

Jessamyn West Reminisces On Early Days in Yorba Linda

by March Butz

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On Sunday afternoon the new library building of the Fullerton Junior College was formally dedicated. The huge 9000 sq. ft. main reading room was nearly filled with visitors and participants of the event. Dr. T. Stanley Warburton, district superintendent, presided at the ceremony. G. Russell Graham, instructor in social science, gave the invocation and William H. Taylor, A. I. A., made the presentation of the building, which was formally accepted by E. W. Wylie, president of the board of trustees.

The building is a very modern, functional and beautiful structure. The color scheme of the main reading room, worked out by Mrs. Mary Hodgden, uses the colors of the eucalyptus: silver green and grayed red. Glass, steel and plastics are used effectively throughout the structure.

The highlight of the afternoon was the address given by the now famous author who grew up in Yorba Linda, Jessamyn West, in private life Mrs. Harry McPherson of Napa, Calif. A generous portion of her talk was given to reminiscences of her childhood in Yorba Linda. She recalled its beauty, its green rolling hills in winter and spring, its tumbleweeds romping ahead of the Santana [sic] winds in the fall, her excursions with friends after the rains came, to pick lupins, yellow violets and other wild flowers.

She told of her great hunger for books to read and of their scarcity; of when there was a library established in the janitor's broom closet at the grammar school, composed entirely of "donated" books, about 50 of them, and to her it was a holy of holies.

At that time there was a charge of one dollar for a library card, and though dollars were scarce at her home she was given one. She dressed herself in a costume considered appropriate for the library visit, (including shoes) and ran all the way to the school house, her dollar clutched in her hand. She recounted amusingly that an early librarian of Yorba Linda tried to insist that she read Master Sylark when she had already read Saint Elmo, The Trail of the Lonessome [sic] Pine, and all the E. P. Roe books she could find. She lamented that she had not been supplied with books of the Master Skylark type when she had been at the stage of immaturity to appreciate them.

All this was prologue to her praise and admiration of the new college library building and its contents. She attended Fullerton High School and Junior College before going to Whittier College.

Applause was long and enthusiastic for Miss West's address. The afternoon ceremony was concluded with refreshments of punch and cookies.