

UNIVERSITY BRANCH LIBRARY

WORK WITH CHILDREN

Report to Miss Gladys English for year ending June 1931

COMMUNITY

The past year has seen this community in a constant state of upheaval and wreckage. Streets have been cut through, many houses torn down or moved away to make way for the new streets and the new university buildings. We ourselves since last fall, have been expecting to move most any time and when we finally did move the middle of May it was with a real relief to get things started and to have some prospect of getting back to normal. Since the first of the year we have been working in the midst of noise and dirt; buildings going up, buildings going down, the street car tracks torn up, the parkway put in, our moving across the street and finally, work on Hoover St. really started.

For the future we seem to have but two directions from which to draw children. The University is directly to the south of us and beyond the University is Exposition Park. Directly east of us we have the Shrine Auditorium, small businesses and storage plants. West and north of us are our residential streets and unfortunately we are going to be on the side of Hoover St. adjacent to the directions from which we can expect less and less in juvenile registration and circulation. Decidedly the wrong side of the street. Formerly we were right between two heavy traffic arteries, Figueroa St. and Vermont Ave. When Hoover St. is finished we shall still be between these two streets and on the far side of Hoover as far as our school children are concerned. Of course the library

is going to be more accessible to our patrons on the north of us but we think that will affect adults more than children. There is no use wailing about thing which cannot be helped, but we feel that it would have made a real difference in the future of the branch if we could have been on the west side of Hoover St.

#### CIRCULATION

An analysis of the year's circulation figures reveals many losses. Our loss of 633 in fairy tales is almost unbelievable but explainable to a certain degree. We partly attribute the 1398 loss as well as the loss of 526 in Xzs to the two terrible accidents resulting in the deaths of two small boys. These classes started to lose soon after these accidents which occurred within a few days of each other about the first of the year. This, together with the increasing traffic problem, seems to be the only answer for our fairy tale collection is good and has always been widely read. However, like every one else we are finding the children less and less interested in fairy tales every year. Our next largest loss was in 900s where we had a loss of 280. We also lost 158 in X700s--130 in X910s--and 82 in X500s. The remaining classes show small losses from 2-50 with a gain of 70 in X200s, a class which was used a great deal by university students and one of our teachers. Fiction gained 50. We viewed with surprise our gain of 265 in magazines until we remembered that we had added Popular Mechanics to our list this year. Needless to say we are more than glad that magazines are included in the total circulation. Taking all in all, our traffic problem which are serious, the two deaths by accident, the great loss in enrollment in our closest school, the unsettled condition of the community and our two days closing for moving, we feel that we have done rather well to close the year with so small a loss as 1587.

The future is more or less problematic but we hope with Mr. Pendleton, principal of 32nd St. School, that with the completion of the new school building and all this upheaval over with that more families will move back in the neighborhood again.

#### WORK WITH SCHOOLS.

Our registration figures show a loss of 33 for the year. Considering the fact that two of our schools are losing steadily in enrollment this loss seems quite small. Thirty-second St. School which is just half a block away and with which we do our most intensive work has dropped in the last two years from an enrollment of almost 700 to little more than 400. Norwood St. School is a very small school with an enrollment of only 250 and still dropping. Vermont Ave. School is just about holding its own and Thirty-seventh St. School is gaining steadily but slowly. The last two mentioned are both west of Vermont Ave.

We have the friendliest relations with all of our school classes from Thirty-second St. School visit the library every two weeks from October until June. The other schools are too distant for class visits but the principal of Thirty-seventh St. School hopes to send the sixth grade classes next term if possible. Throughout the year we keep our contacts with the schools alive with school visits and book talks and appreciation hours.

We can do little more in our Junior High School than visits and talks with the librarian who is always glad to receive whatever lists and material we may bring.

With our one parochial school we feel we do some of our most interesting and stimulating work. This school has a library of about 2000 books but the collection leaves much to be desired. These boys and girls are avid readers and the sisters are very eager to have the children's librarian visit the school and for the children to visit the library. They were

most enthusiastic about our Vacation Reading Plan as the school library will be closed during the summer.

#### WORK WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS.

The children of this community lost a real friend with the passing of Dr. Bull of the Junior Museum. Dr. Bull had given several interesting talks to groups of our children and he was most generous in his plans for the future. Miss Virginia R Rice who is temporarily in charge is also one of the library's good friends.

#### READING GUIDANCE OF CHILDREN.

We consider the work we do on the floor after school one of the most important phases of our work with children. Not having the terrible after school rushes so many of the branches have, we are able to do most effective work with individual children. We have time to do this in a more leisurely way, time to know the children and their reading tastes and time to help them carefully and patiently in their selections.

During class visits the children are usually reading along certain lines or preparing material for their activities and we have the books and other material ready for them when they come to the library.

#### STORY HOURS

As we have repeatedly stated throughout the year, our story-hour is our joy and delight, so much so that we are loath to turn the group over to the student story tellers. We have had three very good story tellers this year but they really are rather a nuisance. They are careless about letting us know when they cannot come and they seem to expect all sorts of privileges in taking out books. Our main objection is that they take the story hour too casually and are not business-like about it. We feel that the story hour is one of our nicest contacts with the children, one isn't the "library teacher" then but a fellow

## BOOK COLLECTION.

A new children's librarian might come into our room and find serious lacks in our collection but we feel that it is fairly well rounded and the result of careful selection over a period of years. We have ordered rather heavily in new books this year and expect to continue to do so as we are not discarding very heavily at present. We do need more general nature study material, more plays( although we never have the right ones anyway) more books on costume and boat building. Our fairy tale collection is good and we feel that our fiction collection is well developed. We are not proud of the number of mystery titles on our shelf list but the demand exists and we do try to give the children the best of the kind.

## DISCIPLINE.

Discourteous and misbehaved children are not a problem at University Branch. Our children respect the library and act accordingly. Much of this is due to the splendid cooperation of the schools.

## CHILDREN'S ROOM

Our dream for the future, as most every one has heard, is to have the walls of the story hour room knocked out. We have several reasons---all good. First- we are going to need room for shelf expansion immediately, Second- we are very eager to try an experiment with Junior High School boys and girls. We should like to turn over a large corner for their very own use, for both study and reading. We feel that if we could announce in the school papers and at the assemblies that we have a Junior High School department it would do much to attract more intermedia intermediates to the library. We should do all we could to make the room attractive to them with special collections, posters, lists, etcetera and sincerely feel that is is a thrilling idea. Third, and last, being lovers of the beautiful we know that we should have a much more attractive room, more spacious and

much brighter. Story hours could be held in the adult club room and our visiting classes could be taken care of in the children's room as they are in so many branches. Having heard almost as we are writing this that the dream is to be a reality we are very happy and excited and full of ambition to make it very worth while.

#### CONCLUSION

As we have stated elsewhere in this report we are going to have serious traffic problems to face when Hoover St. is completed but we are hoping for more signals and a tunnel at Hoover and Jefferson. We also hope that with the completion of the new Thirty-second St. School more families with children will move back into the community. This school is gradually being made a demonstration school with very superior teachers and this fact will undoubtedly attract many parents. Beginning next term the first, third and sixth grades will do demonstration work.

While we consider ourselves fortunate to have found temporary quarters as attractive as these we are in, nevertheless we shall be more than glad to return home and we feel certain that our joy and relief over being back in our own building will stimulate us to meet the new school term with added zest and new ideas.

Respectfully submitted,

*Leone F. Garney*

Children's librarian.