

Leask Library Collection Donated to Santa Cruz UC

The library collection of Samuel Leask, Santa Cruz pioneer and founder of Leask's department store, has been donated to the University of California, Santa Cruz, it was announced by Chancellor Dean E. McHenry.

"We are most proud and honored to have the library collected by Samuel Leask," said Chancellor McHenry. "He was the personification of the 'American dream' -- a poor Scot immigrant who came to California and became a leading citizen in his community."

"His library reflects his great and varied interests. The subjects of the materials run the gamut from art, philosophy and religion to history, travel and economics to poetry, political science and literature. The collection will be especially useful to the UCSC students because it is a working collection -- a collection which is pertinent to all the embracing world civilization studies required of Cowell college freshmen."

Biggest coverage in Santa Cruz county is through Central County News and West Side News, the county's picture newspapers.

Samuel Leask was born in Scotland in 1861. In 1883, at the age of 22, he immigrated to the United States. He worked in New York, Boston and Memphis and came via Abilene, Texas to California. He arrived in Watsonville in 1885 and secured a job with the Charles Ford company.

On June 22, 1892, having left the Ford store in Watsonville, he opened what is now Leask's at the corner of Church street and Pacific avenue.

Mr. Leask was a leader in civic affairs and was instrumental in securing the Carnegie gift for the city library in Santa Cruz.

Samuel Leask Collection was given to the university by his children: James B. Leask, of Santa Cruz, Samuel Leask, Jr. of Los Angeles, Haswell T. Leask and Sherwood R. Leask of Waterford, California, and Mrs. Roscoe P. Franklin of San Carlos.

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