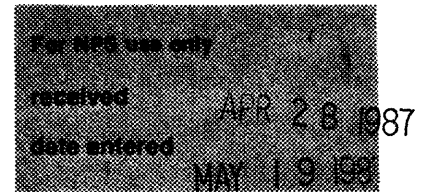


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 14

14. Wilmington Branch Library
309 W. Opp Street

Significance:

The Wilmington Branch Library is significant both for its history and its architecture. The formal dedication on the evening of March 18, 1927 was attended by 500 people, including community leaders and the Phineas Banning High School Band. Architect Sylvanus Marston gave a speech entitled "Our Library Building" and the evening was a milestone for the community since the library had grown from 100 donated volumes in 1909 to 8,675 volumes in 1927. Also present at the opening were 11 members of the Women's Club, originators of the library who had each donated two books, thus forming the nucleus on which the library was built.

The library was designed by the firm of Marston, Van Pelt and Maybury. W. E. McAllister began construction on August 26, 1926 at a cost of \$28,000 for the building and \$11,000 for the land, funds furnished by a 1925 Bond Issue of the City of Los Angeles. As stated in an article of the time in the Daily Wilmington Journal... "The building is of Spanish design to identify it with the important part Wilmington played during the Spanish occupation of our history".

The founder of the firm, Sylvanus Marston, came from at least five generations of architects. The many faceted firm designed schools, libraries, commercial buildings, clubs, banks, churches, and residences. G. B. Van Pelt became a partner in 1914, followed by E. W. Maybury in 1921 and by 1925, Marston, Van Pelt and Maybury was one of the largest architectural firms in Los Angeles. Gebhard and Winter, in their Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles cites them as being among the major architects of the Spanish Colonial Revival of the 1920s. They were responsible for over 1,000 works of architecture, a few of the more notable works being the Grace Nicholson Building (now the Pacific Asia Museum), Mark Keppel High School and the Westminster Presbyterian Church.

This building is an outstanding example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and a testament to Marston, Van Pelt and Maybury's skill at design and programming. The library is one of the few buildings of landmark stature by a major architectural firm in the area. Although it is built on a residential scale, it clearly states that it is an important public building--both in style and history. Since its first full year of activity in 1910, the library has been an important part of Wilmington's community activity. In the development of Wilmington, it has responded to each ethnic group as it became prominent in the community--from the original Irish and Italian, through Black, then Filipino and now Latino. It survived the Long Beach Earthquake in March of 1933 with no damage and is part of a thematic grouping of city libraries which has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

BRANCH LIBRARIES, LOS ANGELES, CA
#14 Wilmington Branch, 309 W. Opp St.
1 inch=60 feet

