Clearwater Memorial Public Library: A 50-year history begins

This letter to the editor appeared in the Clearwater Tribune, November 4, 2015.

Dear Editor:



This week we embark on a series of articles, stories, anecdotes, and tales, tracing the roots of an institution which had a minuscule beginning well over 50 years ago, thanks to a few determined citizens with a love of reading.

You can imagine, though probably not be able to appreciate, what home life was like in the early post-WWII years, in a small but growing community, before the advent of television, computers, I phones, internet, etc., to not even have a library from which to select a good book to read!

A small semblance of a library had been established in the courthouse in the late 1930's by the American Legion Auxiliary, with a small collection of donated books which were moved several times before landing in the high school library.

It wasn't until the year 1949 that the county established a formal library as a living memorial to the serviceman of Clearwater County. That is when the real work began, and with a small group of volunteers and a fund drive which netted $2500, the Clearwater Memorial Library was born.

In the weeks to come, we hope to trace the roots of the growth of this literary treasure of our community, naming those who had a dream of the future, the desire to see a mission accomplished, and most noteworthy, who passed this dream onto the next generation to keep it going and growing.

You will see family names mentioned from the germination of the tiny seeds of a collection of mostly donated books, men and women who kept on working through decades, to establish those roots and send out many branches to extend learning in Clearwater County.

What we now know as the Clearwater Memorial Public Library (CMPL) began with six hundred donated books, housed in the front half of a storeroom in the IOOF building. Thanks to the dedication of the people whose names many will recognize, the collection of books (plus DVDs, CDs, magazines, audio books and newspapers) now number about 39,000!

The dream is not finished yet, it is just beginning to come into full blossom! With the help and support of so many in our community who realize what a fine place this can become to raise future generations, and who wish to offer the best in education, medical facilities, jobs, and recreation, all located in one of God's most beautiful spots in the country, a plan is being formed to accomplish so much more with CMPL.

Watch this space in the weeks to come, and see how many family names pop up over and over who have kept this dream alive, as we relive and recognize their efforts as we forge ahead to further expansion!

Jo Moore, The High Country Inn

(http://www.clearwatertribune.com/news/letters_to_the_editor/clearwater-memorial-public-library-a–year-history-begins/article_fb90d3a8-8305-11e5-adcc-db0e6aa37ed7.html)