

How a community rallied to keep its library going

By CAROLYN
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Bolstered by a \$1,000 donation from the Sesnon family, the Porter Memorial Library Committee announced this week it is confident library service in Soquel can be sustained through an independent, volunteer effort.

Community support was evident Sunday afternoon when approximately 40 persons filled the library building for an anniversary tea held in observance of the library's grand opening 67 years ago. That event was held Jan. 27, 1913.

Committee members reviewed the ceremonies and noted that the spirit of library support today is similar to the dedication of the Soquel Improvement Club that organized the library drive more than a half-century ago.

Soquel Porter Memorial Library was built through the cooperative venture of the improvement club and the family of Benjamin Franklin Porter, an early Soquel pioneer. His daughter and her husband, Mary Porter Sesnon

and William T. Sesnon of San Francisco, gave the site for the building and matched funds for the library's construction. And the donation of \$1,000 by this couple's children, Porter Sesnon and Mrs. Barbara Cartan of San Francisco, illustrates a continuing commitment to the community.

Porter Sesnon's daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Cliff of San Francisco and Aptos, represented the Sesnon family at the anniversary event, and received thanks from the committee for the donation that may allow the library to continue independent of the Santa Cruz City-County Public Library System.

Soquel Library was closed for six-months after the passage of Proposition 13, and was reopened last year after a "Save Soquel Library," movement was organized. Leaders of this group remained involved in the library's operation, and the Porter Memorial Library Committee was formed shortly before the county announced a cut in its share of

the library budget early this month. Since it appears the library system can no longer commit funds for the limited operation of the small Soquel Branch, the committee is now prepared to continue on its own.

Luella McDowell, committee president, announced the library will become independent on Feb. 1.

"Just before we could see the writing on the wall, this committee got together," she said, "We were very glad we did, and now feel much like the ladies who formed the original improvement club."

Purpose of the committee is to "preserve, promote and protect," Soquel Library. There are now sufficient volunteers, the president said, to keep the library open five-days per week, from 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

Soquel Library's books and furniture will remain when the branch becomes independent, but it will lose its typewriter and card machine. Volunteers will make new cards for the

books, and are searching for book donations to help fill the shelves — particularly of good reference editions. Although the Sesnon's donation will be used for general maintenance of the library, some of the funds may also be used for book purchases.

Fundraising events and community programs will also be emphasized. Mrs. McDowell said the "Oldtimer's Afternoon," series will continue along with the weekly story hour.

A number of suggestions about fundraising and book collections were given by the audience during the tea program. Jesse Lee and Christina Case-Gabbaco, owners of Abreyde Books at 4500 Soquel Drive, donated a number of used books, and said they plan to direct people with usable books to the library as a source of additional donations. They also suggested book sales as a means of raising money for the purchase of new materials.

Pledges and memorials will also be considered by the library group.

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