

# National City Public Library: An Early History

Matthew Nye

In August 2005, the National City Public Library opened the doors on its newest home, a beautiful 49,508 square-foot building with a staff of more than twenty-five. The library has subscriptions to over 200 serials and space for more than 160,000 books. The Computer Center, with 60 units, claims to be one of the largest in California's public libraries. The creation of this new structure leads one to reflect on the history of the library. How did a small agricultural town develop its own public library? This article explores National City's history—its founders, its early community, and its relationship to its neighbor San Diego—and the origins of the library. It also looks at the context in which public libraries were established in California in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Frank Kimball founded National City in 1868 with the help of two brothers, Warren and Levi. He had moved from his home town of Contoocook Village, New Hampshire, to California for reasons of health, moving first to San Francisco. He spent ten years there before finding the Bay area too cold and damp; he headed south for better weather.<sup>1</sup> Upon arriving in the southernmost part of California, he purchased the Rancho de la Nación, a "barren" Mexican land grant. Kimball notes in his diary on June 15, 1868, "Called on Mr. Pioche and agreed to take the National Ranch at the price agreed, \$30,000...1/3 cash and the balance in 3 annual payments at 8 per annum."<sup>2</sup> The Kimball brothers quickly began surveying the land to create a town. They "plotted, subdivided, and surveyed the 42 square miles of National Ranch."<sup>3</sup> They envisioned a city along the lines of their rapidly growing neighbor to the north—San Diego. They built twelve homes during their first year and seventy-five more the following year.<sup>4</sup>



*The interior of the National City Public Library, 2008, designed by the architectural firm Carrier Johnson and completed in 2005.*

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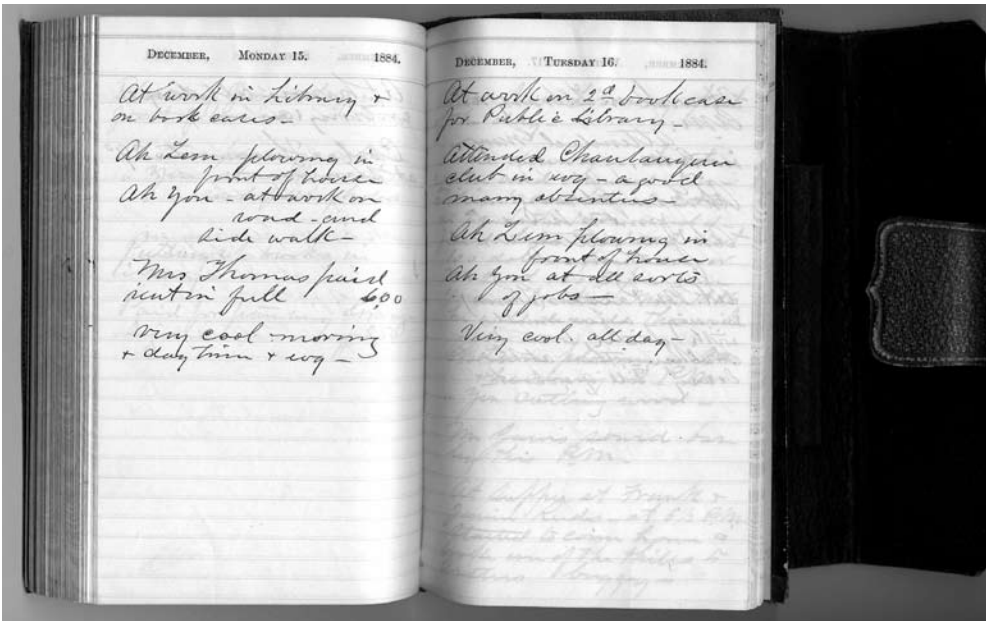


Frank Kimball (1832-1913), ca. 1868.  
Courtesy of National City Public Library  
(NCPL), Morgan Local History Room.

The industrious Kimball brothers had vision. In addition to real estate, they were involved in agriculture; waterworks, which included the building of the Sweetwater Dam, at the time the largest masonry structure in the United States; banking; and the railroad. San Diego's success pushed the brothers to make National City an economic and cultural showplace. They did not want to build an "outpost" but a viable, cosmopolitan city.

Frank Kimball brought his love of books and print culture to the West. He was known as an enthusiast and procurer of good books. While living in San Francisco he often visited "Duncan's Auction House" which stocked books sold by pioneers to make money upon arriving in California. Kimball purchased a good deal of fiction, history, and works on agriculture.<sup>5</sup>

Frank's sister-in-law Flora Kimball also participated in National City's literary scene. She and her husband Warren moved from San Francisco in 1868. She published a children's book, *The Fairchilds*, under the pen name F. M. Lebelle in 1872.<sup>6</sup> She also wrote short stories and essays for *Scribner's Magazine* and *The Argonaut*. Many of her works focused on women's rights and the suffrage movement. In the 1880s she wrote a "Women's Column"



Frank Kimball recorded his daily activities in diaries from 1854 to 1912. They are either leather or cloth bound and vary in size from 6 by 4 inches to 2.5 by 4 inches. All 54 volumes have been copied onto microfilm and are available to the public in the National City Public Library's Morgan Local History Room. Courtesy of NCPL, Morgan Local History Room.

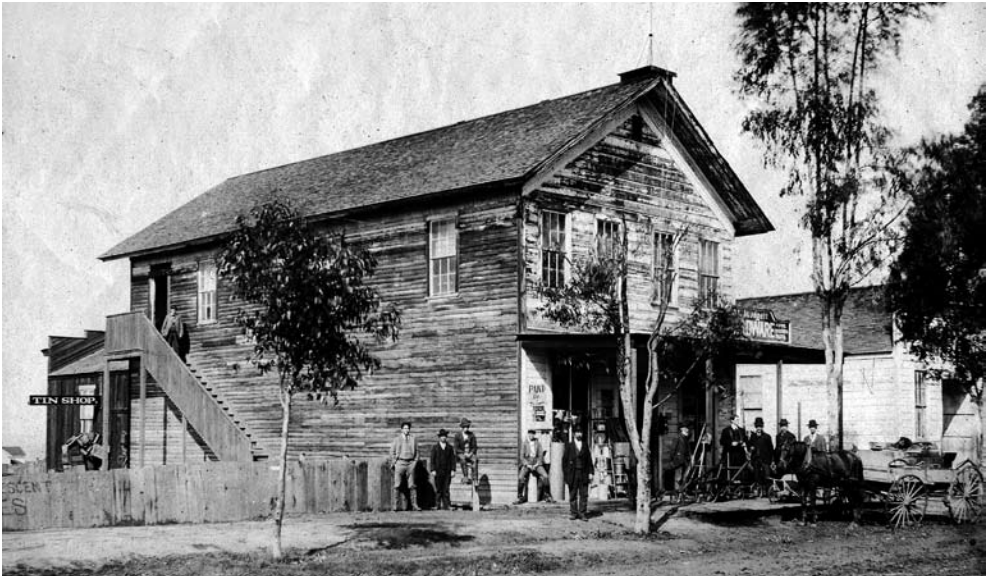
for the *National City Record* and edited a women's section for *The California Patron*. In 1886, she published and edited a National City magazine called *The Great Southwest*.<sup>7</sup>

In 1884, Frank Kimball used his collection of books to create a library in his National City real estate office. He opened his "Public Library" with the help of Ah Lem, his Chinese workman. His diary reads: "Ah Lem at work on library and on bookcases," "At work on 2nd bookcase for Public Library," and "Ah Lem hauled 3 loads of books to the Library rooms in my real estate office."<sup>8</sup> The *National City Record* noted that on December 18, 1884, "National City Free Library and Reading Rooms" opened its door for business.<sup>9</sup> The Library's Accession Record shows such diverse books as the modern library classic *Two Years before the Mast* by Richard Henry Dana; *Poems* by John Saxe; *James Madison* by William L. Rives; and the 39-volume *Bancroft Works* (The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft), that the library still owns.<sup>10</sup>

In April 1887, a few years after the library opened, Frank Kimball, A. G. Adams and other citizens of National City established a Library Association with \$2,000 of capital stock. This stock was divided into 1,000 shares at \$2 each. Everyone interested in contributing to the Public Library was encouraged to take as many shares as they could.<sup>11</sup> On Friday, April 29, 1887, the library was moved into the downstairs room of Grange Hall on National Avenue between 8th and 9th Avenues. The old library room in the back of Kimball's real estate office was then used as the city's kindergarten. The library remained in the Grange Hall for almost ten years before it was eventually moved to the Boyd Block on 7th Avenue (now McKinley) and 16th Street in July 1895.<sup>12</sup>



This view of 7th Avenue (now McKinley Avenue) was taken from 19th Street around 1900. In the distance, the building with the tower was known as the Boyd Building, built in 1887. The public library was located on the second floor from 1895 to 1896. Courtesy of NCPL, Morgan Local History Room.



*The National City Grange was organized in November 1874, with Frank Kimball serving as its first Master. Grange Hall, completed in July 1875, was used for both community events and the library. The first floor housed a furniture store in the front and a tin and plumbing shop in the rear, run by J. L. Mudgett. On the second floor was the Lodge Hall. Courtesy of NCPL, Morgan Local History Room.*

## **Public Libraries in California**

National City's push to establish a viable public library was part of a national trend sweeping the country during the late nineteenth century. It was encouraged by significant economic prosperity, a social focus on education and morality, and an increase in urban populations.

In California, the development of libraries followed steps taken by many other states. These included: "(1) laws permitting the incorporation of library associations, (2) laws relative to school district libraries, and (3) laws authorizing the establishment of tax-supported town libraries."<sup>13</sup> In 1878 and 1880, California legislative decisions provided the state with a base from which it would build its public library systems. The Rogers Act, named after one of its authors, State Senator George E. Rogers, was passed into law in 1877-78. This was known as Senate Bill Number 1, "An Act to establish and maintain free public libraries and reading rooms."<sup>14</sup> This law allowed any incorporated city or town to establish a library. The bill was part special legislation for the city of San Francisco and part general legislation for the municipalities of the state. In *The Rise of the Public Library in California*, author Ray Held summarized the general provisions of the Rogers Act:

1. The law was permissive rather than mandatory, granting authority to all incorporated municipal governments to maintain public libraries.
2. The tax limitation was one mill on the dollar.
3. The power of the library trustees was extremely limited, with all matters touching upon appointment of personnel, salaries, and building being reserved to the municipal authority.<sup>15</sup>



Over the next thirty years California replaced the Rogers Act with three subsequent general library laws. The 1880 act stipulated that the trustees, five in number, were to be elected to the post just like other city officials. Their powers were enhanced, giving them full authority over the library, which included approval of all books purchased for the library. Yet control over real estate and building expenditures remained in the hands of the city council. The board of trustees was responsible for ensuring that the library's responsibilities were being carried out in the most efficient and economical way. Traditionally, library trustees were businessmen, prominent citizens, and professionals. Laws enacted in 1901 and 1909 relaxed and liberalized parts of the 1880 Act. In addition to allowing interlibrary loans and giving permission to loan books to non-residents of a city, the new laws made women eligible for service on library boards.<sup>16</sup>

When the American Library Association was formed in 1876, there were only 188 public libraries in the United States. By 1894 there were 400, though unevenly distributed and predominantly located along the East Coast. Of the 46 public libraries located west of the Mississippi, 18 were located in California.<sup>17</sup> At this time, the state had over 198 incorporated cities, but only 31 of these exceeded a population of 5,000.<sup>18</sup>

The establishment of libraries took off in Southern California, most notably in small towns with populations under 2,000. Redlands and Orange founded their libraries in 1892; Monrovia and Pasadena in 1895; and Coronado and National City in 1896.<sup>19</sup> Many libraries were founded in cities that had experienced some type of community activism, such as a temperance movement or a Women's Improvement Club.<sup>20</sup>

## **The National City Public Library**

The official National City Public Library was founded by Frank Kimball with the help of Rev. Frank A. Bissell who had moved to National City in the early 1890s to take on the pastoral duties of the Congregational Church. Frank and his brother Warren agreed to donate 750 of their books to the current Library Association with the expectation that the volumes would go to the new library. A board of trustees was then established in 1896. Rev. Bissell served as president of the board. The other members were Peleg T. Griffith, John E. Boal, Lynn Boyd, and David K. Horton who acted as secretary.<sup>21</sup> The board of trustees purchased the Kimball books from the Library Association for \$50.

This amenable arrangement contrasted with the situation in San Diego where the library failed to acquire over 1,000 books owned by Alonzo Erastus Horton, founder of New Town. Horton had acquired a substantial collection as a result of a real estate transaction with historian Hubert Howe Bancroft. In 1870, the city of San Diego had created a library association and public reading room. They called it the Horton Library Association and expected to receive Horton's collection, valued at \$2,000, as a gift. Horton was a trustee of the association and a member of the committee on books and donations. However, he wanted to donate half the collection and sell the other half. This request and its subsequent fallout resulted in the dissolution of the Horton Library Association and its reestablishment as the San Diego Library Association without Horton or his books.<sup>22</sup>

In 1896 the National City Public Library moved into Aylworth Hall at 4th



*Flora Morrill Kimball was the wife of Warren Kimball. Her obituary boasted that she was the best-known woman in the state. Flora loved books and was an early supporter of the National City Public Library. In 1889 she was elected to the National City School Board, distinguishing her as the first woman in the State of California to serve in such a capacity. She wrote several books, including *The Fairchilds* (1872). Courtesy of NCPL, Morgan Local History Room.*

Avenue (now Harding Street) and 14th Street. Edward B. Aylworth, an early settler, had commissioned architect Lewis A. Curtis to design and build Aylworth Hall in 1887 at the cost of \$6,000.<sup>23</sup> The result was a Greek Revival, two-story wooden structure with a small entry porch and a low-pitched roof. It measured 50 by 65 feet, with 17-foot ceilings on the ground floor. Aylworth had the building constructed for his civic-minded wife to use as a Temperance Hall. According to one historian, “The robust construction aptly reflected the unbending spirit of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union of which Mrs. Aylworth was a fervent member.”<sup>24</sup> The lower floor held a Women’s Christian Temperance Union parlor while the second floor contained a 600-seat public hall. The Aylworths eventually moved back to their original home in Oregon, selling the building to the city for \$2,500.



*National City, ca. 1886, looking north and east from 21st Street and 8th Avenue (now Cleveland). The three-story building on the right is the Six Avenue Hotel, built by Frank Kimball in 1886. Courtesy of NCPL, Morgan Local History Room.*

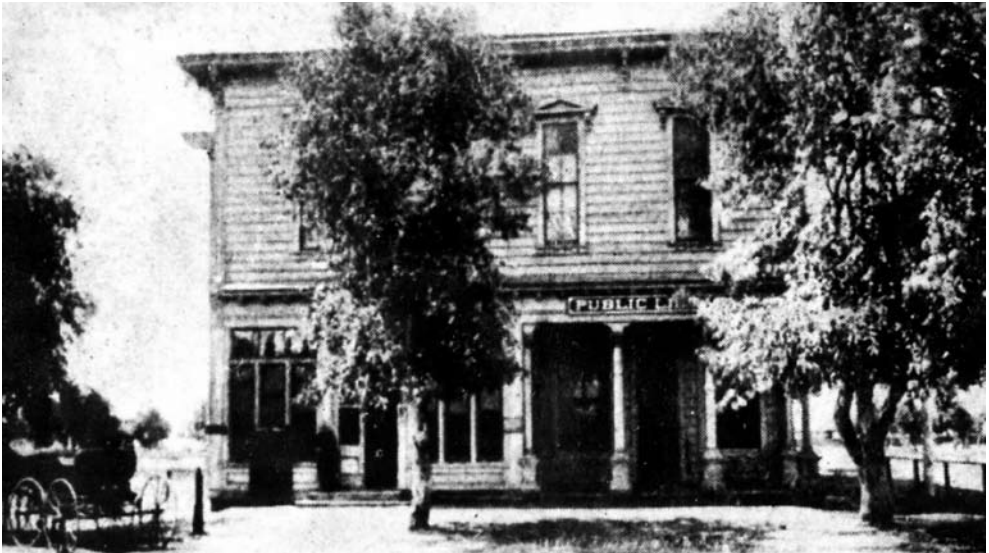
## THE JOURNAL OF SAN DIEGO HISTORY

In order to support the library, National City taxed its citizens in accordance with the Rogers Act passed fifteen years earlier. The minutes from the meeting of the National City Council in 1895 related to the Public Library and the issue of taxation:

Resolved by the Board of Trustees of the City of National City, that a tax of ten cents on the hundred dollars be levied upon the assessed property of the City for the purpose of establishing and maintaining in the said city a free public library and reading room and purchase such books, journals and other publications, purchasing and leasing such real and personal property and erecting such buildings as may be necessary thereof.<sup>25</sup>

The first librarian who worked for the National City Public Library was Sarah T. Murray, chosen by the board of trustees on June 16, 1896. Little is known about her save for the fact that she started work on July 1 with an initial salary of \$20 per month.<sup>26</sup> A year later, she requested a raise to \$25 per month. The board responded, "Answer to Mrs. Murray's request as to an increase of salary the financial outlook for the coming year does not warrant the board in granting it and that she be so informed."<sup>27</sup> They did, however, allow her to get help to clean the library shelves and to arrange the books. This was to be financed by funds "in the hands of the librarian." When Murray died in 1902, the board of trustees made note of the fact in their meeting notes, "She was an efficient worker, a sincere Christian and a brave, true woman. Frail in body and bearing burdens that would have crushed many a strong man."<sup>28</sup> She was replaced by Sarah C. Dickinson.

By 1900, National City had just over 1,000 residents while its neighbor San



*Aylworth Hall, ca. 1905, was home to the city's library until 1911. Because the building afforded such a large open space it was used for a variety of functions, including graduation exercises and public meetings. After the city purchased the building, it was used as City Hall until 1937. Courtesy of NCPL, Morgan Local History Room.*

Diego had 17,000.<sup>29</sup> The library's collection had grown too, approaching 4,000 volumes. The library was in regular use. It was open every day except "legal holidays" from 2-5 p.m. (Sundays 3-5 p.m.), and had an annual circulation of 5,440 (87 percent of which was fiction).<sup>30</sup> There was also an effort to make the library a more comfortable and inviting environment for its patrons. In July 1904, the board of trustees' notes read, "The librarian was instructed to present a petition to the city-Trustees asking for the installation of electric lighting."<sup>31</sup> In September, the library had been fixed up with new wallpaper and newly laid linoleum flooring for \$23.25, paid from a special fund "in the hands of the librarian." The printed 1902 library catalog noted that the library was open to all citizens of National City, 12 years of age and older, and to residents of the county who owned property. All others who wished to borrow books were required to pay a fee of 5 cents a week for each volume they took from the library.<sup>32</sup> During the first years of operation, patrons were not allowed in the stacks and they could take out only one book at a time. The librarian later increased the limit to two books so long as one of the books was non-fiction: "On motion: Librarian was instructed to allow two books issued to one borrower provided one is not fiction."<sup>33</sup>

In 1902 the board of trustees included, for the first time, two women: Fanny Thelen and Mrs. Clark. Other members were Dr. W. S. Welsh and Peleg T. Griffith. At this time, public libraries were in the process of acquiring the collections of smaller libraries, many of which were owned and operated by women. These smaller libraries had "rooms" to meet and read books and papers. Many of them were associated with temperance societies, reform societies, and Samaritan societies. To encourage and facilitate the amalgamation of these libraries and reading rooms into the public library system, it became advantageous to bring women into the executive level of library organizations.

## **A Carnegie Library**

In 1909, the board of trustees applied for a grant from the Carnegie Foundation to assist in the construction of a new library. Starting in 1881, Andrew Carnegie paid for the construction of 1,689 public libraries, many of them imposing architectural structures in a variety of historical revival styles. Carnegie, a wealthy steel baron, could have been a hero in a Horatio Alger story: a poor boy who made good through hard work. As a result, he was interested in providing resources for the self-educated man.<sup>34</sup> Theodore Jones, in his *Carnegie Libraries across America*, noted that five hundred to three thousand letters in reference to library grants arrived daily for Carnegie. Requests came from all over the country from all-sized communities. Jones writes, "Carnegie's tenets for the library program were very simple. To be eligible, a community had to demonstrate the need for a public library, provide the building site, and promise to support library services and maintenance with tax funds equal to 10 percent of the grant amount annually."<sup>35</sup> Hence, if the awarded grant was \$20,000, the town had to dedicate \$2,000 per year.

Some facts about the Carnegie public libraries in the United States:

- \$41,748,689 provided 1,689 public libraries in 1,419 communities.
- The largest grant was \$5,202,621 awarded to New York City.
- A total of 1,015 grants were for less than \$15,000, indicating that most





*National City's Carnegie Library, ca. 1920, was located on National Avenue (now National City Boulevard) at 12th Street from 1911 to 1954. It is the present site of the National City Civic Center. Courtesy of NCPL, Morgan Local History Room.*

- libraries were built in communities of fewer than 7,500 people.
- More than half of all grants (768) went to Midwestern communities.
  - Because of the variation in branch donations, the states with the most Carnegie public library buildings are Indiana (165), California (142), and Ohio, New York and Illinois (all with 106).
  - Only Rhode Island, Delaware and Alaska did not receive Carnegie grants.<sup>36</sup>

In February 1909, the *National City News* wrote that the president of the library's board of trustees, Dr. Theodore F. Johnson, was working to secure a donation from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation "sufficient to erect a public library for some time to come and which would be an ornament to National City."<sup>37</sup> The following month, the board of trustees was offered \$10,000 if the city could provide a suitable site to build. The city administration proceeded to form a Building Committee to work on securing the land. *The National City News* posted a "Notice of Sale of Municipal Bonds" in July.<sup>38</sup> Proposition 1, which would raise \$12,000 through bonds, passed with a vote of 124 for, 46 against. The city planned to purchase a fifteen-acre tract of land where they could locate a new library as well as a public park.<sup>39</sup>

Architect William Sterling Hebbard designed National City's Carnegie Library building in the Classical Revival style.<sup>40</sup> It was a one-story structure with a full basement, made of brick, with two Doric columns in front and six windows, three on each side of the door. It was designed to maximize the amount of light. The interior had over twenty windows, with a skylight above the lobby. *The National City Record* described it as "one of the most ornamental library buildings in Southern California."<sup>41</sup> The "delivery desk" was set in a spacious lobby, allowing librarians to see almost the entire facility. The library included a private room for the librarian and a "Children's Room."<sup>42</sup> Edith Marshall, former secretary to the board of trustees, was appointed librarian with a salary of \$45 per month.<sup>43</sup>

The building was dedicated January 13, 1911. The celebration included a presentation of an American flag by the Ladies of Grand Army of the Republic. The principal of the National City High School, Dr. Benjamin S. Gowen, gave a speech in which he hoped that the library would direct its attention to the children of the city. He instructed parents to cultivate in their children a taste for “good” books and provided examples from the works of various authors.<sup>44</sup> At this time, many public libraries began to encourage young patrons. In 1906, the Los Angeles Public Library began sending collections of books to playgrounds. In Portland, Mary Frances Isom started a library league in the hope of instilling the library habit in every child who lived within walking distance of a public library, a branch library, or a deposit station.<sup>45</sup>

The library’s board of trustees remained responsible for the library’s collection development, often acting as the city’s moral gatekeepers. In 1910, the city newspaper had noted, “the library, through a careful process of elimination and a conscientious selection of new books, now contains over 4,000 volumes, remarkably free from trash, covering all the more important subjects of interest.”<sup>46</sup> They acquired new books such as: *The New International Webster’s Dictionary*, *Larned’s History for Ready Research* (seven volumes), and *The Stereographic Views of the Yosemite and the Yellowstone Parks*. These works, among others, were said to “have given much pleasure and proved very useful.”<sup>47</sup> In July 1911, the library contained 4,130 books, including 44 periodicals. The circulation for the year totaled 8,021, an impressive beginning for the new library.

Trustees also harnessed public spirit to raise money for furniture. At their first meeting in the new building, they were “struck by the meager showing the old furniture made.” It was “absolutely inadequate for the needs of the new library.”<sup>48</sup> One of the library’s patrons, a man believed to be forming the “library habit,” offered a challenge: “I will be one of 50 to give five dollars each toward buying suitable furniture.”<sup>49</sup> The board took him up on his offer and opened a subscription list at the People’s National Bank.



*The Children’s Room of the Carnegie Library, ca. 1940s, demonstrated National City Public Library’s early commitment to the children of the community. Courtesy of NCPL, Morgan Local History Room.*

The construction of a new library in National City in 2005 reflected the city's long tradition of support for the culture of books. From Frank Kimball's small "public" library in his real estate office to the city's first official library, National City used the assets available to them to bring books to its citizens. The city's continued emphasis on education, literacy, and leisure activities reflects the vision of National City's progressive founders.

## NOTES

1. The Kimball brothers worked as successful contractors in San Francisco and Oakland for seven years before Frank's ill health necessitated a move to a more congenial climate. Heading south, Frank Kimball took options on seventeen different properties between Salinas and Los Angeles, including the Coyote Ranch in Los Angeles and 6,000 acres in what is now Pasadena. Finding problems in the titles or in the land itself, Kimball continued south until he eventually found Rancho de la Nación. Irene Phillips, *National City: Pioneer Town* (National City, California: South Bay Press, 1961), 3.
2. Frank Kimball, Diary, June 15, 1868, National City Public Library, Morgan Local History Room, 10. Many of the fifty-two diaries written by Frank Kimball were donated to the National City Public Library in 1958 by Gordon Stanley Kimball, great nephew of Frank Kimball. The diaries span the years 1854-1912. The brief entries describe historical events, modes of travel, business experience, and the hardships of daily life. Events addressed in the diaries include the progress of National City as an agricultural and horticultural center, the development of water resources, and Kimball's efforts to bring the railroad to National City. *A Guide to the Kimball Family Collection, 1854-1934* has been processed by Marisa Abramo and Mary Allely.
3. Leslie Trook, *National City: Kimball's Dream* (National City: National City Chamber of Commerce, 1992), 10. Historian Leslie Trook was an English teacher at Sweetwater Union High School in National City. She accessed primary written materials available in the Morgan Local History Room of the National City Public Library (then the Thelma Hollingsworth Local History Room) in writing this book.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Irene Phillips, *National City: Pioneer Town* (National City, California: South Bay Press, 1961), 85. In 1920, at the age of 31, Irene Phillips moved to National City with her family from their native Denver. By the 1950s Mrs. Phillips was the "self-appointed historian" of San Diego and National City. She wrote a regular column in the *National City Star-News* and published over eight books on local history, including *Around the Bay in 30 Minutes*, *The Story of El Rancho de la Nación*, and *Mission Olive Industry and Other South Bay Stories*.
6. F. M. Lebelle [Flora Morrill Kimball], *The Fairchilds* (Chicago: L. H. Kimball, 1872).
7. Some of her works were published under the names Victor Pearl and Betsey Snow. Irene Phillips, *Women of Distinction: Under Three Flags* (National City: South Bay Press, 1956); Phillips, *Development of the Mission Olive Industry and other South Bay Stories* (National City: South Bay Press, 1960); Laura De Force Gordon, "In Memoriam," *National City Record* (1898), 6; Donna C. Schuele, "Community Property Law and the Politics of Married Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century California," *The Gendered West*, ed. Gordon Morris Bakken and Brenda Farrington (New York: Garland Publishing, 2001), 440n102.
8. Kimball, Diary, December 15, 1884.
9. "National City Free Library," *National City Record*, December 18, 1884. *National City Record*, National City's first published newspaper, debuted on September 28, 1882. It was a weekly newspaper published and edited by William Burgess. It promoted itself as a "Good, Lively, and Interesting paper,

which may be read with impunity in Every Household." The *San Diego Union* had already been up and running for fourteen years when the *National City Record* published its first edition. For a history of the *San Diego Union* refer to Richard B. Yale's "The Birthplace of the San Diego Union," *The Journal of San Diego History* 14, no. 4 (1968): 33-40.

10. National City Public Library Morgan Local History Room, *Accession Record*, December 1884.
11. "Public Library," *National City Record*, April 28, 1887. Frank Kimball's Library Association was a worthy idea but it was not practical. Ten years earlier, American political economist Henry George summarized a report on libraries before a public meeting initiated by Senator George Rogers. He concluded that public libraries were not able to exist on subscriptions and donations. Ray Held, *Public Libraries in California: 1849-1878; University of California Publication in Librarianship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 83. Held wrote insightful and detailed pieces on the origins of California public libraries and the California county library system. He was a historian with his Ph.D. in history. In the 1960s, he was an Associate Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Librarianship.
12. Phillips, *National City: Pioneer Town*, 87. The Boyd building, owned by the popular Boyd family, was completed in 1887 and had an ornamental, galvanized iron front and a blue granite tower, and black trimming around the door. It quickly became a social center of National City's growing business district. It housed the Post Office and the Boyd Brothers Drug Store. Phillips, *National City: Pioneer Town*, 95.
13. Held, *Public Libraries in California*, 77.
14. Ray Held, *The Rise of the Public Library in California* (Chicago: American Library Association 1973), 83.
15. *Ibid.*, 83.
16. *Ibid.*, 59.
17. Theodore Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America: A Public Legacy* (New York: Preservation Press, John Wiley and Sons, 1997), 16.
18. Held, *The Rise of the Public Library in California*, 8.
19. Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America*, 37.
20. Theodore Jones lists over two dozen Women's Clubs responsible for Carnegie Libraries scattered across the country. The clubs located in California were the Progress and Pleasure Club in East San Diego; the Endeavour Club in Auburn; the Hayseed Club in Livermore; and the Wednesday Club in Selma. Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America*, 40-41.
21. David K. Horton was not related to San Diego's Alonzo Erastus Horton.
22. Clare E. Breed, *Turning the Pages: San Diego Public Library History, 1882-1982* (San Diego: Friends of The San Diego Public Library, 1983), 8-9. Clare Breed served as the head of the San Diego Public Library (SDPL) from 1945-1970. Her book provides an in-depth review of the SDPL's history, including the fact that it was the first library west of the Mississippi to receive a grant from Andrew Carnegie with which to build a new library. For early history of the San Diego County Library system refer to *County Free Library Organizing in California, 1909-1918: Personal Recollections of Harriet G. Eddy* (Berkeley: California Library Association, 1955).
23. There have been variations in the spelling of Edward B. Aylworth's surname. *Monteith's Directory of San Diego and Vicinity, 1889-90* (San Diego: John Monteith Publisher, 1890) spelled it Aylsworth (p. 408). The *San Diego and County Directory for 1893-94* (San Diego: Baker Bros., 1894) used the Aylesworth spelling (p. 229), as did historian Irene Philips in *National City: Pioneer Town* (p. 88). In *National City: Kimball's Dream*, Leslie Trook spelled it Alyworth (p. 38). This author is following the spelling provide by William Ellsworth Smythe's *History of San Diego, 1542-1908*, part 4, 391-412, <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/books/smythe/4-1.htm> (accessed March 4, 2007); the *San Diego and County Directory for 1890-1900* (San Diego: Baker Bros., 1900), 3; and "City Library Notes," *The National City Record*, July 2, 1896, 6-1.
24. N. Ball, *National City Star News*, June 1, 1963.
25. National City Council, Meeting Notes, September 18, 1895.
26. National City Public Library, Board of Trustees meeting notes, June 16, 1895, 3.



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27. National City Public Library, Board of Trustees meeting notes, May 4, 1897, 13.
28. National City Public Library, Board of Trustees meeting notes, December 5, 1905, 138.
29. Breed, *Turning the Pages*, 191.
30. Catalog of the National City Public Library, 1900, 5.
31. National City Public Library, Board of Trustees meeting notes, June 7, 1904, 120.
32. Catalog of the National City Public Library, 1902, 3.
33. National City Public Library, Board of Trustees meeting notes, June 3, 1902, 85. At the turn of the twentieth century, the issue of providing fiction in public libraries was a much debated topic. A comprehensive resource on this subject can be found in Ester Jane Carrier's *Fiction in Public Libraries, 1900-1950* (Littleton, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, Inc, 1985). For a scholarly analysis addressing the role American libraries played in the promotion of fiction at the turn of the twentieth century, see Joan Shelley Rubin's "What is the History of the History of Books?" *The Journal of American History* 90, no. 2 (2003): 555-575.
34. Jones, *Carnegie Libraries across America*, 11. Another good resource on the subject is George Bobinski's *Carnegie Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969). Bobinski was an Assistant Dean, School of Library Science, University of Kentucky. His book provides a wealth of statistical information that includes library locations and dates of most grants, the amount of grant money issued to each recipient, and information if the beneficiaries had a public library established prior to their Carnegie grant. Bobinski also provides a list of unaccepted Carnegie Library offers.
35. *Ibid.*, 26.
36. *Ibid.*, 131.
37. "\$10,000 Library Building," *The National City News*, February 20, 1911. By 1903 *The National City News* had changed its name to *The National City News*, published by Cooke and Christiance. In 1954 it would change its name once more to *The National City Star-News*. It was part of a group of newspapers that covered the South Bay, which included the *Chula Vista Star-News*.
38. "Notice of Sale," *The National City News*, November 8, 1909.
39. "Fifteen-Acre Park and Library Site," *The National City News*, May 8, 1909.
40. William S. Hebbard (1863-1930) formed a well-known partnership with Irving Gill that lasted from 1898 to 1907. He worked in a variety of styles, including Beaux Arts, Gothic Revival, Spanish Renaissance, Mission Revival, and Arts & Crafts. His best known projects are the State Normal School (1898, with Irving Gill, demolished), Christ Episcopal Church, Coronado (1894), George Marston Residence (1904-05 with Gill), and All Saints Episcopal Church (1912 with Carleton M. Winslow). Kathleen Flanigan, "William Sterling Hebbard: Consummate San Diego Architect," *The Journal of San Diego History* 33, no. 1 (1987): 1-42.
41. *The National City Record*, February 8, 1909.
42. "New Library Building," *The National City News*, June, 11, 1911.
43. National City Public Library, Board of Trustees meeting notes, 1910.
44. "Fine New Building," *The National City News*, June 18, 1911.
45. Joanne E. Passet, *Cultural Crusaders: Women Librarians in the American West, 1900-1917* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 79.
46. "Our Free Public Library," *The National City News*, June 11, 1910.
47. National City Public Library, Board of Trustees meeting notes, 1911.
48. "Library Notes," *The National City News*, November 12, 1910.
49. "Library Notes," *The National City News*, March 5, 1910.