

Spotlight On California genealogical research facilities

A series of articles about places to do research around the state

Redding Public Library

1100 Parkview Avenue, Redding
(530) 245-7250

Hours: Mon-Thurs: 10 am to 8 pm; Friday and Saturday: 10 am to 6 pm; Sunday: 1 pm to 5 pm.

Website: www.shastalibraries.org

by **Melinda Kashuba**

On March 3, 2007 the new Redding Public Library was opened in Shasta County. For most urban communities in Southern California or the San Francisco Bay Area a new public library might not cause much of a stir but to Shasta County, this was big news. Shasta County is located in Northern California and is larger than the state of Delaware. The entire county is served by only three public county libraries. The new library in Redding was the result of over a decade of planning by state and local officials, librarians, and dedicated members of the community. It was funded, in part, by state money and private donations and is maintained through an agreement between the County of Shasta and the City of Redding.

The Redding Public Library thrives with the help of many community organizations including the Shasta Genealogical Society (SGS). SGS provides materials as well as volunteers to staff the genealogy section three times a week plus holds monthly classes on the premises. The library has 1,595 genealogical books. Of that number, SGS loans 1,242 books from its collection to the Redding Public Library. The genealogical society has a contract with the library to maintain the collection and repair books that become worn. SGS continually adds to the collection through donations from members and purchases from its funds.

During the earliest stages of planning the new library, members of the Shasta Genealogical Society were involved in the development of the library. The plans included a dedicated section for this collection adjacent to the Boggs Local History Collection. Gene Poch, Past President of Friends of Shasta County Public Libraries and an active member of SGS assisted in the transition of



Shasta Genealogical Society member Gene Poch assists a patron at the library.

materials from the SGS to the new library. He was joined by many SGS volunteers who not only physically moved books but assisted in the re-cataloguing of books in the new location. This effort was headed up by SGS member Eleanor Homewood. Also under her care, a volunteer program was developed and staffed by local genealogists.

In the spring of 2008, the Friends of the Shasta County Libraries agreed to purchase a license to Ancestry

Library Edition. This is a pilot program and Redding librarians are monitoring the use of this database by patrons. It can only be accessed onsite through two dedicated computers in the genealogy section. For the Redding Public Library this meant complete access to the U.S. Federal Census and indexes, the new Canadian Genealogy Collection, the U.S. Immigration Collection, the U.S. Military Collection plus many other databases familiar to Ancestry users. Patrons are able to print documents at a nominal cost from printers located near the second floor reference desk. Librarians are finding that over 15,000 pages per month from the Ancestry Library Edition are viewed making it one of the most popular databases accessed by the public each month.

The local newspaper has promoted genealogy through several articles published over the past year. In return for purchasing the license this first year, SGS has agreed to staff volunteers on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays to assist the public in using not only Ancestry but other online sources as well as print and microform sources in the library collection.

On the 3rd Wednesday of each month, SGS member Marti Roe hosts a series of genealogical lectures at the Redding Public Library. The lectures are practical in content addressing a variety of genealogical interests.