

This History is dedicated to the Secretaries of the McKenzie River Club, whose careful recording of the minutes, over the year, provided the material that made the writing of this history possible.
Ruth West

1941 – 1989

HISTORY OF THE MCKENZIE RIVER CLUB, INC.
By Ruth West

This is a brief history of the McKenzie River Club from the year 1941 to 1989.

Because we have many new members now and many new residents on the river, they may be interested to know how the Club was organized, where our first meetings were held, before we were able to build our Clubhouse.

One of the first community type organizations on the river between Leaburg and McKenzie Bridge was the McKenzie River Grange. They were active for three and one half years.

Meetings were held in Vida in a school gymnasium. It was a large building, separated from the other school buildings. It had a stage, a small kitchen and rest rooms.

When the Vida, Blue River and McKenzie Bridge schools voted to consolidate and have one school at Blue River, the Vida Community asked to have the gymnasium and baseball field left for community use. The building came to be known as the Vida Hall.

At the present time a Fire Station and a Forest Service building occupy the site of the old Vida Hall.

When the Grange disbanded, members of the Grange decided to organize the McKenzie River Active Club. The work "Active" was later dropped when we realized there was a State Organization of Active Clubs.

On November the 4th, 1941, an organization meeting was held in the Vida Hall to organize the McKenzie River Club. The following officers were elected: President, Roy Payne; Vice President, Gordon Goodpasture; Secretary, Ruth West; Treasurer, Vi Thompson. As of November 1, 1989, all the above members are deceased, except Ruth West.

All former Grange members were invited to join the new club and many did as Charter Members. Membership increased rapidly with six to eight couples being voted on at each business meeting. Dues were \$1.00 a year per member.

The McKenzie River Club leased the Vida Hall from the school district. The Club paid for the insurance, electric bill, did maintenance and improvement to the kitchen, and provided wood for the large heaters at each end of the room.

The Vida Hall was used by others in the community for meetings; Church Services and dances. The Home Extension held many meetings there.

During the War years the Club sponsored Red Cross Classes for folding dressings for war use. On February 20, 1943, we bought five twenty-five dollar War Bonds. We all raised Victory Gardens, recycled grease, saved paper, and tried to get along with the many items that were rationed. Money was not very plentiful, because before the war

we had been through a recession. We tried to make our own entertainment here on the river. With gas rationing we could not afford many trips to town. Members of the Club enjoyed dancing and playing cards. Local musicians donated their service many times. Dances were given by the Club for the public. We charged \$1.00 admission and sold refreshments, as one of our money making activities to save money for the Clubhouse we were dreaming of owning some day.

May the 3rd, 1947, the McKenzie River Club was Incorporated as a Non-Profit Social Club.

Trying to find a suitable building site, that we could afford was not easy. In July of 1947, while the members were enjoying a picnic at Paradise Park, Dayton and Vi Thomson offered to give a piece of land on the northeast corner of their land on the North side of the river for a building site for a Clubhouse.

Members hurriedly left the picnic to go to the Thomson property to look at the offered building site. The property was covered with large trees, brush and blackberry vines. It was up a high bank overlooking the beautiful McKenzie River, and it looked like the ideal place for a Clubhouse. The members voted to accept the generous offer of the land from Dayton and Vi Thomson.

Plans were made for clearing the land and building a road up the hill. Some of our members were loggers, heavy equipment workers, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and cement workers. They all volunteered their services to help build a Clubhouse.

The Thomsons also offered to lease their parking lot at the foot of the hill for \$1.00 a year, for parking. There was just room enough for a road in front of the building site. A new road was built over the high bank to the parking lot below.

Most of the men of the Club worked at other jobs, and weekends were the only time they had to work on the building site. The women helped also. An old wood range, with a fly overhead, was set up on one side. The women kept the coffee pot hot and brought food for lunch.

By March 20, 1949, a cement floor was laid and we were ready to start laying the pumice blocks for the walls.

A "Corner Stone Laying Ceremony" was held to observe this big event. It was attended by members and friends. Dayton Thomson read a brief history of the Club; prepared by Ruth West. A copy of the ceremony was put in a bottle and placed under the first pumice block laid on the northwest corner of the building site. Members of the building Committee and all members were thanked for their efforts, that made it possible, to finally be able to start construction.

A copy of the "HISTORY OF THE MCKENZIE RIVER CLUB, INC." that was read at the CORNER STONE LAYING CEREMONY is included at the end of this article.

Members were still busy with many money-making activities to raise money for the Clubhouse. We never borrowed money or had a mortgage on the Clubhouse and we never asked for donations of material from the building material places, but we sure did not hesitate to ask for a discounts.

The Club was well known for the dinners they gave to the public to make money. They were often asked by organizations in Eugene and Springfield to give dinners for them.

Rummage sales and bake sales were always popular. The best money making activity was serving food at noon at the Annual Boat Parade sponsored by the McKenzie River Guides Association. The lunch was served at the John West property, where they had 1200 feet of gravel bar along the river, where the boats could come in from the highway for the lunch. We always had a program with a prominent speaker. Sometimes the McKenzie School Band played. The parade was usually held a week before opening of fishing season. Lunch was served buffet style. The women prepared the food; ham sandwiches, hamburger, hot dogs, baked beans, potato salad, home baked pies and cakes, coffee and soft drinks. The last time lunch was served there, we served 2500 people in an hour and a half.

June 4, 1949, the Club accepted an offer from advertising agency to sell advertising space on the top of card tables. Local business places and in Eugene and Springfield were asked to take a space and advertise their business. The Club received 6 card tables and 24 chairs and \$110.00 in cash for their efforts. The chairs were not very sturdy and did not last long, but some of the card tables may still be in use, with new tops. Members also donated their Gold Bond Stamp books in exchange for card tables.

When the Clubhouse was built, a long flight of steps was built from the back of the Clubhouse to the parking lot below. On meeting nights cars would drive up the hill and let the women out at the door and then drive on down the other side to the parking lot below. The men returned by way of the steps and when ready to leave they went back down the steps to get their cars and drive back up the hill for the women. It is hard for me now, to remember when I thought it was fun to run up and down those steps. I am glad we don't have them now.

Mr. Buzza of the Buzza-Cordoza Card Co. bought land next to the Clubhouse on the north and east. He asked permission to use our road to get to his property, where he built a large house. Permission was given and he donated a strip of land to widen the road. After his home was built, joined the Club and Dayton Thomson and Mr. Buzza worked out a deal to give the Club the land that we now use for a parking lot. You can imagine how happy we were to have the land for parking, even though it did require a lot of hard work to clear the land.

Heating the Clubhouse was one of the first problems we had to consider when construction first started. Chet Peden offered to build the wood heater that is still in use. Other forms of heat were considered over the years, but we were never able to afford electric, oil or gas heat.

The first meeting in the Clubhouse was held October 21, 1950. It was a Halloween party. A business meeting and social evening was held November 18, 1950.

Every summer the men would cut wood to fill up the woodshed as we still continue to do. One year the Dance Club members filled the woodshed for us.

Water coils were put in the heater so we could have hot water for washing dishes. Finally, we were able to afford an electric water heater. Our first stove in the

kitchen was a large wood range, with two electric burners on one end. Eventually we were able to buy a used electric range at a discount.

Also, the question came up about whether or not we were going to have a fireplace. The women were all very anxious to have a fireplace, but the men were not very enthusiastic. I think they were thinking about cutting the wood. The women offered to earn the money for the fireplace if the men would do the work. For a while, we just had a big hold in the wall, but the women got busy making money for the fireplace. Twin Oaks Lumber Co. agreed to sell us a Heatilator on monthly payments. The Heatilator cost \$190.00. The members took up a collection of \$1.00 each to make the down payment. The women sold greeting cards, plants and vegetables and had bake sales and made the payments. Eventually we had a fireplace which is still being enjoyed. While you enjoy the fireplace now, you might pause to give a silent thanks to the members who pursued and persevered to make it possible.

We did not have Rest Rooms inside when we first built. A couple of "Chick Stales" back of the Clubhouse served the purpose. They were well equipped with Montgomery Ward catalogs (for atmosphere). We were all very thankful when the Rest Rooms were built. No more trips outside on a wet, cold winter night. So if we have some plumbing problems now, just remember it could be worse.

Our original water system was from a system owned by Thomson's and came from a spring on the other side of the highway. Dayton gave the Club a water right to take water from his line. This served the purpose of supplying water to the Clubhouse for a number of years, but caused some problems later on. When Mr. And Mrs. Elvon Skeen bought the Thomson property, they had a well drilled near the end of the swinging bridge. The County acquired the land that is used for a boat landing and parking area, and the Club was able to make a deal to use the water if we installed our own pump and had water piped up to the Clubhouse. Mr. And Mrs. Skeen were members of the Club and have been active and helpful members of the Club.

At one time when the members were enthusiastic about dancing, we considered building a small card room on the South side of the building. Plans were drawn and as usual the expense was a problem. The big problem was that we could not build over our septic tank. Now we all seem to be happy to just sit and play cards.

After a few years the Clubhouse needed more work. We put a wood floor over the cement floor. We hired a painter to paint both the outside and inside of the Clubhouse. Since the Club was short on cash, it was decided to cut the large trees around the parking area and dangerous trees around the Clubhouse. We sold the timber to a logger, who hauled them away and paid us cash. Cleaning up the ground was a big job. The men cut up the limbs from the trees and our wood shed was filled with wood. This provided money to do many things to improve the Clubhouse.

When the Clubhouse was first built, a new Masonic Lodge was organized on the river. Many new residents were coming here who had belonged to the Order where they came from. Many of our Club members also joined the new organization. They asked to lease the Clubhouse for their meetings. Permission was given and the White Water Lodge still uses the Clubhouse for their meetings on yearly lease.

The Vida Dance Club, which also had many members from the McKenzie River Club, was given a lease to use our Clubhouse. The McKenzie River Home Extension Study Club uses the building for one meeting a month and the Vida Neighborhood Watch has meetings here.

Over the years the Clubhouse served the members and friends for private parties, weddings and Memorial Services. The Garden Club had Flower Shows occasionally. The McKenzie River Guides Association and the McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce uses the building for occasional meetings.

The Club has been generous in the use of the building, but we are not able to let everyone who asks, use it. We are not a Community Club as some people think, but a private non-profit Social Club. The members have to pay the expenses and maintenance. Users of the building do their own janitor work and make a deposit to cover cleanup, if it is not done satisfactorily, with the rent in advance.

For many years the members enjoyed dancing, both square dancing and ballroom dancing. We bought our own record player and records.

Now the main attraction is Pinochle and Bridge. We still enjoy a potluck dinner on the first Saturday of the month, following a Board Meeting. After dinner a short business meeting is held and card playing follows. On the third Saturday at 7:00 pm a potluck dessert and finger food meal is served and card playing follows. Occasionally we have a special program when members show slides of trips. The meeting dates have remained the same over the years, however dues have raised a little.

The Club has a "Memorial Fund" that members may contribute to in honor of members who have passed away. This fund is used for maintenance to the Clubhouse when repairs are needed.

Another feature of the Club that has lasted over the years is the Birthday donations. When members have a birthday they bring a cake or pie or some useful article. Tickets for a raffle are sold and the lucky winner takes home the prize. This helps pay current expenses.

We still have a cleanup day once a year when members come and donate their services to clean, paint and repair, to prepare the building for another year.

New members who enjoy playing cards are welcome to join the Club. New members were sponsored by a Club member and are voted on at a business meeting.

For over 48 years the members of this organization have been a vital part of the civic life of the community. The building has been used for many special meetings and occasions as well as providing a place for the Club members' social activities.

WRITTEN FOR THE CORNER STOND LAYING CERMONY
For March 20, 1949
By Ruth West

History of the McKenzie River Club, Inc.

The McKenzie River Active Club was organized November 4, 1941, by members of the McKenzie River Grange, for the purpose of having a social organization that would also work for the welfare of the McKenzie River country. Membership was open to anyone, regardless of residence. The By-Laws were written by the following Officers of the Grange: Tom Powers, Weldon Keller, Ulla Bredell, Earl Friedly, Ruth West, Carrie Friendly, Ruby Keller and Frances Rodebaugh. The first Officers, elected November 18, 1941, were Roy Payne, President; Gordon Goodpasture, Vice President; Ruth West, Secretary; and Vi Thomson, Treasurer.

September 22, 1945, members of this Club helped to organize the McKenzie River Protective and Development Association, when it became apparent that an organization was needed to work for Civic matters on the river and especially at the time to oppose the building of a high dam on the main McKenzie River. This Club has always supported this Association on their various projects and has also cooperated in many ways with the McKenzie River Guides Association.

February 1, 1947, the Club decided to build their own Clubhouse. It was also decided to incorporate as a non-profit Organization, and in order to incorporate, it was necessary to change the name of the Club. The name of the McKenzie River Club, Inc. was chosen. The Executive Committee met at the office of Judge Harris, Eugene Attorney, to make arrangements for the Incorporation and new By-Laws. The final By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation were adopted by the Club on May 3, 1947.

In July of 1947 Mr. And Mrs. Dayton Thomson offered to donate a piece of ground for a Clubhouse and the offer was gratefully accepted. They gave the Club a deed for the property, and work of clearing the ground, making a road and grading was started right away, with members donating their labor on Sundays. It was not possible to accomplish much during the Winter, but during the Spring, Summer and Fall of 1948 work continued and by November the concrete foundation and floor were completed. Work started again on March 13, 1949, and on March 20th, the first pumice block for the wall was laid in place, and a Corner Stone Laying Ceremony was held. Dayton Thomson conducted the ceremony of laying the first block.

Members of the Building Committee are Henry Christian, Cecil Beyerlin, Max Crosby, Merrill Warren, John S. West, Vi Thomson, Floyd Tharp and Earl Friedly.

Members of the present Executive Board are: Cecil Beyerlin, President; Carl Friedly, Vice President; Ruth Mills, Secretary; Jean McNulty, Treasurer; and Board Members: N.W. Nielsen; John West; and Roy Payne.

At the December 2, 1989 meeting of the McKenzie River Club, a motion was made to dedicate this book to Ruth West, the oldest Charter Member.