

## **District 3 History: Capturing the Past**

The History of District III begins in 1902 with the establishment of the Texas Library Association, and leads from there to the 1950s when librarians in what was then called District VIII first convened at Buchanan Dam to set an agenda for action. District III was formed in 1970 when TLA took action to redistribute boundary lines across the state. With this brief introduction, you are invited to follow the chronology that illustrates the development of District III 1902-2002.

### **TLA formed in 1902 with three goals in mind for the association**

- establishment of a state library -- this goal was achieved in 1909 in the 31st legislative session with the establishment of the State Library and Historical Commission and the office of the State Librarian after failure to pass in the 28th, 29th, and 30th legislative sessions. The Texas Federated Woman's Clubs were a driving force for securing this legislation, having adopted the work to foster free public libraries in Texas at their annual meeting in 1898.
- establishment of free traveling libraries -- this goal was "jump started" by the Texas Federated Woman's Clubs using the strategy to start and fund travelling libraries that were later taken over by the State Library.
- establishment of a library school at the University of Texas at Austin--formal library science instruction in 1901, although classes are recorded to have begun as an apprentice program in 1900. The University of Texas Library School launched in 1919 (Davis).

### **Purpose of TLA Districts**

Districts allow the TLA membership to organize in statewide, non-overlapping areas of action. Legislative matters, for example, are an area of action.

Districts are geographical designations grouping TLA members according to location and offering members a means to identify and organize with other members who work in close range of one another. Districts were first termed Regions and were established in 1948 as part of an overall reorganization effort of TLA and in response to the shortage of gasoline that seriously impeded travel to the TLA annual conference. The District Planning Committee, a Standing Committee of TLA, budgeted annually for districts in the neighborhood of \$60.00 to \$75.00. From the start, each district was envisioned to be self-supporting, raising the funds needed to conduct business through registration fees for the annual meeting of the district. Each district was to encourage and emphasize the need for improved library service throughout the state of Texas and, by accomplishing that, give broader scope to the work of TLA.

The TLA District Planning Committee coordinated the work of the Districts and promoted TLA interests. The District Planning Committee Chair was appointed by the President of TLA and the committee was composed of each district chair, the State Library Extension Director, the Consultant in Library Service for the Texas Education Agency, and the current resident of TLA. Much of the correspondence preserved at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission concerns start-up efforts, discusses travel arrangements, and representation that the Planning Committee members were to provide at the eight district meetings held around the state.

From the start, the annual district level meetings were to be geographically dispersed so that travel distances could be equalized over time. Officers of the districts were generally the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary-Treasurer with the Vice-Chairman in each district serving as the designated program chair and chair-elect. The District Chairman and Vice-Chairman are recommended to be members of TLA and the terms of office followed the TLA calendar from July 1 to June 30. Annual meetings were scheduled to take place in the Fall, usually October.

Other small committees such as nominating, registration, publicity, and arrangements were formed and the District Planning Committee left room for local projects to be determined by the individual districts as well.

### **District VIII -- 1950s**

District VIII held its first meeting at Buchanan Dam on October 20, 1951. In a letter from President Grace Phillippi to Fred Folmer, the purpose of the organized group is explained as "to maintain active files of librarians and others interested in improved library service and to promote the beneficial aspects of libraries and librarianship and to broaden the scope of the TLA by publicizing its activities and furthering its work" (Austin American). The theme of the meeting was "The Library -- Community Powerhouse." One hundred thirty-eight attended the meeting according to Pound and 133 including six students, according to the newspaper. Disbursements for the meeting included money for coffee, postage, travel, and \$10.00 for the guest speaker, Edward Jaborsky and guest author, Fred Gipson. The Panel Discussion for this meeting was titled "What We Can Do."

In 1952, District VIII was composed of Bandera, Bastrop, Bell, Bexar, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Comal, Coryell, Edwards, Gillespie, Guadalupe, Hamilton, Hays, Kendall, Kerr, Kimble, Kinney, Lampasas, Llano, McCulloch, Mason, Medina, Menard, Mills, Real, San Saba, Travis, Uvalde, Val Verde, Williamson, and Wilson counties. This district covered an area of 33,842 square miles and experienced an increase of 26.7% in population during the 1940 to 1950 time period (Pound, January). San Antonio was the largest city in District with a population in 1955 of 507,300 while Austin ranked second in size with a population of 167,100. The rest of the district was quite rural.

Nine county libraries and 23 municipal public libraries were counted in District VIII. Book stock for county libraries was 63,521 and for municipal libraries, it was 819,713. County library staff totaled 11 FTE while municipal libraries employed 115 FTEs. Six counties in District VIII lacked any sort of library service in 1955 (Pound, January, 1957).

The University of Texas and 12 other senior college and university libraries were counted in the district and in addition, the District contained six junior college libraries. Combined book stock was 1,610,789 volumes for universities and 51,200 for junior colleges. One hundred fifteen FTEs were counted in senior colleges and universities and 7 FTEs were counted in the six junior colleges (Pound, January, 1957). School libraries numbered 194 and there were also 12 special libraries including industrial libraries, art, medical, law, and church libraries. These data were gathered from questionnaires sent from the Graduate School of Library Science (GSLs). Six hundred seventeen libraries received the GSLs questionnaire and a 56% response rate was logged. For the entire state, 3186 questionnaires were mailed to collect personnel data and 1660 (52%) were returned.

Schools providing professional education of some type in the field of library science are University of Texas Graduate School of Library Science, Our Lady of the Lake College, and Incarnate Word College; both in San Antonio. A few hours of coursework were offered at Southwest Texas State Teachers College, and Mary Hardin-Baylor College in Belton. Of the 346 librarians returning the GSLS questionnaire, 140 or 40% reported that they had had no formal professional training. (Pound)

Military bases in District VIII included Bergstrom (Austin), Brooke (San Antonio), Gary (San Marcos), Gray (Killeen), Kelly (San Antonio), Lackland (San Antonio), Laughlin (Del Rio), Randolph Air Force (San Antonio), Brooke Army Hospital (San Antonio), Fort Hood (Killeen), Fort Sam Houston (San Antonio), Killeen Base (Killeen), and Medina Base (San Antonio)

In 1952, the District Annual meeting for District VIII was held in Kerrville October 11 chaired by Miss Grace Phillippi of the San Antonio Public Library and attended by 129 registered District VIII supporters. Registration was \$1.00 for librarians and 50 cents for students. Dr. Nettie Lee Benson, Librarian for the Latin-American Collection at the University of Texas gave a talk entitled "Brands on Books" and Mr. Dix discussed library development plans (Folmer, 1952).

Meetings for District VIII were well attended:

- 1951 Buchanan Dam -- 138 in attendance
- 1952 Kerrville -- 129
- 1954 January Austin -- 135-145
- 1954 December San Antonio -- 104
- 1955 New Braunfels -- 85

## **1960s**

In 1960, the fall meeting was held in Floresville featuring a theme of "The Blast Off: the Moon in 1960 or Librarians have Rockets, Too" and in 1961, the Uvalde meeting boasted theme of "Library--Highway to Knowledge". The 1963 annual meeting featured school libraries and was held in San Marcos on October 12, 1963. Attendees received a colorful program featuring Aquarena and were treated to the Sky Ride. Documentation for each of these meetings is preserved in the TLA Archives at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (AC 1979/251-62 ).

At the March 23, 1966 Governor's Conference on Libraries, "Library Excellence -- Today's Necessity," dramatic points concerning needs for library service in the State of Texas were made:

- 75% of all Texans were urban,
- 850,000 Texans had no library card,
- 5,600,000 had inadequate public libraries,
- 4.3% of elementary schools had a centralized library, and
- Texas ranked 33rd for money spent per school child in the United States.

Only six of forty-nine junior college libraries in the state met minimum standards and to meet standards, Texas needed 1,506 more professionally trained librarians. Governor John Connally appointed Dorothy Blodgett to serve as organizing chair for this conference and State Librarian Dorman Winfrey served as coordinator of the conference.

The District meeting held November 19, 1966, in Temple was titled "An Opportunity and a Decision." It featured a slide tape show on library development in Texas, delivered by Ann Bowden, Director of Films and Recordings for the Austin Public Library. At this point in time, a model developed in New York with ten major resource centers centered around public libraries was being discussed as appropriate for implementation in Texas.

The 1969 meeting was headquartered at the Cowhouse Motor Hotel in Killeen on October 18, 1969, where standards for school media programs were the chief topic of the meeting.

### **1970s -- Forming District III**

In 1970, the Association redistributed the districts to conform to the boundaries of the Texas Planning Regions. As a result, a total of ten TLA districts were created. Fred Folmer, Director of Libraries at the University of Texas at Austin, was Chairman of the District in 1970 when the District boundaries were redrawn to become the District II we know today.

The TLA bylaws specify that districts must conform to the Texas Library Systems. Although districts represent one type of TLA unit, they are to create their own constitution and bylaws which must be approved by the TLA leadership, elect officers, set agendas and establish priorities for the District, elect a member to serve on the TLA Council, hold annual meetings apart from TLA annual conference, and develop programming for members in their regions.

David Earl Holt, Director of the Austin Public Library was the first Chairman to serve the newly formed District III. John Henry Faulk was the featured speaker at the November 13, 1971 meeting at Baylor University speaking on "Books, Ideas, & Censorship." Also in attendance were Mrs. Walter Prescott Webb and Robert E. Davis, publisher.

In 1975, the wording in the Bylaws changed to be more appropriate for the times. Chairmen became Chairperson and the chairperson that year was Mary Gervasi of Cody Memorial Library at Southwestern University in Georgetown. One hundred sixty-six attended the Fall meeting held 10/18/1975 at Baylor University. The treasurer reported an account of \$300.00. Newspaper and television coverage and a more formal meeting than usual is reported to have taken place to present the program "Management by Objectives--Just another Management Game?"

By 1979, "Managing Change" was the popular topic, this one organized by Bernie Luckenbill at the University of Texas to discuss social, political, and cultural changes. Charles Griggs and Biruta Kearn talked about the work of the Cooperation Task Force at this meeting held in Austin on September 29, 1979.

### **1980s**

In 1982, the group attending the District fall meeting on September 25, was treated to a program featuring guest speaker, Harry Middleton, from the LBJ Library, speaking on "LBJ Library Past & Present." Records show 93 members who had not renewed (28%) and 234 who did renew membership on 2/21/1982, with \$458.37 in the treasury.

By 1988, legislative matters were priority. Val Dunnam served as Trustee for District III. The annual fall meeting was held at the Flawn Academic Center, University of Texas at Austin on October 1, 1988, and Marion Barnes was the guest speaker. May Schmidt was appointed as the liaison to TLA on June 15, 1988 and Lee Hisle traveled to Washington, D.C. representing Texas and District III during Federal Legislative Day. The District also held a Legislative Brunch at College Station area on October 29, 1988 and in Temple on October 22, 1988.

## 1990s

In 1991, strategic planning was taking place and new TLA headquarters offices were being planned. District III is known to have had over 600 members and \$1,014.14 in its treasury as it headed into FY 1991.

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## Reference List

AC 1979/251 TLA Archives in the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. Located in GS1.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission holds the archival records of the Association including 4.23 cu. ft. of District III records arranged chronologically. The files contain correspondence, minutes, reports, and printed materials. The files document district activities, including continuing education programs, legislative efforts, meetings and membership drives.

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