



—Staff Photo by James S. Rayner

WARM SMILES of staff members and a large supply of books on all subjects make the Union Gap branch of the Yakima Valley Regional Library a popular place. Mrs. E. A. Plummer, librarian, will have as her assistant this summer 17-year-old Dixie Davis, Yakima Senior High School graduate.

Union Gap Library Patrons Reveal Pioneer Background

By VIRGINIA LLOYD
Sunday Women's Editor

UNION GAP — Through use of their library residents of Union Gap help to keep alive in their minds a tradition which is close to their hearts — that of the pioneer West.

Most of the readers who use the Union Gap branch of the Yakima Valley Regional Library are not old enough to remember the days when their bustling, modern town was a tiny village of cabins at the mouth of the Ahtanum Creek.

But the pioneer background of Union Gap, as related by grandparents and parents and preserved in city records, is largely responsible for a marked preference in the town's children and young adults for frontier literature.

THE PIONEER settlement, overshadowed by the buttes of Union Gap, was established in 1870, nine years after the first pioneer family had come to the area. The settlement was first known as Yakima City. It was not until 1917 that the town became Union Gap. The same legislative act which gave Union Gap its name also changed the town to the north from North Yakima to Yakima.

During the pioneer years those who blazed trails through rugged country to settle in the little community experienced all of the hardships which were part of American frontier life. Even though their new home was far west of the Indian country which has inspired so much of pioneer adventure literature and even though settlers came to the area late in the last century, Union Gap pioneers knew well the fear of hostile Indians.

The men who helped to build America, Capt. John Smith, Daniel Boone, Kit Carson, Lewis and Clark, rank first among the heroes of young Union Gap readers. Mrs. E. A. Plummer, who has been branch librarian for five years, commented as soon as reading tastes of the library's child patrons begin to mature, historical non-fiction and fiction become the mainstay of their reading program.

THE YOUNGER generation of Union Gap is not alone in its quest for Western adventure through reading. The community's adults also show a preference for Western literature although they have a well developed interest in many subjects.

The Union Gap branch library, which was established early in 1946, has had three homes—one an old frame business building, another a former private dwelling. It has been permanently situated since last summer in one of the town's most important

buildings and one of its most modern, the city hall.

Mrs. Plummer explained that even the new location has a trace of historical aura. The library occupies what was once the city council chamber. Supplies are kept in the old vault and bookshelves line the walls of what used to be the town's jail cell.

Circulation at the branch has increased by 4,000 since 1950. Mrs. Plummer credits a large part of the increase to regional library's short loan program through which readers may request books which are in constant branch circulation through the regional office in Yakima.

MRS. PLUMMER, a 19-year resident of Union Gap, knows her readers and their interests well. She and her husband, who was sales agent for the Northern Pacific Railway, came to Yakima in 1928 and moved in 1936 to Union Gap where she continued to make her home after his death.

She has good reasons for her obvious enjoyment of her job. The library provides her with what she likes best in life — people and books. She is a member of the board of trustees of the Union Gap Welfare Association which sponsors the branch. The organization, of which every resident of Union Gap is a member, is responsible for the upkeep of the library.

Mrs. Ralph Stevens is chairman of the library committee. Members of the committee are Mrs. Plummer, Mrs. John Millard and Mrs. Donald Brown.

During the school year a high school student is employed as a part-time assistant to Mrs. Plummer. This summer her assistant is Dixie Davis who was graduated in June from Yakima Senior High School.