EDITORS PAGE

The focus in this issue of the Trumpeter is on the historic downtown section of Klamath Falls, where we will be taking a closer look at some of the more fascinating, historic, structures in that area. Featured, are 24 commercial buildings, each with an interesting story to tell. We will relate a small part of the history of each.

The oldest structure in our study, the “Melhase-Page-Stratton Building,” located at 202 Main Street, dates from 1911, while the newest, the Esquire Theater was built in 1940. All were built during the years of the great Klamath County lumber boom which began shortly after the arrival of the railroad in 1909, and ended in the mid-1940s, following the peak of lumber production in 1942. All but four of the structure date from the pre-depression era.

For several months now, Dan Masi has been in Klamath Falls conducting an in depth study of the historic downtown area in cooperation with the city planning office. He is a member KLAMATH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY and has attended several of the meetings. Many readers will no doubt remember him. Dan has generously provided most of the material for this issue of the Trumpeter and the editor extends a hearty thanks to Dan for his help.
WHY SHOULD DOWNTOWN BE LISTED AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT?

In 1983 Downtown Klamath Falls was visited by the National Main Street Resource Team. New York architect Donald Minnery noted in his report that the Downtown "possesses perhaps the finest stock of architecturally significant and interesting buildings of any town its size in Oregon." A 1986 survey team reiterated that "Klamath Falls has historical resources of great significance to the community and the state." The state-wide significance of the downtown can be seen, for example, in the numerous Art Deco style buildings constructed during the 1920s, when Klamath Falls was the fastest-growing city in the state. It seems clear that the Downtown contains numerous historical commercial buildings that make it worthy of being honored as a National Historic District. These resources should be a source of pride for the community, a notable attraction for visitors and a valuable business promotional tool. They provide the Downtown with a unique identity that cannot be duplicated by new development. As the Downtown Redevelopment Plan puts it: "In many ways the downtown's economic success is dependent on maintaining the character and quality that sets the downtown apart from other shopping areas; the downtown is not a "shopping center or mall" but is in fact a town center reflective of the community's history and heritage." Thus, one of the Plan's major recommendations is the creation of a historic district.

In order for a historic district to be successful, its individual buildings need to be properly maintained and rehabilitated. If the Downtown district is listed on the National Register, many historic properties will potentially become eligible for state and federal historic preservation programs designed to assist owners with the costs of building rehabilitation. Historic buildings that contribute to the character of the district and are to undergo rehabilitation may qualify for two major tax programs; the State Special Assessment Program and the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit. Both programs require that a building be listed on the National Register of Historic Places in order to qualify or receive maximum benefits. Historic buildings that are included in the district would already be listed and potentially qualified, making it easier for owners to possibly take advantage of these programs. Such programs can help lead to a "win-win" situation that benefits both property owners and the entire community by promoting the repair and preservation of important pieces of our collective heritage.

David K. Voss
Associate, City Planning office
ARCADE HOTEL
1038 MAIN ST

Year of Construction: 1919
Architect: A. F. Heidel
Architecture Style: Chicago Style

The Arcade Hotel was opened in May, 1920, by George and Christos Blanas at the cost of $40,000. Architect A. F. Heidel prepared the plans for the 52 room hotel in mid-1919 and construction began immediately. The two men were natives of Greece, moving to Klamath Falls in 1919 with a third brother, Nicholas. In 1923 the Blanas brothers added a four-story brick building to the rear of the original hotel for $20,000. It is connected to the main building by a covered walkway. Both buildings are constructed of brick from Klamath Brick and Tile. The family remained active in Klamath Falls for many years.

BALSIGER MOTOR COMPANY
MAIN & ESPLANADE

Year of Construction: 1929
Architect: Tourtellotte and Hummel
Architecture Style: Egyptian Revival Art Deco Style

The Balsiger Motor Company Building stands at the intersection of Main and Esplanade. This structure is an excellent example of the Egyptian Revival Style. The concrete building, which has is triangular in shape, is a one story building. The original windows have been replaced by aluminum four-sections, but the basic appearance of the building remains unchanged. The front of the building is at the apex of the triangle and is dominated by a two story tower that rises like the entry to a temple. The symbol of the sun and what appears to be a Phoenix are centered above the word “Ford” above the entry. Iron lanterns are suspended from the second story of this entry tower. Flanking either side of the door are bas-relief profiles of a human figure; these are repeated at other entries along the sides of this building. This structure was erected 1929. It was placed on the site of the White Pelican Hotel, a building called “the most magnificent” ever erected in Klamath Falls. Built in 1911, the White Pelican burned in October, 1926. The Balsiger Motor Company began selling Ford products in 1923.

ELKS' TEMPLE
N THIRD & MAIN

Year of Construction: 1915
Architecture Style: Colonial Revival Style

The Elks' Temple is a two story, brick building which stands at the northeast corner of North Third and Main. This red brick structure has a truncated hip roof and is in the Colonial Revival Style. The building has a hexa style portico on its South (front) elevation and has another formal entry on its West elevation with two story high pilasters. The entries have broken pediments for their heads. This building is presently in 1976 the Klamath County Courthouse Annex. The Elks organized in January, 1909, in Klamath Falls and on April 17, 1915 laid the cornerstone for this building. The structure was completed in December of the same year. An addition was made to the building in 1952 and 1967 it was abandoned for new quarters.
ESQUIRE THEATER
218 N SEVENTH

Year of Construction: 1940
Architecture Style: Moderne

Esquire Theatre is a large, concrete building which faces east on North Seventh Street. The building has a tall tower which is the highest structure in the business section of the city. The Herald and News carried this article on November 29, 1940: "Completed in record time, the colorful new Esquire Theatre, Klamath Falls' towering new $150,000 motion picture palace, is scheduled to open tonight with a special inaugural program, playing to an estimated 3,000 invited guests... Known as a stadium-type house, the Esquire Theatre is built to seat 1,000, with burgundy and blue the predominating interior color scheme. Each side wall of the auditorium contains three beautiful murals depicting the winning of the west. Done in fluorescent paint, the will be lighted by blacklight projectors concealed in the ceiling. Miguel Santacomo, noted decorator in charge of decorating the new theatre, has worked on the murals for three months." The building has commercial rentals on Pine and Seventh Streets.

FIRST NATIONAL BANK
601 MAIN

Year of Construction: 1930
Architect: H. H. Winner
Architecture Style: Art Deco Style

The First National Bank of Klamath Falls is a three story building at the northeast corner of Sixth and Main Streets. The building has a white, terra cotta exterior with scenes in the Art Deco Style of the 1930's above the two story window bays on the west and south elevations. The structure has six-beside-six casement windows in its third story. This building was erected for use as a bank and bears the words "First National Bank" above its main entrance on the south elevation. Between 1900 and 1910 four banks were established in Klamath Falls. The Klamath County Bank was formed in 1900, the First National Bank in 1903, and the American Bank and Trust Co. and the First Trust and Savings Bank were established shortly thereafter. The First National Bank was originally located in the A.O.U.W. building on Main Street. During 1921 this bank merged with the Klamath State Bank and late in that year moved to the former Klamath State Bank Building. Probably about 1922 the bank was moved to the former American National bank Building and then in 1930 moved to this building.
HIRVI BUILDING - ELK HOTEL
1111 MAIN ST

Year of Construction: 1930
Architect: Howard Perrin
Architecture Style: Art Deco

The Hirvi Building was constructed in 1930 for Jacob and Elvira Hirvi, Finnish immigrants who arrived in Klamath Falls in 1914. He came to the United States in 1895, where he settled in Massachusetts and learned the bakery trade. In 1914 he opened a bakery in Klamath Falls and maintained his business until 1940. After the destruction of the White Pelican Hotel by fire in 1926, Mr. Hirvi saw an opportunity to open another large hotel on the east edge of the commercial core area. The edifice took the name of the Hotel Elk, and functioned as such for many years. William DuVall served as manager. In 1961 the hotel was named the Winema, and major rehabilitation occurred. The building was designed by Howard Perrin, Klamath Falls architect. Mr. Perrin came to Klamath Falls to assist with construction of the Pine Tree theater. He soon opened an architectural office and immediately developed a brisk practice. Among buildings for which he was responsible are the Klamath Armory, American Legion Building, the Willard Hotel, and the former Golden Rule Building. During the Depression Jacob Hirvi was unable to make necessary payments and was forced to sell the hotel in 1940. It continued to operate as a hotel after purchase by T.B. Watters, Lois Serruys and Merle West.

IOOF HALL
S FIFTH & MAIN

Year of Construction: 1911
Architect: R.E. Wattenburg
Architecture Style: Commercial Style

The I.O.O.F. Lodge Hall is located at the southwest corner of south Fifth and Main Streets. This three story, brick building has a rectangular shape and faces north on Main Street. The building has one-over-one, double hung sash windows with transom panes set in arch bays on the third story and has one-over-one, double hung sash windows in its second story. The first floor elevation has been altered in recent years and is presently occupied by Dick Reeder's Store. R.E. Wattenburg received the contract to erect this building in July, 1910. The cost of the structure was to be $41,520. On July 16, 1910, the old Masonic Temple that occupied this site was moved to the rear of the block so that this building could be built. Work began on the I.O.O.F. Hall on July 27, 1910 and was completed in the spring of 1911. In 1911 this building housed Houston's Temple Theatre on its first floor. This was an early movie theatre in Klamath Falls.
KLAMATH COUNTY ARMORY  
SPRING & MAIN

Year of Construction: 1935  
Architect: Howard Perrin  
Architecture Style: Art Deco Style

The Klamath Falls Armory is a two story, brick building which stands at the corner of Spring and Main Streets. This building exhibits elements of the Art Deco Style, especially in the decorative metal sections located between the first and second stories between the window bays. The structure has a main entrance on its south (front) elevation; the entry has been altered and now contains a large mural. The windows are four-over-four double hung sash. The structure has a large vault roof. Mounted between the first and second stories near the entries are partial figures of soldiers in World War I period uniforms and helmets. Long used as an armory, this building is now the home of the Klamath County Museum. Commencing in 1935 the armory was regularly used by William R. "Baldy" Evens for dances and musical programs.

KLAMATH FALLS CITY HALL  
226 S FIFTH ST

Year of Construction: 1914  
Architect: Earl Veghte  
Architecture Style: American Renaissance Beaux-Arts Style

The Klamath Falls City Hall is a two story building in the Colonial Style. This structure has a brick exterior with decorations in concrete. The brick is an orange-buff color. The building has a basement and a recessed front entry on its east (front) elevation. The entry is flanked by a pair of columns to the north and south; a small balcony is suspended above the main door at a door on the second story. The building has ten-over-ten sash windows. The window bays have flat, concrete voussoirs. The structure is in good condition. Erected in 1914, this city hall replaced an earlier, two story, wood frame building which first stood at the southeast corner of Third and Main but was later moved to the northwest corner of Fourth and Klamath. That building, which housed the fire department, had a tail water tower as well as an open belfry.

KLAMATH FALLS CITY LIBRARY  
500 KLAMATH

Year of Construction: 1926  
Architect: H. D. Marsh & C. N. Coseboom  
Architecture Style: Colonial Revival Style

The Klamath Falls City Library stands at the southeast corner of south Fifth and Klamath streets in Klamath Falls. This brick building has an "L" shape with its main entry in the junction of the two wings. The building is in the Colonial Revival Style and has an entry flanked by pilasters with a stone railing at the roof level. The windows are twelve-side-twelve casement type. The building has a full basement and concrete foundation. The exterior is an orange-buff color. This building was erected in 1926 by the City of Klamath Falls. This structure, was constructed in 1926 near the
KLAMATH FALLS POST OFFICE
SEVENTH & OAK

Year of Construction: 1930
Architect: James A. Wetmore
Architecture Style: Colonial Revival Style with Georgian elements

The Klamath Falls Post Office is a three story stone and brick building in the Colonial Revival Style that stands at the northeast corner of south Seventh and Oak Streets. Its structure has a truncated hip roof covered with tile. Wings have been added to the north and south elevations of the original east elevation. The building has pairs of six-over-six, double hung sash windows on its second story and has pairs of four-over-four, double hung sash windows in its third story. The formal entry on the west (front) elevation has a carved, stone eagle above it and is flanked by cast iron lamp posts. The exterior of the first story is stone; the upper two stories are brick.

MARION APARTMENTS
223 SIXTH ST

Year of Construction: 1927
Architecture Style: Spanish Colonial Revival

The façade on this apartment house is perhaps the most elaborate Spanish Colonial motif in Klamath Falls. The doorway is surrounded by terra-cotta tiles and topped by an ornamented arch which includes swans neck pediments. The window surrounds continue the motif with Churriguereesque spiral ornamentation and large terra-cotta plaques between the windows. The parapet is similarly detailed and rows of tiles descend the building's corners. The building was owned by Marion Barnes, who engaged "a San Francisco Firm" to design and build the structure.

PELICAN HOTEL
1024 MAIN ST

Year of Construction: 1927
Architect: Angelo Doveri
Architecture Style: Vernacular (art deco details)

Early in 1927 George Christie of Sacramento, announced that he planned to build a $150,000 hotel. The frame buildings standing on the property, and owned by Anna Maehl, were destroyed, and work on the new structure began in May, 1927. Seventy-five rooms were planned and a San Francisco architect retained to execute the plans. Angelo Doveri, a native of Italy was brick mason in charge of construction. He moved to Klamath Falls in 1919 and soon constructed the Arcade Hotel. Klamath brick was used throughout the building. George Christie moved to Klamath Falls to manage his new hotel which opened in January, 1928.
MELHASE/PAGE/STRATTON BUILDING
202 MAIN ST

Year of Construction: 1905
Architecture Style: Vernacular
Known Architectural Features: rough-cut stone venacular style commercial building

October, 1905 the local paper stated that "Fred Melhase is having the finishing work done on his two-story building on the east corner of Main and 2nd Street. The building is 30 x 50 and will cost $5,000. It will be occupied by Meiss and Armand Meat Market... the Library and offices will be located on the second floor." (Klamath Republican, October 19, 1905). In June, 1906 Mr. Melhase sold the building to F. H. Page of Portland and F. S. Stratton of San Francisco for $8,700. Several important businesses and institutions were housed in the Melhase/Page/Stratton building during its early years. The Elks Club's predecessor, The Antler's Club, met there in February, 1909, and began their organization, later moving to other quarters. In October, 1911, City Hall offices were housed in the building. At the same time, the first Trust and Savings Bank was located in the Melhase/Page/Stratton building--later moving to Fifth and Main Streets. In September, 1920, The Melhase/Page/Stratton building was damaged following the disastrous Houston Hotel fire which destroyed several buildings and homes. Soon refitted, the structure eventually housed Van Fleet Electric--a business that occupied the site for several decades. The Melhase/Page/Stratton building is one of the few buildings left on Main Street which pre-dates 1910, and remains architecturally intact.

OREGON BANK BUILDING
905 MAIN ST

Year of Construction: 1929
Architecture Style: Art Deco with Period Gothic Style

In June, 1927 the local newspaper announced that a charter application had been filed for a state bank in Klamath Falls. Primary organizers were George R. Lindley, Wilson S. Wiley and John P. Duke, a Seattle, Washington financier. By August of that year, quarters were being remodeled on Main and Eighth Streets for the new Oregon Bank and Trust to occupy. In July, 1929 the city granted a permit for the organization to erect a six-story bank building at Main and Ninth Streets, location of the Central School. Construction began in summer, 1929, executed by the Oregon Building Co., a company financed by N.E. Berry and Frank Burns, Seattle businessmen. By January, 1930 the building neared completion--becoming the second six-story building in the city. (The Willard Hotel was the first.) Three months later the building opened for occupancy. The Bank was installed on the ground floor, and additional floors were comprised of medical and dental offices. Three years later, the Oregon Bank and Trust was closed as President Franklin Roosevelt instituted protective emergency bank closures. By mid-March, 1933 the bank reopened but closed permanently a short time later. In 1934 the First Federal Savings and Loan was chartered and opened in the Oregon Bank Building. This building is significant to Klamath Falls, as one of the tallest and architecturally most intact building in the commercial district.

The Oregon Bank Building, then & now.
PAC.TELEPHONE & TECHNOLOGY BLDG
120 EIGHTH ST

Year of Construction: 1939
Architecture Style: Art Deco

The Pacific Northwest Bell Building was constructed in 1939-1940 after ten years of plans to erect a new building. Work on the building was due to have begun in March and to be completed by September 1, 1930, but due to the depression plans were halted. In October, 1932 plans were again discussed and structural steel was actually unloaded on the building site, but again no building was started. The building was eventually completed in early 1940. In 1948 an addition, designed by Pietro Belluschi was completed. The building served for many years as the main office in Klamath Falls, housing equipment and all staff operations. Later additions were designed by James Stritsky and Wilmsen, Endicott and Greene.

SCANDANAVIAN HALL BUILDING
839 WALNUT

Year of Construction: 1920
Architecture Style: Commercial Style

The Scandinavian Hall was constructed of local brick in 1920 for use by a flourishing local fraternal organization. By 1930 the building had been sold to the Fraternal Order of Eagles who continue to occupy the structure. With the exception of the west windows. The building has received little alteration and retains important architectural characteristics.

SMITH, W O, BUILDING
130 S FIFTH ST

Year of Construction: 1919
Architecture Style: California Mission Style, Period Mission Style

The W. O. Smith Printing Co. Building was built in 1919. Wesley Oliver Smith was a native of New Brunswick. In 1903 he purchased the Klamath Republican and later became publisher of the Evening Herald. In 1920 he got out of the newspaper business to concentrate his efforts on his printing business, establishing the Smith-Bates Printing Co. In 1928 Smith served two terms in the state legislature and two terms as Klamath Falls City Councilman. This building is Significant for its association with Wesley Oliver Smith, one of Klamath Falls' most distinguished citizens. It retains the greater part of its architectural integrity.
VALLEY HOSPITAL
403, 415 PINE ST

Year of Construction: 1919
Architect: E. E. McClaren
Architecture Style: American Renaissance with Georgian elements

The Klamath Valley Hospital was built in 1919 for Warren Hunt, who was Klamath County health officer. Design and architectural supervision was provided by Portland architect E. E. McClaren, and the contractor was R. E. Wattenburg. The second addition to the hospital was completed in 1928, according to oral sources. The building itself is a functional brick and concrete structure, with classical ornamentation at the entry, including columns and a pediment. Other design features include brick quoins at the front corners and a cornice at the roofline.

VALLEY HOTEL
415 PINE ST

Year of Construction: 1928
Architect: R. E. Wattenburg
Architecture Style: American Renaissance with Georgian elements

The Valley Hotel was built by Dr. Warren Hunt as an adjunct of the Valley Hospital. Its primary clientele was convalescents and the families of hospital patients. The architecture of the hotel is similar to the two wings of the hospital, except that the entry features Mediterranean Revival arches and iron work rather than the Classical pediments found on the hospital wings. The distinctive simulated quoins are featured on the hotel's façade to match those on the hospital.

WHITE PINE APARTMENTS
1120 PINE ST

Year of Construction: 1924
Architecture Style: Period French Renaissance

The White Pine Apartments were constructed about 1924 for Arth and Bertha Olson on land sold to them by the Klamath Development Company. The Olsons lived in and managed the apartment complex for many years, and their descendants eventually sold the building in 1954. It has retained its original name and remained in apartment use since construction. The White Pine Apartment Building is significant architecturally for its style and integrity. It is one of the oldest similar structures erected during Klamath Falls boom period.
WILLARD HOTEL
203 MAIN ST

Year of Construction: 1926
Architect: Howard R. Perrin
Architecture Style: Period Mission Style

The Willard Hotel was constructed in 1926 for and by W. D. Miller. The building had an initial cost of $150,000. One hundred rooms were planned above the first floor; a lobby, coffee shop, barber shop and two store buildings were designed on the first floor. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Dillon of San Francisco signed a lease to run the hotel for the first ten years. A banquet hall addition designed by Perrin was constructed in 1928. A fifty room addition, planned in 1937 was not constructed. Willard D. Miller was born in Lockport, Kentucky, February 12, 1886. In October, 1910, he moved to Klamath Falls to work on construction of the Diversion Canal on Lost River. He soon opened a general contracting business and specialized in concrete construction. The Willard Hotel retains much of its architectural integrity, although lower storefronts have been changed. The building serves now as government offices and housing development. The Willard Hotel has substantial significance to Klamath Falls for its association with W. D. Miller and its existence as one of the largest buildings erected during a flourishing economic period in that community.

WILLIAMS BUILDING
716-24 MAIN ST

Year of Construction: 1926
Architect: Jamieson Parker
Architecture Style: Period Italian Renaissance Style

In 1919 D. O. Williams announced his plan to erect a large building at the corner of 9th and Main Streets. Two years later excavation for a basement had begun, but construction was to be delayed for five years. Dayton Ogden Williams was born October 3, 1883, in Detroit, Michigan. He came to Klamath County in 1907 and established himself in timber and farming activities. Construction began on the Williams Building in September, 1926, and by spring of 1927 was nearing completion. The Williams Building was formally opened May 7, 1927, with three store rooms on the first floor and fourteen offices on the second floor. Polychrome terra-cotta, which distinguished the exterior on that day remains intact. Particularly noteworthy is the fresco of terra cotta skulls of Hereford cattle and pine cones which effectively represent Mr. Williams' interests in Klamath County. The Williams Building is significant architecturally as a distinguished example of Architect. Parker's commercial work, and a unique building in Klamath Falls. It is historically significant for its association with D. O. Williams, prominent Klamath County citizen.
US NATIONAL BANK of Portland, Klamath Falls
Branch
740 MAIN ST

Year of Construction: 1937
Architect: Sutton, Whitney & Aandahl
Architecture Style: Art Deco Modernistic Style

The U. S. National Bank was constructed in 1937 to house the company's local banking operation. On January 1, 1937, American National Bank of Klamath Falls, located at Sixth and Main, sold out to U. S. National Bank of Portland. In March, 1937, construction plans for a new building were announced. The prominent architectural firm of Sutton, Whitney and Aandahl were selected to design the building. Albert Sutton, senior member, was born in British Columbia June 6, 1867. He practiced in Tacoma, Washington, from 1888-1895 and in San Francisco from 1895 to 1910. In 1912 he entered in to partnership with Harrison Whitney. Whitney was born in Michigan and studied at the Boston School of Technology. He moved to Portland in 1904 and drafted for the firm of Whidden and Lewis. He served as superintendent of construction on many buildings in Oregon, including the Forestry Center Building. Some resources for which the firm of Sutton and Whitney is responsible are the Meier and Frank Warehouse, Hood River Library, remodeled State Capitol at Sacramento, Farmer and Merchant's Bank, Oakland. Construction for this building was begun in July 1937 and by November the building was seventy-five percent complete. The dedication was held on March 12, 1938. The U. S. National Bank is significant to Klamath Falls as a fine example of Moderne Style architecture. Characteristics of the style which are particularly evident include the rounded corners, the large metal framed windows, glass brick windows, large entry opening with bronze doors, and bronze grill above. Decorative details, the chevrons, curvilinear lines and stylized lettering contribute to the strong declaration of style.

Looking west in downtown Klamath Falls, in 1939 and over 40 years later, the most profound change seems to have been in the automobiles parked along Main Street.
Meetings are held the 4th Thursday of the month — with some exceptions. See schedule or call 883-4208. We meet at the Klamath County Museum meeting room, 1451 Main St., Klamath Falls, Spring Street entrance. We will meet on July 25 at 6 p.m. at John Fortune’s home for our summer poduck. For further information call the museum. Our next regular meeting will be September 26 at 7 p.m.

Be sure to call Anne Federhart, our Sunshine Lady, if you hear of anyone who is ill or needs cheering up. Her number is 541-884-5475.

2002 Amtrak Volunteers Endowment Fund Donators


Correction: Bennett A. Loftsgard was the author of Picking Huckleberries, from our last issue.

Membership information

Individual Member $5.00
Supporting Member $25.00
Life Member $100.00

Make your dues payable to:

KLAMATH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

and mail to or drop off at:

Klamath County Museum, 1451 Main Street, Klamath Falls, OR 97601

2002 Officers
President: John Fortune
Vice-President: Judith Hassen
Secretary: Susan Rambo
Treasurer: Avis Kielsmeyer

Board Members:
Doris Peters
Wayne Scott

2002 Meetings
September 26
7 PM
October 24 7 PM
November — Annual Meeting