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## Letter from the Chair and Vice-Chair

Greetings:

As chair and vice-chair of the Ethnic & Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT), we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contributions and continued support of EMIERT.

Since the founding of EMIERT, multicultural librarianship—efforts to preserve our diverse cultural heritage and foster greater intercultural exchange in the library setting—has evolved significantly, perhaps in part in response to today's extraordinary immigration trends. Immigrants continue to come to the United States in record numbers; however, they are now coming from countries that are less well-known and are locating in areas where immigrants have not traditionally settled in large numbers.

Libraries have been at the forefront in their communities by promoting diversity and bringing people together. The Federal Task Force on New Americans presented its final report to the president in December 2008. The report recognizes the formative role libraries have played and continue to play in helping new immigrants. The report may be viewed and downloaded at [www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/M-708.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/M-708.pdf).

To share the expertise and successes within our profession and facilitate access to tools that will further enhance multicultural librarianship, we invite you to help develop the EMIERT web site into a one-stop clearinghouse of multicultural resources. Resources will include collection development lists, directories, best practices, news, calendar items, program highlights, and last but not least a recipe corner.

We call on you—our members—to contribute within your area of expertise. If you are eager to participate more in EMIERT, please drop one of us a line.

We look forward to hearing from you.

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## California Normal School Libraries: A Study of San Jose and San Diego Normal Schools

By Kristen Baslee

Normal schools served a deeply rooted purpose between 1830 and 1930 in the United States. Primarily used to teach the teachers, many found normal schools to be an effective and low-cost alternative to universities. The libraries associated with these schools served as an excellent microcosm of the collegiate life during this time. Patrons were students, holdings were textbooks, and staff members were professors.

The scope of this research is limited to two large institutions in the state of California: San Jose (formerly San Francisco) Normal School and San Diego Normal School. Both are prime examples not of the country's normal school system, but of this state's diverse and complicated history. While these two schools were not the only normal schools established in California prior to 1905, they were the largest and most influential in the state's teaching population. Evidence, both primary and secondary, was plentiful when researching San Jose and San Diego normal schools.

By first examining the history of normal schools in the United States, attempts will be made to link the political and social turmoil in the nineteenth century to the wave of normal school es-

tablishments in various states. The Civil War, Reconstruction, and state school standardization all played a pivotal role in the nation's school system and subsequently the normal school system.

Second, a tour of San Jose and San Diego normal schools will provide a glimpse of life for the average student and faculty member. By carefully observing campus life and culture, one can witness the formation of each institution's library and the role it played in normal school education.

Various problems such as exponential enrollment growth and education requirements put a strain on the library services of these schools. Though San Jose and San Diego normal schools were fortunate to have fully functional libraries, their use far outweighed their capabilities. Increasing demand for textbooks and decreasing staff were problems faced even in these early libraries.

Details such as salary, staff, tuition, services, and building accommodations will also shed light on the precarious place of the normal school library. As funding for libraries became scarce, so did the resources, even as students demanded more complete services.

Last, the effect of time will be discussed. Historical factors such

as university reorganization and war played havoc with enrollment, luring students away from the normal school system on a national scale. Many universities began to absorb the normal schools. Both San Jose and San Diego normal schools were brought into the California State University system in the 1960s, but their influence on education is still present today.

### National Context

Prior to the Civil War, normal schools were anything but the norm. They were found predominantly on the East Coast of the United States and were privately funded. The first of these schools was founded in Lexington, Massachusetts, in 1839. It was the first of a planned network of five normal schools in the state. The school term lasted only one year and covered a range of academic subjects.<sup>1</sup> On the opening day of each term students would hear Cyrus Peirce lecture:

Remember that you are to influence the character, the future standing of the ten, fifty, or a hundred children who are committed to your care. In stepping over the threshold of your schoolroom, you have stepped into a very great responsibility.<sup>2</sup>

Normal schools encouraged not only basic academics but also the responsibility that came with being a teacher.

With the end of the Civil War in 1865, a new population was exposed to educational opportunities. Citizens rushed to the South to teach the newly freed slaves. Southern states were allowed to establish segregated normal schools, which they did first in West Virginia and Mississippi.<sup>3</sup>

Other states followed suit by creating normal schools around their existing cultural landscape. Oklahoma established a territorial normal school for American Indians aspiring to become teachers. New Mexico established a Spanish-American normal school for Spanish speakers.<sup>4</sup>

In 1869 there were 35 normal schools in the United States. By 1900 that number had ballooned to 139. Enrollment at these schools went up as well, increasing four-fold between 1869 and 1900.<sup>5</sup>

The Common School Campaign fueled much of this growth. In an attempt to reform and improve national youth education, a centralized public school system was created in many states in the 1880s. State boards of education began requiring that certain mandates be met in instruction.<sup>6</sup> In order to meet these mandates, a new breed of teachers was needed. These teachers were not only expected to know the material, but also to have a grasp on concepts and ideas in order to stimulate discussion and interest in the class.

This first experiment in school standardization not only affected normal schools but grade schools as well. To cope with these changes, many schools separated the girls from the boys during lessons. In San Francisco, the high school curriculum was split by gender. Science and higher levels of mathematics were taught to the boys while girls were taught subjects such as English and cooking.<sup>7</sup> Many institutions felt the new standards would be attainable by separating the boys and the girls. This logic might have made sense at the turn of the century, but it would be completely unacceptable today. Regardless, this separation meant more classes,

which in turn required more teachers.

Some normal schools were restricted by gender as well. The first normal school in Lexington, for example, was for women only. Though there is no evidence of an all-male normal school, some of them were coed. Classes ranged from spelling and history to botany and astronomy. Despite the gender separation, students at these normal schools were obligated to know more than the standard state requirements for grade schools. They were expected to know how to teach.

Normal schools' enrollment qualifications were minimal in the beginning. Many did not even require a high school diploma to gain acceptance.<sup>8</sup> Coupled with inexpensive tuition (in 1922, San Diego's Normal School tuition was written "not to exceed \$15"),<sup>9</sup> normal schools were an attractive form of higher education.

Each normal school had its own graduation program. Some instruction lasted only a year before the students would become certified teachers. Others, however, required two to three years of study before certification. This was a difficult time commitment for many students to make and the dropout rate was high; some schools reported 70 percent attrition.<sup>10</sup>

### California Context

California during and after the Civil War was a booming state. Military forts, dynamic trading posts to Asia, and remnants of the gold rush crowd gave California a diverse mix of people.

California's first state normal school opened in San Francisco in 1862. The school was relocated in 1871 to San Jose due to alleged "neglect and indifference."<sup>11</sup> The San Jose Normal School remained the only normal school on the West Coast until the 1880s, after which schools in Los Angeles and Chico were established.<sup>12</sup>

San Diego's Normal School was established in 1897 and held classes in a downtown drug store until a permanent home was fully constructed in 1899.<sup>13</sup> The completed building was modeled after the Palace of Fine Arts at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and was an interesting composition of Greek façade and an "Oriental" dome.<sup>14</sup>

Admissions into both San Jose and San Diego Normal Schools were initially lenient but became progressively more difficult with time. The first two requirements for admission into San Jose's 1887-1888 school year were "good moral character and good bodily health."<sup>15</sup> But as grade schools requirements became standardized by the state, normal schools became increasingly selective, often requiring entrance exams. By 1901 San Jose required a high school diploma.<sup>16</sup>

San Jose Normal School's student body was consistently greater than 80 percent female.<sup>17</sup> While there are no conclusive figures on the ratio of male to female students at San Diego Normal School, it is assumed that the number of men was more equal to the number of women than at San Jose. This assumption is garnered from the Incoming Student Personality Tests, in which students were identified by name and photograph. It is unclear what merit these personality tests held for admitted students, but they did provide for an interesting anecdotal element to this research. In one instance Robert Joseph Sullivan checked off professions he would and would not like to have. Sullivan would have liked to be an actor or bank teller, but not an auto salesman or missionary.<sup>18</sup> "School teacher" was not a category.

Though California normal schools were not segregated by race, there is no evidence these schools taught African Americans, Hispanics, or American Indians. The student body was most likely comprised of white men and women.

### San Diego Normal School Library

The San Diego Normal School had a library even before the school had a permanent building. Accession logs date back to 1898, and the first book listed is the Holy Bible. Within one year, the library grew to nearly 2,000 books. By 1905 that number grew to 5,000. And by 1918, the San Diego Normal School library had 20,000 books.<sup>19</sup>

The library at San Diego Normal School contained amenities like a reading room and reserve desk. The reading room was a large room filled with tables and chairs specifically for quiet study. The reserve desk operated much like a university reserve desk does today. Professors would allow class textbooks to be used by any student for a short period of time.

Monthly library reports from 1930 through 1933 detail the books frequently checked out by students. For the 1930–1931 school year, social science, history, and literature texts made up over 55 percent of the total books checked out. Compare that to five percent fiction, four percent fine arts, and less than one percent religion.<sup>20</sup>

Many of the books in the library pertained directly to the classes offered at the San Diego Normal School. From examining instructors' term reports from the 1926–1927 school year, one can see that classes such as psychology, English, and history were some of the most popular for both men and women.<sup>21</sup> This correlates with the subjects frequently borrowed from the library.

The patrons of San Diego's Normal School library were mostly students of the normal school. There was, however, a children's reading room located in the library beginning in the late 1940s, but that service was discontinued a short time later for unknown reasons.<sup>22</sup>

### San Jose Normal School Library

A San Jose Normal School catalogue in 1900 noted that classes were designed to "arouse a spirit of inquiry, to instill a love of original research, and to train the judgment to independence of thought."<sup>23</sup> This statement set the stage not only for the classes offered at the school, but also the contents of its library.

Since the normal school's move to San Jose in 1871, the school has had three separate library locations. The first was destroyed by fire in 1880, but thankfully most of the 2,000 books were saved. The earthquake of 1906 rendered the second building useless, and the library's present location (on the San Jose State University campus) was completed in 1910.

Between 1910 and 1923 the library's holdings nearly doubled to 21,000 titles.<sup>24</sup> Most of these volumes were likely used to aid in the "original research" noted in the school's 1900 catalogue.

Both the library's first and second locations were on the first floor of the normal school. While this provided easy access for the students, it left little room for the expansion the library desperately needed.<sup>25</sup>

The current state of the library, located at San Jose State Uni-

versity, is testament to the role of the community as patrons. Currently, the library is part of the San Jose public library system, a rare relationship among academic libraries. This mirrors the community involvement seen in the early days of the school's library. Clubs and group activities would often use the library as a meeting place.

### Leaders of the Stacks

One challenge neither the San Diego nor San Jose normal school libraries faced was large staff turnover. John Paul Stone served as the head librarian at San Diego Normal School library from 1931 to 1960.<sup>26</sup> He is the only known first librarian at the San Diego school. Ruth Royce was the head librarian at San Jose Normal School from 1881 to 1918.<sup>27</sup> Prior to both librarians' tenures it is assumed student volunteers worked at these libraries.

Ruth Royce was the epitome of the stereotypical librarian. She was born in 1853 around Sacramento, California. She graduated from the San Jose Normal School in 1877 and taught courses there until her appointment to librarian in 1881. Royce was quiet and reserved and was well regarded for her "intimate relationship" with the books under her charge.<sup>28</sup>

Most of what is known about the life of John Paul Stone relates to his professional accomplishments. He was born in 1902. He obtained a Ph.D. in library sciences from the University of Chicago in 1945 while serving as librarian at San Diego. Stone is best known for his survey work of libraries, which was published in 1945.<sup>29</sup>

The librarian salaries are unclear for both Royce and Stone. Looking at San Diego's instructor salaries, one can surmise an average librarian salary in the 1920s to be around \$2,000 annually.<sup>30</sup> However, this guess is far from any hidden historical evidence on the matter.

### Library Challenges

As enrollment steadily increased at both schools, resources at each library were stretched thin. In the 1930s, Stone reported laying off two full-time employees to meet the budget.<sup>31</sup> Even before the Great Depression, accessions barely kept up with student demand. The diminishing services offered by the library were even the subject of jokes among students, as seen in this "Library Hymn" from 1922:

Softly, student, softly moving,  
Pause awhile beside the door.  
Hush your voice to whispers soothing,  
Enter gently, I implore!  
Write your wishes plainly, clearly,  
On the Reserve Lists that you see;  
then with diligence, unflinching,  
Searching for material new  
Quickly working,  
Without shirking,  
There will soon be more for you.  
If above one day you've left me,  
Just five cents a day, I'll take,  
And unless my mind's bereft me,  
Payment you must straightway make.  
With the hordes of knowledge seekers  
Filling every inch and space

You should read your books with promptness,  
 Therefore take not,  
 What you use not,  
 Let some other lose the race.  
 These few simple rules abiding  
 You will always win our smile.  
 There will be no room for chiding  
 No one's temper will you rile.  
 And when Heaven's Golden portals  
 For you on their hinges turn,  
 With the books for all immortals,  
 There will be no rules to learn.  
 Therefore heed them,  
 Often read them,  
 Lest eternally you burn.<sup>32</sup>

Until the Depression and in the decades after, libraries increased operational hours, acquired more books, and hired more staff to account for the demand, but it was a futile battle with budget cuts looming overhead.

Neither San Jose nor San Diego normal school received a Carnegie Grant.

### Changing Times

Despite San Jose and San Diego's normal school successes, enrollment at normal schools across the country fell into decline. Beginning with the onset of World War I, interest in pursuing a teaching profession waned. After World War II, the "baby boom" created a great need for teachers, but by then the previous decades' damage had been done.

In California, normal schools were saved by a newly developed state-run university system. In 1960 the Master Plan for Higher Education was developed to link a network of schools throughout California under one system. Californians meeting certain standards would be guaranteed enrollment.<sup>33</sup>

Though the Plan did not specifically target normal schools, all of California's existing normal schools were absorbed into the network. The Los Angeles Normal School became UCLA. The normal school in Chico became California State University at Chico. San Jose Normal School developed into San Jose State University. And San Diego Normal School morphed into San Diego State University.

This new system allowed for a steady cash flow into the schools' existing libraries. Although the state of the California university system is in current financial jeopardy, it still maintains one of the largest library structures in the world, thanks to the previous work by normal school library staff.

### Conclusion

The American normal school system was a hodge-podge of state and privately owned schools for teachers from 1830 to 1930. Their number increased rapidly after the Civil War and curriculum varied based on the location of each school.

In California, these schools served both men and women and were dispersed all over the state in population centers such as Los Angeles and the Bay Area. In comparison with other normal

schools in America, California was lucky. New standardized teaching requirements did not affect California's normal schools. This was partially due to the population size and diversity unique to the state. The libraries in California's normal schools served a key purpose in the research-based curriculum emphasized in San Jose and San Diego. Book accessions swelled to over 10,000 volumes for both schools, and those resources were utilized by students and members of the community on a regular basis.

Facing budget cuts and dwindling enrollment numbers, the normal schools in San Jose and San Diego were absorbed into a state-run university system. This, in effect, saved the schools through cannibalization. Though the normal schools have vanished from California's cultural landscape, their legacy lives on in the research library network that dots the state today.

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