

History of the Wallowa Library

“Wallowa is to have a Public Library”

November 1912

“Wallowa is to have a public library” was announced by the Ladies’ Progressive Club. These were headlines in the Wallowa Sun newspaper. The arrangements to establish a Free Reading Room for the local area were a vision of the women of the club. The group decided to appeal to the Wallowa City Council for support of their project at the December council meeting. The plan for a Free Reading Room was presented; Mr. Edward Holmes was the Mayor at this time and Council members were Kenneth McKenzie, Edwin Marvin, Edward Mason, T.E. Mitchell and J.H. Mimnauagh. The council passed a motion to allow twenty (\$20) per month to aid in maintaining a Free Reading Room until April 1, 1913.

Thus, allowing the group a few months to see if their plan would succeed. The first location was to be in the lower floor of the Tulley Building located at 208 E First St. Bessie Baird was the President of the Ladies' Progressive Club. The ladies had secured a traveling library service, purchased books and ask for donations of books, magazines and papers from the local citizens. Mrs. Alex Cameron of Walla Walla, Washington provided 240 books for the establishment, aiding in filling the shelves of the newly formed library. The Cameron Family added 40 more books later that year. The library was to serve everyone in the community.

The Reading Room was to be open from 4:00 to 6:00 PM in the afternoon and 7:00 to 10:00 at night with Mrs. Baird serving as the Librarian.

In May, the experiment was deemed a success and the City Council moved to continue an allowance for the project for another 6 months. The Council also decided to use the Reading Room as the meeting place for the Wallowa City Council to save paying rent on the Morelock Building.

In December of 1913, the Reading Room was on the ballot at election time. The vote was Reading Room, yes 123 and no 33. The vote clearly established the favored support by the city. The members of the Library Board were selected and presented to the City Council for approval a practice that is still used. At that time, the Reading Room was listed as a line item in the budget.

The Council met with Mrs. Baird to determine the salary and hours for the Reading Room. The salary for the librarian was set at \$240 per year with an allowance for the Board set at \$100. Mrs. Baird continued as librarian from 1913 to 1917. The board continued to make modest improvements during the next years; The Reading Room had one section in which there was a charge for using those books.

Year	Salary	Supply Allowance
1931	\$330	\$200
1955	\$600	\$100

It is difficult to determine the location of the library until 1937. The articles and minutes of the council mentioned the location as the Steven's Building and later the Noregaard Building. These locations remain a mystery at this time. In January 1918, the Mayor appointed a committee of one J.P Morelock to find a suitable building for the library and the Council meeting place. Mr. Morelock secured the Schiffler Building located at 106 E First St. (the Goss Storage buildings are located on this site.) The rent on the building was set at \$25 per month, and Mr. Schiffler was to paint and paper the rooms.

In June of 1921, the State Librarian visited the Wallowa Library in summary, She reported that the State Library had 275 letters from Wallowa County requesting information. The Wallowa Library had 2226 books in their collection with 80 percent fiction. Reference books were ordered from the State library. Curtained windows, long reading tables and comfortable chairs give the Wallowa library a very attractive appearance.

In 1937, the City bought The Couch- McDonald Building on Storie St. for \$887.50 in a tax delinquency sale. The Council used the South side of the building and the room on the north was remodeled for the library. By this time, the *Free Reading Room* name had been dropped and only the term *Wallowa Library* was used. The side that was to house the library had been used by the U.S. Forest Service from 1910 until 1933 when they moved their headquarters to Enterprise. It was a very spacious room with adequate restrooms. It seemed to be a grand space with nice tables and shelves.

In 1959, The City Council offered the library space to the First State Bank of Elgin and the library was moved to an empty building at 208 E Main just about the location of the first *Free Reading Room*.

In April of 1960, the Wallowa Women's Club held a Silver Tea at the Christian Church to benefit the Library. Mrs. Maude Marvin a member of the Women's Club and one of the early founders gave a history of the library. She related that The Ladies' Progressive Club met in December of 1912 at the home of Mrs. Edward A Holmes at 308 E First St. and decided to launch a *Free Reading Room*. The women canvassed the town for donations of books, magazines, papers and money.

Locations listed in the Wallowa Sun Newspaper, Wallowa Record, and Wallowa City Council minutes.

Year	Location
1913-1917	The Stevens or Tulley Building
1918-1934	Schiffler Building
1935-1936	Noregaard Building
1937-1959	Couch McDonald Building
1960-----	E First Street

Childhood Memories of Forrest Carpenter

Our library was small, with a limited number of books, but it was well used. It was one of my favorite places. I was fascinated by stories of the early pioneers, including mountain men, fur traders, cowboys and Indians. I recall, particularly, a series of books written by Joseph A Altshelter, which detailed the adventures in the Kentucky wilderness of a young pioneer named Henry Ware. Quite frequently the librarian (Mrs. G.H. Feese), who was interested in seeing that my literary education was expanded, urged me to read books of greater substance--- without much success. I was in the library when the librarian excitedly informed me that a young aviator named Charles Lindbergh had just flown, alone, across the Atlantic Ocean to France.

The story of the Wallowa Library will be continued in the Winter Newsletter. If you have stories about your experience in the library, please send me the information. We appreciate any information or changes necessary.

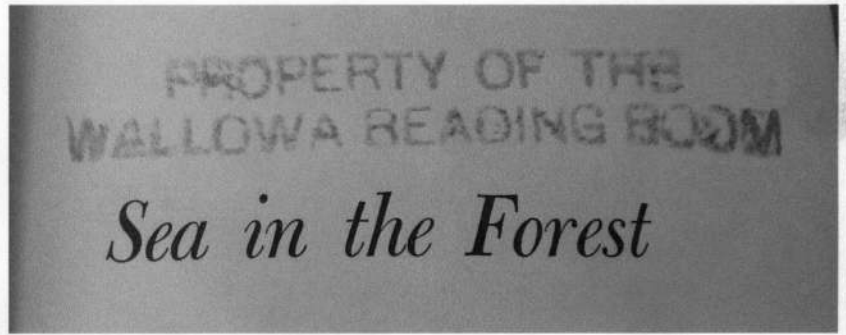
Librarians

Year	Name
1913-1917	Bessie Baird
1917	Marie Mitchell
1919	Ethel Tulley
1921	Mrs. H.J Martin
1922-1927	Mrs. G.H. Feese
1928-1937	Mrs. P.L. Bales
1938 - 1939	Marjorie Martin
1940 - 1945	Edna Hall
1946- 1954	Mrs. Elmer Biggs
1955	
1956- 1962	Thelma Cray
1963	Ione Berry

To be continued.....



Thelma Cray



First Library Stamp



E.A. Holmes house



Edna Hall



Couch-McDonald building



Tulley Building, 2nd from left.



Schiffler building

Members of the Wallowa History Center
THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT
SUMMER 2014

Our Thanks to Wayne Johnson for providing the space for the Wallowa History Center.

The University of Oregon has not completed the order for the Wallowa Record newspapers on microfilm. Hope to receive them soon.

We hope to have these soon so they can be sent to CA for conversion to digital format.

For those doing early research there is a site provided by the University of Oregon called Digital Historic Newspapers. They have a search feature which help in located specific information.

The History Center provided the display at the annual Alumni Banquet. We would like to find more graduation group photos.

We need a photo for the WHS Class of 1924 and 1934.

We need more information about the Wallowa Library after 1960 if you have any photos or stories please share them.

Wallowa Alumni Announcement

Shai Allen represents the 5th generation of Alumni from Wallowa High School. Shai is the daughter of T.J. Allen, Class of 1995; Granddaughter of Dana McKenzie Shelton, Class of 1976; Great Granddaughter of Ted McKenzie, Class of 1949; Great Great Granddaughter of Orville (Shorty) McKenzie, Class of 1916 and Aura Coats McKenzie, Class of 1919.

*Wallowa
History
Center*

Preserving Our Past for the Future

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As a member you can request 3 free copies of historical photographs from our archives, and 10% off your purchases of regional history books.



Bessie Baird in her flower garden 1934