

Central University Library "topped-out"

December 12, 1969

A 20-foot Norwegian Spruce, brightly decorated for the holidays, will be hoisted to the top of the Central University Library on the campus of the University of California, San Diego at 11:00 a.m. Friday, December 19, to mark the "topping out" of the building.

The traditional topping out ceremony began centuries ago in Europe when farmers would hoist a small evergreen to the roof of a new barn as a symbol of long life for the building. In this country, it has come to symbolize the last beam to be fitted into place, or the last construction on the roof.

In the UCSD ceremony, the tree will be hoisted by a huge central building crane 110 feet to the library's roof. From that height, and due to the fact that the library sits on some of the highest ground on the campus, the tree's lights will be visible throughout most of the campus and from Interstate 5.

Representatives from the UCSD Library staff; the Nielsen Construction Company of San Diego, major contractors for the project; and William L. Pereira and Associates, architects for the building, will take part in the brief ceremony. Melvin J. Voigt, UCSD Librarian, will serve as master of ceremonies.

Ground was broken for the \$5.5 million library on July 1, 1968. Projected date for the move to the new building is July, 1970. At that time, all library departments now housed in the Humanities-Library Building located on the Revelle Campus will transfer to the new building.

The new library, located at the functional center of the completed campus, is the first structure in the University's Administrative Center. When viewed from the ground, the multi-level structure gives the appearance of a giant flying saucer.

The building consists of eight levels, with the basement and the main levels partially underground. All technical and administrative offices will be housed on the basement and main levels with the general library on levels four through eight, allowing for easy access to students in the open stack concept.

The basement and main levels are separated from those above by the third (forum) level, an open walk-through area slightly above the surrounding ground level.

The building is 135 feet high from the basement to the top of the eighth level and 214 feet square at its widest point at the sixth level. It is constructed of more than 386,500 linear feet of reinforced concrete--enough concrete to pour a four-foot-wide, three-and-a-half-inch-thick walkway from the Mexican border to Oceanside. The building will provide 110,000 assignable square feet of space--about two-and-a-half acres of floor space.

The completed structure will provide 1,244 seats and will house 700,000 volumes. Future steps will house 1,300,000 additional volumes.

FACT SHEET ON THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

CONSTRUCTION: Ground was broken at 11:30 a.m., Monday, July 1, 1968, on the building site. A group of nearly 30 persons from the library staff, each armed with a shovel, turned over the first earth.

OCCUPANCY: Projected date for the move to the new building is July, 1970. At that time, all library departments now housed in the Humanities-Library Building will occupy the new building.

LOCATION: The division of John J. Hopkins Road and old Sorrento Valley Road, about 200 yards north of the Matthews Campus. This is about the highest point on the 1,200-acre UCSD main campus arid, in this location, the building will be clearly visible to motorists traveling south from the Sorrento Valley area on Interstate S.

HEIGHT: Light levels rising 110 feet above the ground, 135 feet high from the basement.

WIDTH: The building's widest point is 248 feet at ground level. The widest floor above the ground is the sixth level, which is 214 feet wide.

SQUARE FEET: 157,000 gross square feet; 110,000 assignable square feet; more than two and a half acres of floor space.

MATERIALS: Construction is reinforced concrete and glass. Overall finish is rough form board exposed concrete in a horizontal pattern with anodized aluminum window walls and heat resistant glass.

LEVELS: One and two - Below ground; technical processing and staff, acquisitions, card catalog, reference collection, data processing, reserve reading and document stacks.

Three - Forum level, slightly above the surrounding ground level and open except for building support columns and elevator shafts. This area may eventually become a sculpture garden.

Four - Music and fine arts.

Five, six and seven - 80 per cent of the main research collection will be on these three levels. Students are no more than one flight up or down from the majority of books they will use through the "open stack" concept.

Eight - Special collections and University Archives.

CAPACITY: 690,000 volumes; 1,244 reader stations (primarily on the upper levels); 146 staff stations.

COST: Total project, including construction, architect, furniture and equipment, and administration - \$5,500,000.