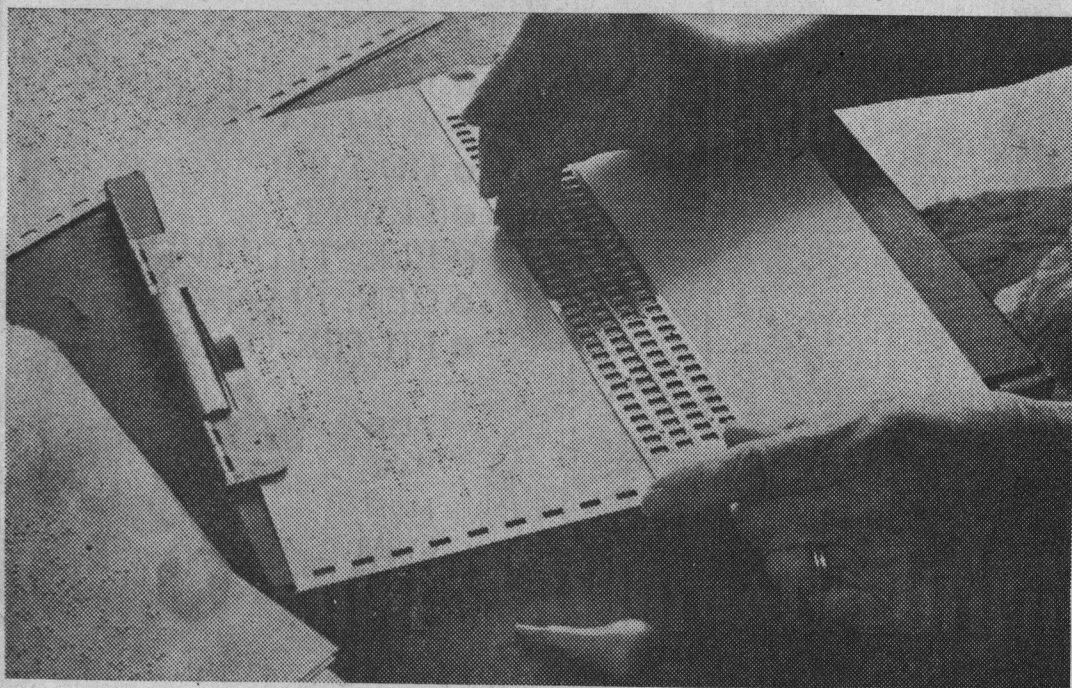
After 13 years in San Francisco, the Naylor's who are both natives of England, retired to live in Santa Cruz. But her so-called retirement has just given her more time to carry on this very important work.

Today the greatest need is for people who will learn to transcribe music, mathematics and foreign languages into the finger-tip language. These subjects require special formats. Mrs. Naylor, who does not speak a word of Spanish, has greatly enjoyed her work of transcribing that language into Braille. And she is hopeful that there will be local women who will answer this need for special subjects.

Those who are interested in further information about Braille may contact Mrs. Louis Henderson or Mrs. Bruce Dodson, Braille instructor at Santa Cruz Evening school.

"The need is great, and the rewards are even greater,"

Naylor declared.



CORRECTING pages of machine-made dots is a by-hand process. Here Mrs. Naylor demonstrates the technique, with the page clipped firmly to the slate. With the stylus she is adding a dot that was accidentally omitted from the page. The little wooden "eraser" lies on the table.