

Society Seeks To Save History Of Basin Area

The Klamath County Historical Society, organized about 1942 in the office of Mrs. Ida Momyer Odell, has carved its own important niche in the Klamath Basin.

Mrs. Odell was the first president. Mrs. Beuna Stone, Mrs. Ivy Gralapp, Mrs. Helen Thomas and Mrs. Irene Foster were charter members cognizant of the need for preserving the history and antiques of the Klamath country, perpetuations of the country's traditions and establishment of a museum.

These goals have been realized. Interest continues with a largely increased membership through monthly meetings, observance of historical dates and interchange of ideas and data with other groups and with individuals.

The only membership requirement is an interest in the history of Oregon and the Klamath Basin. Faith and work of the charter members and leaders have inspired others to continue.

The Klamath County Museum located in the building with the county library, contains an overflow of historical items that have

luncheon of the society which brought guests from Yreka, later home of Nurse, and others to hear the story of his philanthropy.

An earlier group of history-minded residents formed the Pioneer Association in October, 1909, with O. E. Stearns as president, O. C. Applegate, vice president, and Mrs. Emma Gogswell, secretary.

Goal for this group was annual gatherings of those who came before 1885 or had parents here before then. They held picnics and dinners, with the first dinner in the First Presbyterian Church Feb. 20, 1931.

The association merged in 1947 with the Klamath County Historical Society.

The victory was followed by the placing of markers on the route from Rickreall in the Willamette Valley, south through Western Oregon, over the Green Springs route, through the Klamath country. The road continued east to Fort Hall, Idaho.

The society stimulated interest of the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce, local banks and merchants in arranging window displays of antiques in business establishments commemorating the centennial opening of the Southern Route.

Again during the presidency of Mrs. Geneva Duncan, the society sponsored the Oregon Trail-Southern Route pageant, "Wagon Road to Sky Road."

Much of the groundwork and the dialogue for the impressive three-day pageant depicting the history of the Basin from the explosion of Mt. Mazama, the creation of Crater Lake and coming of the white man was the work of society members.

A 1939 Centennial dinner commemorated the 100th anniversary of statehood for Oregon and the society hosted a symposium of societies in Northern California and Southern Oregon in 1959 which brought noted historians to Klamath Falls.

Antiques brought by members and non-members from Klamath Falls and other towns were on display during the historical tea for the symposium.

George Nurse, founder of Linkville and first postmaster, was honored in recent months at a

PAGE 17-C HERALD AND NEWS, Klamath Falls, Ore.

Evolution Of Schools Traces Basin's Advance

Perhaps progress in the Klamath Basin during the past decade may best be traced by evolution of its schools.

While the schools have progressed physically to a remarkable degree, the evolution has not ended there.

Administrations have trimmed off the fat so that curricula today are sleek and streamlined as a rocket. Entire school districts

graders from Mills District are instructed there now. The school is designed for easy transition to a junior high school.

Fairview School received a five-room addition. Pelican School has two new rooms, a boiler room, dressing rooms and a cafeteria. Roosevelt School, a music room and some other alterations; Riverside School, alterations and modernization; Conger School, a classroom and a dressing room, and Mills School and Roosevelt, conversion to subterranean hot water heating systems.

And the elementary district's newest school, O'Neill, is under construction. The first 10 classrooms of the unit designed ultimately to contain 20 rooms, or room for about 600 students, are expected to be ready for occupancy sometime this spring.

Even with new construction, the county school district, especially, is having trouble keeping pace with the increase in elementary school enrollment.

Where average daily attendance in county schools in 1949-50 school year was 4,510 students, it was 6,140 during the same period this year.

This year the county employs 270 teachers. Only 192 were needed then.

Ten years ago, 23 per cent of students who were graduated from Klamath Union High School attended four-year institutes of higher learning. The figure rose to 40 per cent for the class that was graduated last June, and that figure was five per cent higher than the year before.

The rise has been accomplished in part by more demand for college graduates. But it has also been accelerated by better teachers, methods and facilities.

At KUHS, for instance, 125 more students are taking mathematics this year than last year because of the flexible, highly special math program introduced there.

Science and language departments have been overhauled and remodeled, too, and counseling is improving with inertia of a tidal wave.

The most tangible evidence of development, however, still remains with physical school facilities.

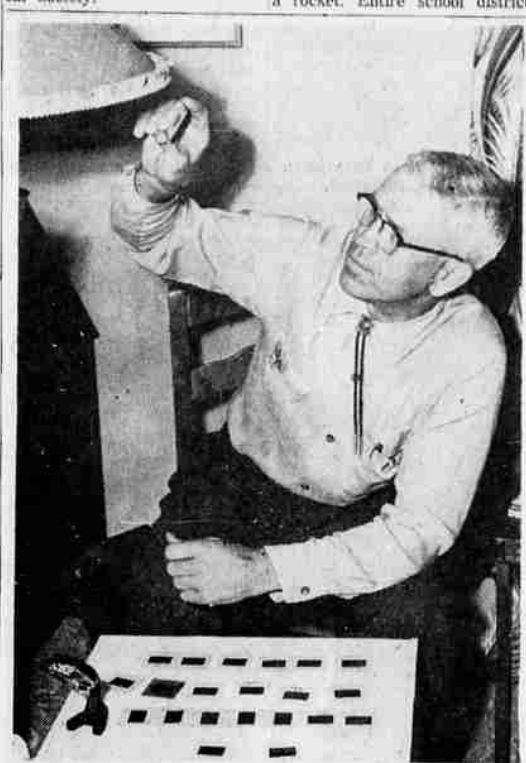
Since 1950, the county school district alone has spent more than \$3,000,000 for new schools and improvements to old ones. Seven new schools have been constructed with some of that money.

They are Peterson, Ferguson, Stearns, Merrill, Chilquinn and Falcon Heights elementary schools and Henley High School.

In the city school districts, a wing costing \$960,000 was added to KUHS. It contains a cafeteria, chemistry and physics departments, instrumental and vocal music departments and a stage for an auditorium that someday may be built.

The natatorium was overhauled and a field house built onto it at a total cost of about \$155,000. That job was completed in time for school last fall.

The city elementary district spent about \$150,000 to build Ponderosa School, containing five rooms, in Mills subdistrict. First



HAROLD ASHLEY, clerk of School Districts 1 and 2, Klamath Union High School and the city elementary schools, is a photography hobbyist who frequently shares his excellent pictures of the Klamath country and other spots with local groups. He is a member of the Klamath County Historical Society and has recorded many local events with historical value. He started 40 years ago with an Eastman camera, postcard size. In addition to black and white prints, he has between 8,000 and 10,000 colored slides. His father, also a photographer, took pictures with a camera using glass film.



ORSON STEARNS was president of the Pioneer Association which was formed in 1909 to bring oldtimers of the era before 1885 together for picnics and dinners. —Photo by Hal Ogle



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