Most of the people using the Klamath County Library are probably unaware of all that has been involved in getting and maintaining this splendid facility. We use and enjoy it, giving little thought to its long, colorful history. But the year 2005, is not just another year as far as the library is concerned, for it marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the library's founding. This, its centennial year seems like an appropriate time to pause and look back over the years and see how we got to where we are today. With that thought in mind, this issue of The Trumpeter features an essay by Ann du Pont entitled, "A Short History of Public Libraries in Klamath County."

There is probably no one more qualified to report on the subject than Ann du Pont. She earned a BA in history at the University of Oregon, MA in history at the University of Missouri, at Columbia, and finally the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science Degree from Simmons College. She worked at the Klamath County Library for six years and then moved over to the Oregon Technical Institute Library for six additional years. Since her retirement Ann has volunteered for several projects for the county library, including this history. She has spent the past year researching this subject and she says it has been one of the most enjoyable projects she has ever undertaken.

This centennial year will be a busy one for Ann. In addition to her presentation to the Klamath County Historical Society in the main hall at the museum on February 24th she has a number of other appearances scheduled. On April 23, she will be at the meeting of the League of Women Voters, April 26th at the Garden Club, May 10th at the Kiwanis, and on June 29th at the Chamber of Commerce in the main hall of the museum, and in November at the Soroptomists Club.
Klamath County Historical Society

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. For further information call the museum.

### 2005

**Meetings**

- Apr 28 - 7 pm
- May 26 - 7 pm
- June - Annual Tour
- July - Picnic
- August - No Meeting
- Sept 22 - 7 pm
- Oct 27 - 7 pm
- Nov - Elections
- Dec - No Meeting

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**Membership Information**

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**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

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**Thank you for renewing your membership, and thanks to those who chose to raise their membership level.**

**Welcome New Members**

- Donna Andersen
- Danielle Brown
- Barbara Knox
- Valeree Lane
- Barbara Lindland
- Mickie McCormic
- Robert Pastega
- Jean Peters
- Donna Skudstad
- Mary Smothers
- Jim Stilwell
- Anne Stoebbe
- Dennis Teater

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**Board Members**

John Fortune, President
Judith Hassen, Vice President
Susan Rambo, Secretary
Avis Kielsmeier, Treasurer
Bob Baker, Carol Mattos, Doris Peters
The history of public libraries in Klamath County is similar to the history of many public libraries across the United States. Not long after the close of the Civil War, the woman's club movement started. Today many public libraries trace their history back to a small group of women who formed a local woman's club before or just after the turn of the century.

In late 1904 a few well-dressed women met at the home of Mrs. William S. Worden and formed the Klamath Falls Woman's Club. They adopted by-laws and a constitution. Four days later, the women met again and discussed the reading room they planned to open on Main Street. They said the purpose of the reading room was to provide "a place of resort for quiet rest and refreshment of mind..........."

Early in the spring of 1905, the members decided to open not only a reading room, but also a library. To raise funds they held ice cream socials and concerts, and sold subscriptions to anyone who would pay. All that spring, summer and fall, the women worked toward their goal.

On November 26, 1905, the Women's Club opened the Klamath Falls Public Library and Free Reading Room on the second floor of Fred Melhase's new building. The
Library owned about 200 books and 20 magazines, in addition to subscriptions to the daily and weekly newspapers. The Library was open every evening except Sunday, from 6:30 until 10 o’clock and on weekend afternoons from two until five.

Someone once said that history is “the action of people.” Much of the history of public libraries depends on actions taken by members of the community who care about public libraries. Julia Zumwalt was one of the people who cared passionately about the library in Klamath Falls. Julia Kinsey was born 21 Sep 1874 in California, the daughter of a Methodist minister. On 28 June 1905, Julia married Don J. Zumwalt, the civil engineer for the Klamath Abstract Company. It was later said that Julia Zumwalt “came as a bride to Klamath Falls by way of Thrall, Pokegama and a four-horse stage.”

Within the first few weeks of her arrival in Klamath Falls, Julia joined the Woman’s Club. She sang soprano, played piano, and later became an important member of a touring opera troupe. She gave piano and voice lessons. Almost every year Julia gave concerts, with the proceeds helping support the library.

By the spring of 1907, the library in the upstairs of the Melhase Building was very successful so that the women were in the process of trying to find new quarters for the library. They continued their money-raising work to support the library, and they received twenty dollars each month from the city.

The courthouse block we know today contained the 1888 frame courthouse and the little city hall. Across Third Street from city hall was a former Methodist Church building. The Methodists had sold the lot, and because the buyer wanted only the lot, he offered the empty building to the Woman’s Club. Using contributions from local people, the women paid to move the city hall to another location, to move the church building across Third Street to the former location of the city hall, for a new roof, carpentry work, plastering, painting, and decorating. In mid-July 1907, the library opened in the former church building.

The statistics for library usage during August 1907 are stunning. In that month alone, more than eleven
hundred people used the library, and the library loaned almost two hundred books.

Early in 1910, the newly-renamed Woman’s Library Club received a letter from William S. Worden, Secretary of the Klamath Development Company, which was developing the hot springs area. In the letter, Worden offered a site for the women to build a new library. The women discussed the offer, but decided to “investigate other possible offers and locations.”

About the same time that the Klamath Development Company made their offer, they also offered five acres free to Klamath County to build a new courthouse to replace the small 1888 courthouse. A new courthouse was needed, but people could not agree on a site. The five-acre parcel offered to the county was located precisely where Klamath Union High School is today. Fred Melhaase and others who owned businesses in the main part of town opposed the offer and wanted the new courthouse to be built in the courthouse block.

William S. Worden was elected Klamath County Judge in November 1910. In April 1913 Judge Worden and the two county commissioners signed a resolution in an effort to obtain Carnegie funds for a public library. By the resolution, the judge and commissioners agreed to the two requirements to obtain a Carnegie grant, that the library would be free to the public and that the local community would provide annual tax support.

Construction of the new courthouse in the hot springs area started in July 1913, and Judge Worden insisted that the new library be located close to the new hot springs courthouse. Although leaders of Klamath Falls and the Woman’s Library Club complained that the site was too far from the main part of town, Klamath County received the first installment of Carnegie funds by December 1913.

By March 1914, contractors and builders were busy working on the new Klamath County Carnegie Library, and by that autumn the library was nearly finished. The county hired Anne Brockenbrough to prepare for opening the library to the public. She was quoted in a newspaper article, “We will serve not only the city circulation, but will establish deposit stations through the county...” The newspaper article also stressed that books would be loaned from the new county library at no charge.
No doubt as a result of Anne’s words, the members of the Woman’s Library Club voted to make “our Library free to the general public,” effective October 12, 1914. Providing free library service meant the Woman’s Library Club no longer had income from library cards. They voted to give their “library to the City and in case they did not care to take it over ask for a larger appropriation.” After the women made their offer, the Klamath Falls City Council “decided to levy a 2/10 mill tax and let the ladies retain the library.”

A few weeks later, the newspaper carried an article about the county library headlined, “Library Found Too Small for Intended Uses. In Addition to Isolation, is Inadequate.”

In November 1914 Judge Worden lost his re-election bid, and the new county judge “closed” the county library (which had apparently never opened) and revoked the appointment of Anne C. Brockenbrough.

Construction was also started on a new courthouse on the courthouse block, and by February 1919 the new courthouse was completed. However, the county court would not occupy the building and continued trying to finish the hot springs courthouse.

About the time that the courts and county offices did move into the new courthouse on the courthouse block, the Woman’s Library Club was informed that because of fire protection for the new courthouse, they would have to find a new location for the Klamath Falls Public Library.

Klamath Falls Public Library (1907-1927) Note new Klamath County courthouse in the background.

In November 1924, city voters passed a bond election to build a new city library. In November 1925 the Woman’s Library Club turned the library over to the City of Klamath Falls. The Mayor appointed a library board with President Mrs. Jackson Kimball, Vice President Mrs. A. M. Worden, Secretary Mrs. J. F. Goeller, and Treasurer E. M. Bubb to bring about the building of and to manage the new city library. First, they had to find a site for the new library.

In 1926 Henrietta Schallock Melhase’s children donated property for the site of the new city library in memory of their mother, an early and active member of the Woman’s Club, and widow of Fred Melhase.

A contract was signed in 1927 between the county library and the county schools and high schools, providing that the library would “furnish facilities and render ... library service.” That contract was
carried out with excellent service until 1965.

Klamath Falls City Library (1927-1969)

In a report to the Oregon State Library for the year ending December 1928, the Klamath County Library had branches at Bly, Bonanza, Chiloquin, Fort Klamath, Henley, Keno, Klamath Agency, Langell Valley, Malin, and Pelican City.

The Klamath County Librarian for a good portion of the time from 1927 to 1930 was Mildred Oleson, the first librarian with a master's degree in library science to work in Klamath Falls. She was credited with being responsible for raising the rating of the Klamath County Carnegie Library "from a rating as one of the two poorest Carnegie libraries in the United States to a place where it compares favorably with any." (Basin Progress 15 Aug 1929) In the summer of 1929 Mildred Oleson purchased the first Klamath County Library book van, a boon to outlying communities and residents.

These two women are probably Margaret Nye (L) and Mildred Oleson (R) with the 1929 Book Van.

By 1941, as noted in a Klamath County Library report, the library maintained branch libraries in 28 communities and served 39 schools of the county. According to the report, "This library system sends more books out and circulates more through the branch and school libraries than any other county library in the state, exclusive of Multnomah County."

The branch libraries were located in individual buildings, in stores, and in people's homes. Billie Fitzhugh wrote an article, published in the periodical Reminisce, in which she told about the Klamath County Branch Library for Upper Lorella being located in her family's living room. Billie remembers Mary McComb, the county librarian at that time, driving her personal car and delivering books on a regular basis.
1955 must have been a very good year for the libraries in Klamath, because the city library celebrated its first fifty years, and Klamath County built a new library building, which also housed the museum and Red Cross, at Klamath Avenue and Third Street.

Over the years, many people suggested that the two libraries merge. The Red Cross moved out of the library building, and as the years went on, one concern was finding a new location for the Klamath County Museum. By 1968, it was decided that the museum would move into the armory. In July 1969, the merger of the city and county libraries was complete, with the city library employees and books going to the county library.

By 1973 the two libraries had been merged for four years, and even though some remodeling had been carried out when the two libraries merged, much more room was needed. A “Friends of the Library” society was formed. Edna Karczag, library director at the time, gave several reasons to form the new group. The most important need was: to “campaign for a new building or for modification and expansion of existing facilities.” Officers were soon elected in the Friends group, with Clara Moore becoming the very capable president. That July the Friends held their first used book sale, not indoors, but outside, under the shade of the library’s big tree on Third Street.

By Autumn 1973, the library board was planning an addition to the 1955 building. The Wonder Apartments on Second Street, between the Melhase Building and Klamath Avenue, were torn down to allow for the new addition, which made the library twice the size it had been when it was built in 1955. An open house was held 17 May 1975, and it was said then that the library should be adequate for the next twenty years.

Present Klamath County Library, opened in 1975.

Thus, seventy years after the few active members of the Woman’s Club first opened the Klamath Falls Public Library on the second floor of the Melhase building, now the library extended all the way from Second Street to Third Street. And with voter
approval of a tax base for the library in the Year 2000, the future is assured. Through individuals working together and the inspiring contributions of many women and men over the last one hundred years, now we all benefit by having a first-rate public library. It is a place where, in the words of the Woman's Club, we attain "refreshment of mind."

Klamath Republican
August 7, 1903
Local News Items

The town authorities have taken steps to repair the sidewalks on Main Street. Lumber has been hauled and we may soon expect to see dilapidated walks disappear. This will be a source of comfort to people who have to walk.

Klamath Republican
August 13, 1903
Local News (Ad)

Don't forget to try our 20-cent roast coffee. A 50-cent package of tea for 40 cents. Eggs good as cash at Moore's Altamont Store.

Washing the book van

**Auction**

April 30, 2005
at the Klamath County Fairgrounds.
The proceeds will benefit the Museum. We are looking for Collectibles and Antiques to sell.

Please check your attic!
John Fortune, President of the Klamath County Historical Society speaks about the watercraft and waterways of early 20th Century Klamath Falls at the Klamath County Museum, 1451 Main Street, Klamath Falls, OR.

Klamath County Museums
Historic Waterways and Watercraft Exhibit and Lecture
April 21, 2005 at 7:00 p.m.
April 28, 2005 at 7:30 p.m.

From the stage of the old Armory
1451 Main Street
541-883-4208

View Exhibits of Historic Watercraft and Waterways in the Entrance Gallery.

The Klamath County Historical Society and the Klamath County Museum Present:

Dave Elzner telling the story of the Klamath Belle and how she came to the Upper Klamath Lake.
Quilt Raffle

Hazel Lewis has donated this quilt to help raise funds for the museum. $5 per ticket or 5 tickets for $20. Purchase your tickets now!
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Spring Events and Exhibits

April 2005

Maud Baldwin Photography Contest and Juried Show. The opening of the exhibit at the Klamath Arts Council Gallery (by the Highland Credit Union at the Alameda Bypass and Shasta Way) is 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. on April 3.

Historic Waterways and Watercraft is on exhibit in the Entrance Gallery at the Klamath County Museum. Two lectures will accompany this exhibit: John Fortune speaking at 7:00 p.m. on April 21 about the launching of the “Winema” and the “Klamath” in 1905 and Dave Elzner speaking on April 28 at 7:30 p.m. about bringing the “Klamath Belle” into the Upper Klamath Lake.

Bev Fairclo-Ott of the Aspen Gold Studio will display her art in the Modoc Gallery. The opening for her show will be on April 2 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

May 2005

James Beane “Small Works of Art” will show in the Modoc Gallery. The opening reception for his show will be on May 7th from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

Bureau of Reclamation’s Klamath Project Centennial is on exhibit in the Entrance Gallery at the Klamath County Museum. Bureau personnel will present a lecture on the history of the Klamath Project.

Fort Klamath will open early this year with a Timeline for school children on May 13 and will be open for the general public May 14 continuing through Labor Day. Road closures on Highway 62 to Crater Lake will require an early closing of Fort Klamath.

June 2005

The Baldwin Hotel Museum will open for the season on June 1, 2005. The Baldwin is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. by tour only. Special events will be offered on Third Thursdays throughout the summer from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Gina Janelli’s Photographs will be on display in the Modoc Gallery. The reception for Gina’s show will be June 4th from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

Barbara Krause’s Quilts will be featured in the Entrance Gallery of the Klamath County Museum. On June 24, 25 and 26, there will be a Quilt Show in the museum with the drawing for the raffle quilt by Hazel Lewis on Sunday afternoon, June 26, 2005.