

HOW THE CASCADE PUBLIC LIBRARY

GOT ITS START

A Brief History

1979

by Marie K. Bell

In researching the history of the Cascade Public Library, we find that the recognition of the need for such a facility in Cascade pre-dates by at least 45 years the actual establishment of a library.

Sometime in the late 1920's or early 1930's the first attempt at creating a library for use by the public originated with the Methodist Ladies Aid, and had its beginnings in the Methodist Church, the red brick building on the corner of Pine and Idaho streets which is now known as the Community Christian Church. All books were either donated or loaned by local interested residents, and different members of the Ladies Aid volunteered to act as librarians. The facilities were open to the public for a few hours one or two days a week, depending on how much time the ladies could spend with the books.

We would like to be able to give recognition to all those who worked on this project, but we have found no records of their activities, so we can only mention a few who are remembered by present-day Cascadians.

Mrs. Zelma Redmon told us that her mother, Mrs. Ella Cromwell, spent time acting as librarian. Woody Bean, chairman of the present Library Board, says that he remembers checking out books from Mrs. Zella Coleman, aunt of Mrs. Redmon and Tot Cromwell. Also, Alene Kelley recalls that, as a little girl, Mrs. Mary Kerby once scolded her one cold rainy typical Cascade spring afternoon because she had made more than one trip to the library in order to borrow books from the Church kitchen. Mrs. Kerby was sure Alene would catch a very bad cold, or, worse, pneumonia.

Just how long the Ladies Aid kept that library going could not be determined, nor is it known just why the books were moved from the kitchen of the church, but Mildred Frances told us that in the mid 1940's, Mrs. Titterington kept the books in a downstairs room of the old Odd Fellows building on the corner of Pine and Main streets. Her husband had his undertaker's office there, and she would loan books while she helped him in the office.

Unfortunately, sometime during the 1940's for one reason or another, no organization or persons took the responsibility of maintaining the library. This very likely was due to lack of adequate space to shelve the books. Anyway, the books were taken to the high school library with the understanding that they were a loan, and if and when a city library could be organized, the books would be returned.

About this time, to fill the void left by having no books available for borrowing, a book club was formed. Mrs. Edna Greenlee, wife of the Methodist Minister was largely responsible for organizing the group which called itself the Secundus Club. Members exchanged books, gave book reviews, and the Club subscribed to a Book-of-the-Month Club. Even so it was soon evident that a book club could not take the place of a lending library.

A History of The Cascade Public Library
Compiled by Ida Mae Holm

The library was started by members of the Cascade Civic Club. The earliest record is a portion of the minutes, in the city records, that states ladies from the Civic Club have requested our support each month to help with the library. That meeting record was dated February 3, 1925. The City Council at the time voted to give them five dollars a month.

In 1929 the Civic Club Year Book shows Mrs. WM. "Stella" Coleman as the Library Board Chairman. She is the one Woody Bean and Jack Creason remember as Librarian. There is no record to tell if she was the first one. Jack Creason and Woody Bean said that they used the library in 1932. They said it was in full swing and they used it extensively. They thought that Stella Coleman and Ella Cornwell were co-librarians at the time. No body is sure where it started but in 1932 it was in the Methodist Church. Janice McCann says old church records show it still there in 1938.

In the early 1940's the Methodist Church was sold to the Christian Church and Church Members wanted to establish a kitchen and so the library was moved to the Odd Fellows Hall. Mr. & Mrs. L.L. Tetterington had opened a mortuary in the back of the Hall. The library was put in the front rooms separate from the mortuary. Mrs. Tetterington, a Civic Club member, became the Librarian. When the Tetteringtons moved their business Taylor Bowlden put in a farm and hardware store. At that time I was asked if I would fill in as Librarian. That was the fall of 1945 and the spring of 1946. Taylor closed his store and I found other employment.

Members of the Civic Club decided to move the books to the Cascade School where Dee Gifford became the Librarian. Isabel Bernard told me that she understood it was a temporary move until they could convert the old chief station, or the old fire station, whichever you want to call it into a library. These dates are a little sketchy since the school has no record of it having ever been there. Glenn Redmon told me she has been on the farm for 41 years and the library was in the old fire station before she moved. She helped Dee Gifford and never drove into town to do it. Marie Bell said she came to teach in Cascade in 1949 and the library was not at the school at that time. With this information the date when it was in the school must have been late 1946 and possibly early 1947.

Dee Gifford remained the Librarian until it was taken over by the city. At that time Elsie Scott was hired as the first paid Librarian. There is no record of what happened but city records show no payments to Elsie Scott at that time and payments started for Dee Gifford in Nov. 1955.

During the year of 1959 Elsie Scott was the paid Librarian and city records were not available so it could not be determined which of the ladies were the Librarian during 1960 and 1961.

Meredith Selby told me she had taken over from Dee Gifford in 1962. Meredith was Librarian until March 1979.

The library moved to a temporary location on Main Street "The Robert Remaklus Building" which was located where I.G.A. store parking lot is now, in 1977. The new library was under construction and due to inconsistencies in what was expected and what was there the move into the new building did not take place until Nov. 1978.


Shirley Gibbens became the Assistant Librarian on JANUARY 31, 1977. when
(started as a helper on August 7, 1976)

Shirley
Meredith Selby resigned in March of 1979 Shirley became Head Librarian. Bonnie Martinson become Assistant Librarian in May 1979. When Bonnie and her family moved out of town she was replaced by Shirley Huston on June 24, 1980.

The grand opening for the building was held May 15, 1979. As more and more books were received changes have been made. Both Shirleys are doing a great job in keeping the library in excellent shape. It has grown from a small one room library to a building everyone can be proud of. The Civic Club and the friends of the library are the main supporting organizations today but without the help and support of the entire community it could not have lasted for a recorded sixty-four years. If anyone has anything to add to this history let us know and we will update it.

Ida Mae Holm

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Library's history woven with threads of Cascade

by Rachel Nicholson

The Cascade Public Library has come a long, LONG way.

From its beginning in a Sunday school room, to its World War II near-demise, and finally to its post-war revival and current plans for a new and expanded facility, the library's history is one woven with the threads of Cascade itself.

"It's been real uphill to educate people in this town to the need of a library," Marian Selby, librarian, said recently.

"I feel we are making progress now, especially in view of the fact we're going to get a new building... Getting the building is going to be one great step for the whole community."

As of last year at county fair time, the Cascade Public Library offered 4,650 volumes to its users and boasted a circulation of 1,530 adult books and 2,084 children's books.

The library is open four afternoons and one evening a week and is manned by Selby and Shirley Gibbens, assistant librarian. But it was not always so.

The scant, sometimes broken, written histories of the library show that it first came into existence in the mid-1920s as a special project of Mrs. A.D. Robb, president of the Civic Club. It opened in a classroom of the then-Methodist Church building (now the Cascade Community Christian Church) and was open only on Saturday afternoons.

Stella Coleman served as the first librarian, and she was followed by several other women in the period of time prior to World War II. The library also changed locations during its 15 years,

but the available histories do not record their whereabouts.

During World War II, the library was integrated with the school library and "lost its identity and was used very little to not at all by the general public," one summary of the library states.

In 1954, under the direction of Civic Club President Mrs. Willard Bennett, the library was once again operated apart from the school library. It opened in the office space in the firehouse after an intensive fund-raising drive and renovation with the help of donated labor and materials. Elsie Scott and then Estelle Gifford served as the librarians. The library was open three days a week, for a total of eight hours a week.

Immediately after the library's reactivation, it was governed by a three-person board of directors appointed by the Civic Club. The chairwoman of the first board was Mrs. John McDougal. A two-mill levy was passed to support the library.

In the 1960s, by mandate of state law, a new five-member board of directors was appointed by the city council. Selby was hired in 1962, and the library was located until last fall in a building on Front Street. It is slated to be torn down this month in preparation for the building of the new library-city offices complex.

Selby noted that the library originally contained only 1,550 volumes when it was reactivated.

"It's really taken some selective buying to make sure it didn't get lopsided, and then we've been really fortunate to have donations; it's really helped

out the fiction section especially," she said.

"We haven't come up to the place we can actually say no to people who want to give us books," said Selby. "Because we might come up with some real gems, and we have at times."

The mill levy for the library now stands at 4.5 mills, although the state allows up to five mills to be levied. The library received \$2,565 in the nine-month fiscal year of 1977. Of this, \$1,615 went for salaries and \$950 for the purchase of books. The budget for 1978 is \$5,692.

Selby credits the Idaho State Library with much of the Cascade library's success.

"Keeping alive we have to credit to the state library," she said.

The state library also helped Selby perform her librarian duties, she said. Selby is not a certified librarian, a status which can only be earned with a bachelor of arts degree plus two additional years of library science study.

"The state library people were awful good to keep me informed on lists of books to read to keep abreast of trends. It's been a self-education program for 15 years," she said.

"There's been an awful lot of small libraries here in Idaho started out in that same way," she noted and added that the extensive training required for librarian certification limits a small town's ability to attract a certified librarian.

"Of course, by the time they get all that done, they don't want to come back to a small town like this and work for peanuts," Selby said.

"The city council didn't

support the idea of paying a librarian, even parttime," she said. "In order to keep it from dying, we worked for anything we could get.

"If I didn't like it, I wouldn't be here. The doctor told me to quit five years ago.

"It gets discouraging at times, like anything else. The thing that makes it all worthwhile is if you have an understanding board to work with and interested patrons who come in and use the library and tell us how much they enjoy it."

Selby also credits the Civic Club for its constant support over the years and the McCall Public Library and Cascade School Library, which helped her set up the record and catalog system at Cascade's library.

The second district of the Idaho Federation of Women's Clubs held a book shower for the library, Selby said. And the Southwest Regional Library System "gave us a great deal of support last year," including \$1,000 in furniture and additions to the book volume. Boise Cascade Corporation provided \$500 last year for an encyclopedia set for the library.

Selby said she is "constantly looking toward expansion," both in size and amount of time the library is open to the public.

"We've been criticized for being open so few hours...but that's not our fault; there's no money, she said. "It's up to the city council."

Plans for the new library include groundbreaking May 1 and completion by the first of August. The library will then make its second move in a year, from its temporary housing on Main Street to the new facilities.

Cascade, Idaho Library History

1920's or 1930's Methodist Ladies originated the first attempt at the Methodist Church (now the Community Christian Church)

1940's books were moved by Mrs. Titterington to a downstairs room of the old Odd Fellows building (undertakers office).

Sometime later books were 'loaned' to the H.S. Library. (during WWII)

1952, about, Civic Club sponsored the formation of a city library. Location - the old Chief service station on Main St. Across from the Masonic Hall.

Became a City Library. Fewer than 1000 books out each year.

1962 - 1979 Meredith Selby - librarian

1963 moved to Mill St. (old house to a Boise Payette office to a paint & building supply store with weigh and scales in front of it).

1969 checkout exceeded 1000

1975 & 1976 interviews of "old timers" were taped by library board members.

1977 -1978 Books temporarily moved to vacant building on Main St. While a new city facility which would include a new library building was built on the same site.

(1974 checkout - 1610, 1978 checkout 6213)

From Marie K. Bell

2/3/1925 Civic Club started Lib. Methodist Church - Stella Coleman and Ella Cromwell co-librarians.

Early 1940's moved to Odd Fellows in front of L.L. Tetterington mortuary office. 1945,1946 Ida Mae Holm librarian.

1946 books moved to H.S. Under Dee Gifford

Converted the old chief station/fire station into library.

Nov. 1955 payments started to Dee Gifford as librarian.

Year of 1959, Elsie Scott, paid librarian.

1962 to 1979 Meredith Selby paid librarian.

1977 library moved to a temp. On Main St., The Robert Remaklus Building which was located which became I.G.A. Parking lot.

Jan. 31,1977 Shirley Gibbens became the Assistant Librarian., became Head Librarian, March of 1979. Bonnie Martinson, Assist. Lib in May 1979, replaced by Shirley Huston on June 24, 1980.

Nov. 1978 move to new building.

May 15, 1979 grand opening for the building.

From Ida Mae Holm (This was run in The Advocate 2,22,1989.)

Around 1990 - ad "Holdings over 9000 hardbacks and 600 paperback. Extending hours to 12-6 Mon. - Fri., 10 to 2 on Sat."

About 1977 4,650 books, Marian Selby and Shirley Gibbens

Front St. Building to be torn down in preparation for the building of the new library-city offices complex. From news article quoting Marian Selby.

1991 - 1997 Mary Sides

1997 - 2004 Alyce Kelley

2004 - Robin Mayfield

