

Forming of Merced County Library System

First County Librarian Antoinette Humphreys



The Merced Library Board hired former Redlands Librarian Antoinette Humphreys (pictured below) as the first librarian. Upon her arrival on July 5, 1910, she established an office headquarters in the Security Bank Building on 17th Street (pictured below – 1st building on the right), which was known as the Merced County Free Library. She accepted gifts from the Merced Book Club (Merced Ladies Library Club) and W. T. C. U. Reading Room. She purchased library furniture and assembled a group of professional staff. Pictured left (from L to R) includes Mildred C. Stoddard (First Assistant), Margarita Winton (Assistant), Lenna L. Landram (Assistant), Minifred H. Bigley, and Librarian Antoniette Humphreys.

"In the first month many visitors from the county dropped in with requests for books on 'eucalyptus culture,' 'alfalfa farming,' and kindred subjects. Even though there was as yet no library, they were not turned away empty-handed, for books were generously sent down from the State Library to supply the demand and to retain their confidence in the ultimate realization of their expectations regarding a 'real library.'"

— Antoinette M. Humphreys, "How the Merced County Free Library System Has Been Worked Out," *Library Journal*, July 1911.

