



## Friends of the Klamath County Library Quarterly Membership Meeting Minutes

15 March 2023

*via Zoom (due to community room renovations)*

The meeting was called to order by Fran McDermott, Vice President, at 14:00. About 14 guests (including several board members) attended *via Zoom*. Unknown which FOL Board members were present.

Fran noted that today's speaker would be Todd Kepple, director of the Klamath County Museum, on looking at Klamath history with Google maps. She mentioned that we would be summarizing the nominating committee's list of candidates for the Friends of the Library Board at the close of Todd's remarks. Todd had some technology glitches so Fran mentioned a possible presentation for the June meeting by Karl and Ann Wenner on their restoration of Lakeside Farms on upper Klamath Lake.

Todd Kepple began by noting this is a presentation he's wanted to give for some time because technology has progressed so fast and far that the museum can now share many photographs and other items from its collection that it hasn't been able to exhibit to other museums and historical societies or to many people.

Todd opened his presentation with some photographs by Maud Baldwin and others of the Pokegama log chute on the Klamath River just south of the Oregon-California border. He outlined the purpose of the log chute and talked about how it was designed and built. He then switched to Google maps of the same area and one could clearly see evidence of the log slide in the hillside. Interspersing photographs with discussion, Todd indicated where a rail line of about 4 miles had been built from the forests where the logs were harvested to the top of the log slide. The rail cut is also quite evident on the associated Google maps. Other photos of the slide were displayed, giving different views of the grade of the chute, showing the flattening near the bottom as the logs went into the river but not across the river. Todd extended the discussion of how the log chute system worked, talking about the workers ("river pigs") who stayed in the river to move the logs, one log at a time, along toward the mill downstream.

Todd then "transported" the audience downriver *via* Google maps to the sawmill location (below today's Irongate dam) where the logs were processed and the small surrounding community. The mill and town totally burned in about 1902, but on Google maps, one can see where the town was. Current roads in the area show a Mill Street - that was where the mill was. Nothing left of the mill or houses but there's a faint outline of streets in the area.

Another area of Klamath history that shows up on Google maps – old Topsy roads in addition to the familiar Topsy Grade which was constructed in 1890. Todd showed several photos of wagons and carriages on the Topsy Grade – a very precarious passage. Interesting to speculate how vehicles going in opposite directions passed one another on the narrow road. Todd conjectures perhaps uphill traffic went up in the morning when it was cool to aid animals and afternoons were reserved for downhill traffic when it was warmer but animals weren't working as hard. No definitive answer on that.

It turns out that there were at least two other attempts at building roads up the Klamath River Canyon. A local Klamath resident has found evidence of these other attempts – photographs taken by hikers more recently show the building methods on these roads, built in 1870s or 1880s. These roads also show up on Lidar images. Google maps display these roads as well. The image of the Topsy Grade is pretty spectacular showing the huge drop off the canyon wall. The first road built in 1870 was probably too steep so a second attempt was made in 1880s; it too didn't allow the freight wagons and passengers to climb up the canyon. So, in 1890, Robert A. Emmett, using government money, engineered what we know today as the Topsy Grade which at one time was a state highway.

Todd concluded his talk by showing some rock structures east of Klamath Falls that show up on Google maps that probably belonged to first peoples who lived in the basin. Reeds and poles would have been placed in these to build structures for living. These are the oldest structures to show up on Google maps of the basin.

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Fran McDermott noted there would be a recording of the talk available by emailing the Friends gmail box. Elaine Deutschman will send out the recording link.

Fran reminded attendees that we'll be voting on board member candidates in June; nominations from the floor will be accepted at that time and she encouraged anyone who might be interested to think seriously about joining the Friends board as there are currently several vacancies. Currently, the following people are candidates for the Board: Jacek Berka, Gail Brock, Elaine Deutschman, Dorothy Hudson, Judith Izzo, Fran McDermott, Dona Nelson and Betty Shaw.

**MEETING ADJOURNED: 14:50**

Respectfully submitted,  
Elaine Deutschman, Secretary  
Friends of the Klamath County Library