



Library Closed

Monday, November 11,
for Veterans Day and
November 28 and 29 for
Thanksgiving.



BEAUMONT LIBRARY DISTRICT

a California Special District,
independent of both city and county
government, providing library services
to Beaumont and Cherry Valley



November 2024

Beaumont Father & Son World War Vets Discovered Through Library Research!

by Luren Dickinson, Director

An antique collector in Michigan purchased an old postcard at an estate sale in Tecumseh, MI earlier this year. He decided to donate it to Beaumont Library District because it included a photo of a soldier in his World War I dress uniform with the inscription, "Harold H. Sears, Beaumont, Calif."

Beaumont Library's investigation into this postcard led to the discovery of two World War veterans that the community did not know it had!

In researching Harold Sears, we found out that his father was William Sears who was born in Texas in 1862 and came to California when he

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was 3. He married Mary Jane Powers in 1889 in Santa Ana. Their only children were twins, Harold and Harvey, born in 1892.

The family moved to Beaumont in 1903, eight years before Beaumont Library District was established by a public vote and nine years before the city was officially incorporated. Sadly, Harvey died of pneumonia at age 18 in 1910.



Harold served in the U.S. Army as a chauffeur in the unit of the famous General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing in WWI. See the photo of him in his full-dress uniform (at the left) from the postcard, of the type used back then, that was donated to Beaumont Library District.

According to his military records, Harold held a Private First Class rank when he departed from New York City, on the troop ship S.S. Adriatic on July 29, 1917, as a member of the Motor Truck Group. Most of his combat service was spent in France where the Allied forces fought Germany to surrender on the western front.

The armistice ending World War I, first known as the "Great War" and the "war to end all wars" was eventually signed on November 11, 1918. Harold's unit finally returned to the U.S. in early 1919. After the war, he came back to Beaumont, married, and had a son, Richard, in 1924. It was his only child.

Harold may have suffered from PTSD because of his war experiences and certainly struggled financially during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Ironically, he was actually a resident of the Riverside County Jail in the 1940 census.

At that time, his son, "Dick," as he was known, may have spent time with a foster family, but ended up living with his mother before enlisting in the army in 1943.

Dick served in North Africa and Europe during WWII. He returned to the U.S. in 1945 (see photo) and, through the G.I. Bill, he was able to earn a college diploma and went on to get a Master's degree at the University of Iowa and an M.F.A. from U.C. Berkeley. He eventually got a job as an instructor in drawing and painting at the University of Michigan in 1953.

Harold Sears died in 1955. He and his brother and parents are all buried in Mountain View Cemetery here in Beaumont.



Dick remained at the University of Michigan for the rest of his career, retiring in 1989 as a full professor in the Department of Art and Design. He relocated to the state of Maine where he spent the final years of his life, dying there in 2013.

Based on Beaumont Library's research, we will be filling out the applications to have the names of both Harold Sears and Richard "Dick" Sears added to the city veterans memorial.

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Beaumont Library District

125 East Eighth Street

Beaumont, CA 92223

951-845-1357

mybld.org

Library Hours

Sunday—1 to 6 p.m.

Monday—10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tuesday—10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Wednesday—1 to 6 p.m.

Thursday—10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Friday—10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday—10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Bookmobile Stops

Last Mondays—4 p.m., Sundance Elementary Family Walk

Tuesday—11 a.m., Noble Creek; 3 p.m., Liberty Village

Wednesday—11 a.m., Chatigny; 3 p.m., Blossom Apartments

1st & 3rd Thursdays: 11 a.m., Blossom Apartments—Storytime

2nd Thursdays 11 a.m., Fairway Canyon—Storytime

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