

Return Those Library Books And All Fines To Be Forgotten

Somewhere in book borrowing land, there are about 300 volumes long overdue from the Santa Cruz public library and its 16 branches.

Uncounted others have been stolen. The more demure librarians prefer to say "borrowed."

But this being National Library week, a time of the year when the hearts of librarians across the nation go soft, a general moratorium has been established until April 23.

No fines will be charged for overdue books, even the one your great-grandfather borrowed back in the horse and gaslight days.

Stolen books may also be returned, thank you, without fear of the stock or the rack. As is being chorused by the staff: "We forgive, we forget, and we forego all fines."

In fact books may be left in the collection box on the main library lawn.

Mrs. Geraldine Work, chief librarian, said some of the overdue books go back to Lola Montez' "The Art of Fascination," published in 1854.

She said "Child Birth Without Fear" has been missing so long the child is probably in junior high school by now.

"It's very costly for us to order and replace books, so we are more concerned with getting them back than we are

with receiving fines," she said.

It's especially vexing when someone walks out with one volume of an encyclopedia.

Close to 300,000 books will be circulated from the main library this year, Mrs. Work said. The monthly checkout is more than 22,000 over the main desk.

The library was built in 1903 for 15,000 volumes. Today the building at Church and Center streets holds 110,000 books.

There is material for any subject, the head librarian said, and what is not immediately available here can be borrowed from the state library.

The system subscribes to 260 magazines.

Mrs. Work said the reading trend is building up in the non-fictional field—mainly science, travel and how-to-do-it books.

She said it was not uncommon for a book to circulate from 150 to 200 times before it gives up the ghost.

Author Irving Stone, chairman of National Library week, has written that: "The exposure to publications of general interest beyond the required study and textbooks has served to widen the students' range of interest and to stimulate his searches into the meanings and mechanisms of the world about him."