

BRANCH PROFILE - Richmond Branch - January, 1991

1. GENERAL. Richmond is one of the largest, oldest, busiest branches. Twenty-two persons, in various classifications, are currently assigned, full and part-time. Circulation is presently at the rate of about 275,000 items per year, on a base of approximately 63,000 catalogued items plus approximately 5,000 uncatalogued paperbacks and periodicals.

2. PLACE IN THE SFPL SYSTEM.

A. Relationship with the Main Library. As with other branches, the relationship with the Main Library is usually through the Branch Department and the Coordinators' offices. When the branch collection does not provide what the patron needs, the patron is either referred to the Main Library, or specific titles and subject materials are supplied to us for our patrons through our requests to the Branch Room librarians. The Main provides us a collection of large-print books and some foreign language materials on long-term loan. Most materials for the branch are purchased and catalogued centrally.

B. Relationship with other branches. Richmond is one of six regional branches. The other regional branches are: Chinatown, Excelsior, Mission, Sunset and West Portal. A new branch management structure is currently evolving, similar to an informal arrangement that has been in effect for a number of years, but with more authority vested in the regional branch manager. The manager of each regional branch, a librarian III, will be called a cluster manager, and will have supervision and coordination responsibilities for the regional branch and for other branch managers located within a cluster (a geographic grouping of community libraries). The senior librarians, librarian II's, at the regional branch will assume more direct supervisory responsibility for staff and activities at the regional branch as the new structure is implemented. At this time, the Sunset Cluster, the West Portal Cluster and the Richmond Cluster are in the process of completing the transition. The Richmond cluster includes the Anza branch, the Park Branch (closed for renovation), the Presidio Branch (to be closed for renovation in early spring), and the Western Addition Branch. However, branches throughout the entire system borrow materials from each other, share ideas and concerns, and refer patrons when appropriate.

3. HISTORY OF BUILDING AND COMMUNITY. The Richmond Branch opened in 1893 at 809 Point Lobos Avenue (now Geary Boulevard). It later moved to 4th Avenue near Clement, in back of Blank's Candy Shop, where the smell of cooking chocolate reportedly "tantalized the juvenile readers beyond endurance."

The present building was constructed in 1913-14, with Carnegie funds, on a lot declared surplus by the School Department. Before the fire and earthquake of 1906, the district was mostly sand dunes except along Geary Blvd. and lower Clement St., and along the rim

of the Presidio out toward Seacliff. Wild strawberries grew abundantly, and during the Spanish American War a tent city of troops from the Presidio was pitched among the dunes. Many new arrivals to the City were given lots in the Richmond in payment for services in construction and other trades. Many homes here are still owned and inhabited by the direct descendants of these early settlers.

4. COMMUNITY TODAY. No doubt the new census will give us some new statistical information, but the latest figures we have now suggest the following:

A. Approximately 45,000 persons live in the area known as the inner and middle Richmond district--an area roughly designated as the area from Masonic to 25th Ave. and Fulton Street to the Presidio.

B. Ages: 35% under 25; 26% 25-44; 17% 45-59; 22% over 60.

C. Ethnically: Approximately 50% Asian, including Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Thais, Cambodians, Laotians. Newest Asian arrivals are primarily from Southeast Asia. Another large ethnic group are the Russians--both long established families and new immigrants.

D. Socioeconomic: Large number of middle and upper middle class; some poor--mainly elderly and students; a few "wealthy" persons, mostly in Seacliff.

Richmond has always been a busy branch--it is centrally situated on 9th Ave. between busy Geary Blvd. and Clement Street. Clement Street is particularly interesting and active between Arguello Blvd. (1st Ave.) and 14th Ave. It is full of small restaurants serving food for any persuasion, little specialty shops, locally famous nightspots (like Holy City Zoo where legend has it Robin Williams was discovered), and a number of popular and comfortable shopping places such as BusVan (for outstanding used furniture purchases) and the Green Apple Bookstore (undoubtedly the city's most successful grassroots secondhand bookstore, now selling new books as well). Along with the Green Apple, the community continues to support a large number of book stores, both new and used, and to keep their branch library crowded and busy. An exciting, stimulating book-loving neighborhood.

5. ADULT MATERIALS' COLLECTION.

The 1990-91 city-fund budget for books, including materials in Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean is \$27,800. In addition this year we received \$2,000 in MURL funds to supplement our Russian language collection due to the increased number of new immigrants entering the area within the last few years. We anticipate this increase will continue. We also have a McNaughton quota of 56 titles per month.

When monthly and subject lists arrive from OAS committees all adult service librarians are responsible for reading reviews and recommending those titles that seem most appropriate, are most in demand, and/or are most useful. Monthly McNaughton lists often

provide us with the hottest, best new fiction, mystery and science fiction titles, with weaker nonfiction selections. The monthly selection list is our best source of new nonfiction titles, and rush pickups. Subject lists help keep the collections strong and solid.

6. PERIODICAL BUDGET. Richmond Branch has only 24 periodical/serial titles designated "Reference." These titles do not circulate and are held from 4 years and "current," to "current" only. They include such items as "Congressional Digest," "Consumer Reports," "Kelley Blue Books," "U. S. News and World Report," and "Science News." Included in this total figure are the book review journals that staff uses to help find reviews and select books, including "New York Times Book Review," "Kirkus Reviews," "Publisher's Weekly," "Library Journal," and "Booklist." Many of our patrons are tremendous book enthusiasts, and snatch our review material right from under our noses.

In addition, there are approximately 58 popular, general-interest titles in the adult reading room. The current issue is reference until the new issue arrives. Back issues are circulated. Monthlies are kept 1 year and current. Weeklies are kept 6 months and current.

The branch subscribes to 14 newspapers, and receives donations of others. Newspapers include the Wall Street Journal, the San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner, the New York Times Sunday edition, Chinese Times (in Chinese), Sing Tao (in Chinese) and Russian Life (in Russian).

Seventeen magazines and newspapers, many in Chinese, are selected specifically for Chinese interest.

The children's room has 35 periodical subscriptions, including "Mang Mon" (in Vietnamese), "Misha" (Russian edition), and several professional tools for the children's librarian/s.

7. ADULT REFERENCE AND READER'S ADVISORY. These services are available at the reference desk where at least one librarian is assigned during all open hours. Traditionally, Richmond Branch has had a high volume of reference questions, averaging probably within the range of five to fifteen questions per hour, by telephone and in person. Most questions are answered within five minutes. Many people are referred to the Main Library, or a subject request is sent to the reference librarian in the Branch Department. Some questions go to BALIS. While we have an outstanding reference book collection for a branch, we are severely limited in reference service by our meager reference periodical collection.

Because of size restrictions weeding of the collection must be done often. This is not an easy task since there are readers for virtually every available title. It is rare to find a book that has not circulated recently and often. The need is always for more titles and more copies than space or budget will allow.

8. SPECIAL INTEREST COLLECTIONS. The Chinese-language collection is extremely popular. Currently, in the adult area, the branch spends \$2,000 to \$3,000 per year on books and subscribes to 14 magazines and newspapers in Chinese. In addition, we receive donations from various Chinese associations and patrons. The circulation is limited only by the number of materials.

Russian-language materials have always been popular--but the demand has grown by leaps and bounds with the recent influx of Russian immigrants. We are slowly building the collection with donations, MURLS funds, long-term loans from the State Library, and some funds from our annual book budget.

The neighborhood also has a considerable number of Korean and Vietnamese people, some of whom do not read English. We maintain popular collections in both these languages. When Japanese-speaking patrons request material, we refer them to the excellent collection and services available at the Western Addition Branch.

9. YOUNG ADULT SERVICES. Richmond Branch has a Young Adult collection with emphasis on books that help encourage the joy of reading. Students attending George Washington High School, and those high school students who attend alternative high schools but live in the neighborhood, come in regularly to use materials that help them with their homework. With budget cuts this year we are having to look very seriously at priorities, and while we have decided to continue to supplement what the schools offer in their libraries, and assign as homework, we will not buy materials that most likely will be used only by high school students to help them with their homework, but materials that have a wider appeal as well.

10. CHILDRENS SERVICES. The senior librarian in charge of the children's room is responsible for juvenile collection development, budget administration, programming and general service, as well as supervision of all staff working in the children's room. Richmond circulates more juvenile materials than any agency in the city. Juvenile circulation averages 27% of total Branch circulation. The children's room is located on a separate floor, and the children have their own entrance, a playground right outside, and their own circulation desk. The book budget for 1990-91 is \$10,000, the highest for any branch.

The staff offers weekly storytimes, lapsits and videos, monthly film programs, and other special programming. The Saturday morning Toddler Lapsit has quickly become the most popular and well-attended program. The Richmond branch serves 17 preschools and 11 elementary schools. In addition to providing reference and reader's advisory assistance, and a place to hang out for numerous children during after-school hours, staff also makes presentations to classes in the library and at schools.