

VANPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Report for October 1944

One morning last week the librarian came up the walk ^{behind} ~~in back of~~ two Vanport women. They turned toward the library which was closed (it was one of the days on which we open at noon), no lights were on and the poster we usually have in the window listing our opening hours had been temporarily removed for mending. Suddenly we overheard one say to the other in an aggrieved tone, "I'll bet they've taken our library away from us! How do they expect us to live out here? We caught up with them, and hastened to let them know that it is "business as usual" for us. They departed happily after informing us that the seven day week has temporarily interrupted their reading habits, but that they will be in soon to see us.

The rise in Vanport's population has been clearly reflected this month in our statistics. For the first time since last March we have issued more than 5000 volumes and the number of borrowers registered continues to be astronomical (more than 250) for a library as small as ours. We continue to be plagued by the inconsiderate type of patron who applies for a library card, takes out one book, and moves away from the project soon after- too often taking the book with him. During the month, however, we made a careful check of all delinquent borrowers through the files at the Administration Building and obtained numerous forwarding addresses. Since we like to believe that our fellow man is more often careless rather than dishonest, we have high hopes that many of our books will be returned to us. As a matter of fact, a few have already come in the mails in response to our letters.

During October, we had an opportunity to contribute our small bit to the Good Neighbor Policy. One of the Vanport teachers has a sister in Colombia who has just taken over a school library. She has had no library

training, and is appalled at being given the responsibility of cataloging all the books in the library. We have sent her a set of sample catalog cards as well as samples of all our book supplies. We have talked to her sister so many times about this girl's problems that we almost feel as though we now have a South American Branch of the Vanport Library:

Ever since our library was opened there has been great interest among our negro patrons in books on the race problem. We have therefore tried to add everything worthwhile and up-to-date on the subject, both in fiction and non-fiction. During October for some reason the demand so far exceeded the supply that we were never able to find more than one book dealing with the negro on our shelves at anytime. This has been for us a source of some embarrassment when we have not been able to fill requests, but it is also very gratifying to know that considerable reading is being done on one of the most vital subjects of the day.

Regularly the Administration Office calls us to inquire concerning the number of patrons who pass through our portals daily. We are not ashamed of our report but we feel that the number would really be a staggering one if we were allowed to include our canine visitors! Each new dog who moves into Vanport (and some that we suspect are only visitors) makes it a point to include the library on his first tour of inspection. Would that all the residents of Vanport were as library-minded!

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Touhey
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Vanport Public Library