The people of Klamath County are fortunate in having the excellent museum facilities that we do. Our museum would do credit to a much larger community. The old Armory Building, with its two World War I soldiers standing guard is an exhibit in itself, to say nothing of the Hotel Baldwin and Fort Klamath property. In this issue of the\nTrumpeter\nwe pause to look back over the early history of the Klamath County Museum. As we\nread of the museum’s early development, one fact seems to stand out. We have what\nwe have today because a few concerned individuals in the past thought it was\nimportant that we have a museum and went out of their way to see that we got one.

Carrol B. Howe, the author of the feature article in this edition of the\nTrumpeter\nwas one such individual. During his long career as a local teacher, coach and superintendent of the county schools, he found time to write several books on the history of the area and serve in the state legislature for a number of years. Fortunately for the rest of us, he also found time to work for the establishment of a museum. He was one of the founders of the Klamath County Museum.

We owe a lot to this man and others like him who shared a vision and strove to make their vision a reality. In a future edition of the\nTrumpeter\nwe hope to outline the later years in the development of the Museum.

* * * * *

Judith has a long list of exciting events scheduled for the museum during the coming year, and she shares some of them with us in this issue. For example, at 3:00 p.m. on January 18, the Basin Brass Quintet will be performing on the stage of the museum. The price of admission will be Adults $3.00, Students & Seniors $2.00 and 5-12 years $1.00. Price includes admission to the Main Museum floor. What a deal! And this is just one of the exciting events to come!
50th Anniversary Exhibits and Events

The theme for January 2004 is Fanfare: As we start off our 50th Anniversary Year, photographs of bands (especially brasses) from our collection will be hung in the Modoc Gallery. The Entrance Gallery will share the fanfare theme with musical instruments and sheet music and more photographs telling how our museum first became a physical reality in one room in the Veterans Memorial Building in 1954. Fifty years later, our museum has become a museum complex consisting of the Main Museum at 1451 Main Street (in the old armory), the Baldwin Hotel Museum at 31 Main Street and the Fort Klamath Museum and Historic Military Site at 52620 Highway 62. To spread the news of our anniversary, we will "strike up the band" on Sunday, Jan. 18, 2004 with a special concert by the Basin Brass Quintet right here on the stage in the Main Museum. Admission to the concert is included in admission to the museum: $3 for adults, $2 for students and seniors, $1 for ages 5-12, and children under 5 are free.

February is the month for lovebirds: the Modoc Gallery will be filled with the magnificent collection of Victorian valentines loaned by Carol and Gary Mattos. The Baldwin Hotel Museum will host a romantic dinner (by reservation only) on Saturday, Feb. 14, that may be enjoyed in conjunction with a wedding or vow renewal in the Baldwin Hotel Chapel. To make this Valentine's Day the most special of all, call the Main Museum at 883-4208 prior to the end of January in order to schedule a Valentine's Day wedding and dinner, vow renewal and dinner, or simply the most romantic dinner of the entire year. Expect chocolates, roses, a strolling violinist, and the heady atmosphere of the celebration of love. Lovebirds continues in the Entrance Gallery at the Main Museum with an exhibit of very beautiful pairs of birds prepared by taxidermist, Charlie Thurston, of Airborne Taxidermy. On Feb. 15, participants in the Eagle Conference who sign up for the Beginning Bird Identification Workshop will be bused to the Main Museum to utilize our collection (and Charlie's exhibit) in learning about birds. Charlie is even going to bring in real wood ducks and a green winged teal for that day. Other events for the month include participation in the Living History at the Jefferson Square Mall Feb. 21 and 22 and photographic exhibits at the Watershed Conference at OIT on Feb. 24, 25 and 26.

March is Train Month: The Southern Oregon Model Train Association is bringing model trains into the Main Museum for the weekend of March 12, 13 and 14. Alex Piper will have paintings and prints of "Trains" in the Modoc Gallery. The Entrance Gallery will present Jack Bowden's original ink drawings of trains and stations together with train photographs and 3-D train artifacts. Other train activities are in the works, so if you like trains, the Klamath County Museum is the place for you!

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A LIBRARY IS SOLD - A MUSEUM IS BORN

(This article originally appeared in the book, Frontier Stories of the Klamath Country, by Carrol B. Howe, 1989)

By the year 1953 about the only vestige remaining of the old courthouse fight was the library building on the campus of the Klamath Union High School. It was called Carnegie Library by the old timers. The high school board members were anxious to extend the high school for a cafeteria and other purposes, so were trying to buy the building in order to remove it. Removal, of course, meant finding or building another structure to house the County Library.

When Judge Reeder told me of projected plans I was both surprised and elated. The County Court (now called Board of Commissioners) then made up of Ed Gowan, Jerry Rajnus and Judge U. E. Reeder, had agreed to fund the construction of a library and county museum.

Judge Reeder, who was my father-in-law, knew of my long interest in developing a museum. I was serving as Superintendent of the County School District at the time and had anxiously watched a generation of Indian children grow up who knew little about their native culture. The federal government had divided the territory of the reservation into church educational areas. The Klamaths and Modocs quickly were converted to Christianity and both Indian Service personnel and parents encouraged their youngsters to give up living the "old ways" and to adapt to modern ways of living.

Certainly I was not the only one interested in the establishment of a
museum. Ida Odell, who helped start the first Klamath Historical Society in 1942, had long worked for some type of museum. Later she made contributions of priceless objects to the permanent collection - materials she had acquired while living on the Klamath Indian Reservation. The event that triggered the museum construction was the sale of the library building on the Union High School site.

Funding for a public museum had started back as far as 1940. During the severe depression years of the 1930's there were many who were unable to pay property taxes. Others found it to their advantage if they removed timber from the land and allowed the land to be returned to county ownership for the unpaid taxes. As a result, county governments became owners of many parcels of real property, both bare land and some buildings. Many county governments set up land sales departments to dispose of these so called tax lands. In 1940 a law was passed providing that ten percent of such land sales revenue was to be set aside for museum purposes. On July 24, 1940 a court order signed by U. E. Reeder and John Reber, set aside $1,570.50 for the museum fund.

By July 1942 Klamath County had set aside $8,485 for the museum fund. In 1946 the first Museum Commission was appointed: Mary Case to represent historians, Dayton Van Vactor, veterans, Alfred Collier, taxpayers, and U. E. Reeder, County Judge.

A room was set aside to hold historic objects in the Veteran's Memorial Building, also this room was used to administer driver's license tests. A few objects were collected but otherwise, little was accomplished.

In 1953 Representative Hudson and Senator Hounsell introduced legislation which provided for museum commissions with extensive power and authority for the operation of county or city museums. They could employ personnel, accept gifts in the name of the county and make contracts with state and federal agencies.

At first a room was set aside to hold historic objects in the Veterans Memorial Building.

Under the new law members of the county court appointed Oliver Spiker, city councilman; Hal Ogle, then president of the Historical Society; U. E. Reeder, county judge; Mary Williams Case, historian; Elvine Gienger of Chiloquin, North County; Jesse Smith, Malin, South County. I was appointed as superintendent of the county school district, to the seventh position.

Meanwhile, when the building construction seemed likely, the court members appointed a site selection committee made up of Nelson Reed, Dick Henzel and Vern Moore. Two factors helped decide against building on the High School site: Joint administration of a single
building, and building on land not owned by the county. The museum commission met on July 10, 1953. They recommended location of the building at South Third and Klamath Avenue. Among the reasons was proximity to Memorial Park, already county owned, and janitor help by jail inmates.

Hal Ogle and Ida Odell.

It seems doubtful that approval for the museum construction would have been given had not the necessity for a library occurred. The sale of the old library building brought $26,100 and by this time $28,201.91 had accumulated in the museum fund. The old museum law had provided a rich dowry for a somewhat ugly bride in a marriage to the county library.

Howard Perrin, Klamath Falls architect, was authorized to draw plans for the new building. It is fortunate that in my job as school superintendent, I was working with Mr. Perrin. I was able to persuade him to add to the original plans a fire-proof vault, a small upstairs auditorium and a basement darkroom for photographic work. The court members approved the changes, then Howard Burkhart was awarded the bid for construction.

In looking back, I'm sure the members of the county court started with a very different concept of a museum than did the members appointed to the commission. They did, however, cooperate wholeheartedly as the planning progressed. Court members joined museum members to visit the University Museums at Corvallis and Eugene. There they gathered information on cataloging and problems that might be encountered in operation. In addition Dr. L. L. Cressman of the Oregon University and Erma Gunther of Washington University visited the Klamath institution to offer suggestions.

Among the best suggestions was one to "be sure and determine what we were trying to do as we could not be all things to all people." In forming a constitution for the commission, the following words were adapted: "The purpose of the Klamath County Museum Commission is to encourage people of the region to become aware of their natural and cultural heritage and to promote scientific study and research. The commission will also acquaint visitors with interesting features of the region."

Hal Ogle, who was the current president of the Historical Society and was also active in veteran's affairs, was elected as the first chairman. Mary Case who was interested and active in historical research was elected secretary. As word was spread and solicitations made for donations, materials came drifting in to add to the sparse accumulation in the county collection. Edith McLeod was
appointed as the first curator. She had extensive background in both the history and natural history of the region. I'm sure it must have been a discouraging process for her as the donations, mostly old clothes, poured in and were piled on the floor of the new building. Ogle accumulated old pictures and others gathered various materials, some precious, some worthless. Mrs. McLeod decided to resign before the museum opened.

![Edith McLeod](image)

The commission adopted a policy of using no tax money to buy exhibit materials for the county. As a result, an organization called Klamath Museum Associates, was formed to raise money for exhibits and to sponsor scientific and historic lectures. One of the first purchases was the Frank Payne Indian Artifact collection which was purchased for $5000 from the Winema Hotel owners, Merle West, Andy Collier and Tom Watters. This formed the backbone, along with the collection donated by Ida Odell, of an outstanding collection for interpretation of the Klamath-Modoc material culture.

Dr. Claude Schaefer was next appointed curator. His previous work as head of the Federal Museum at Browning, Montana, was quite different from the new appointment. He struggled bravely and cheerfully with little money and much advice and finally on October 23, 1955, the doors were opened and the public invited. One of the outstanding features - an Indian lady from Chiloquin was hired to grind wocus on the steps of the new building.

The reputation of the museum must have been satisfactory and it must have traveled as far as Portland, Oregon. One day Dr. Schaefer told me he had been invited to give a talk in Portland at the Historical Society on "How to Start a New Museum." He wondered if I could help him with a few suggestions. I must have done a good job on him because - presto. He was hired by the Oregon Historical Society. Money isn't everything, but it will help lure away a museum curator.

The museum operated with various degrees of success over the next few years ranging from excellent to dismal. The research library collection was enhanced by a memorial grant from the children of Mary Case and an important archeological discovery was made by Roy Carlson, curator. Several outstanding programs were provided by Klamath Museum Associates.

In the mid-1960's there was considerable sentiment to close the city library and to combine its function with the county library. The big question was how to get rid of the ugly bride with the big dowry (the museum) so that the space could be used for an expanded library. The museum commission was asked to examine the Elk's Club building to
determine its suitability. They also studied the Hillside Hospital building. About this time Marijane Filtrcraft, who owned the City Library site, offered to give it to the county museum purposes. We enthusiastically studied the building (now used as a City Hall Annex) even going so far as to draw blueprints and plan the various display areas. County commissioners meanwhile, became more anxious to get the museum out. There was never a conflict over the problem between commissioners and the museum board. Finally Don Kenyon (then a county commissioner), came up with a brilliant solution. Get rid of a white elephant - the jointly city-county owned armory building and the county museum together. His proposal was enthusiastically accepted by the city. The city sold its share of the armory, which had not been used for military purposes for some time, to the county for $1.00.

By this time, Van Landrum had been appointed to the museum commission, where his engineering skills, as well as historical knowledge, were valuable assets. After laying out the space to preserve the original purpose of the museum, planning was soon followed by construction. Landrum's designs were adapted to the display materials. Jim O'Donahue worked on wildlife displays. I worked on Indian displays along with Jim DeVore. Landrum and Bill Burke, with the cooperation of the National Park Service, developed an outstanding military and Modoc War exhibit. Scott Warren hustled historical, especially western livestock material and solicited the services of the county road department to help construct the historical displays. Outstanding research was done by Devere Helfrich on the Applegate Trail display and Bernard Griffin used his years of research to assemble and construct the post office exhibit. Research by Elvine Gienger on Indian trade as well as material contributions made a lasting interpretation possible. Outstanding work was also done by Lorraine Quillen Orr and Isabelle Borgman on research cataloging and display. Cliff Clayton and Sam Raymond, who was then chairman, rounded out the team that made it truly a people's museum.

Combination County Library and Museum.

In order to get ready for the grand opening some displays we made were considered to be temporary. When the opening finally occurred in late January 1969, I was in a legislative session in Salem. The result was pronounced good and best of all, it was the product of local people.

In addition to the old armory location, the County purchased park property at the site of old Fort Klamath. Thanks largely to the effort of Scott Warren, a small rustic
building was constructed there by the road department employees. This serves as a display area for the artifacts associated with the military past there.

As time passed, operation of the museums created more personnel problems, although the institutions were well financed. On Dec. 10, 1976, Douglas Ernst, then chairman, was asked by the commissioners to draw up and present a set of operating rules that would solve any disagreements between the museum board and employees. Ernst said a plan was presented but by that time the commissioners, Nell Kuonen, Lloyd Gift and Ray Thorne, had decided to withdraw the authority of the museum board and re-create it as an advisory group with operating authority left in the hands of the county commissioners. Several museum board members resigned, including Ernst, but were given plaques of appreciation in thanks for their services.

The next major event in the history of the museum took place when word was passed around that the Baldwin Hotel was about to be sold and dismantled. The City Council discussed the possibility of acquiring it in order to preserve it. They did not act, but shortly thereafter Commissioners Kuonen and Floyd Wynne voted to buy it for County Museum purposes. Lloyd Gift disagreed but the purchase was made for $148,979.78. Subsequent repairs brought the cost to $167,350 by 1981. The ugly bride with the big dowry had taken on weight.

The fate of the museum has changed several times since the withdrawal of authority from the board. County commissioners have, of course, changed also and at one time the museum was actually closed. When this occurred, it drew strong protests from members of the Historical Society and others who had helped found the museum. As a result of the meeting, the museum was reopened - reopened with more volunteer help and stronger public support than it had previously ever had. The Klamath Historical Society has become active in research, promotion, finance, and above all, active dedicated help to a small staff equally dedicated to public service. Commissioners have adapted rules which encourage contributions of money and materials. Rules were designed also to protect the materials loaned or given, from damage and dissipation.


Carrol B. Howe