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O ne of Salem Public Library's most valuable collections is the result of a donation of thousands of negatives from the estate of Ben Maxwell, a Salem newspaper photographer who collected his own negatives and prints as well as other photos of local historical interest. The photos were mainly from the 1940s through 1960s, but included others from earlier in Salem's history. The collection was stored at the library for over 20 years. Indexing was minimal and manual access and retrieval was problematic.

Then in late 1980s, as computer databases and digital imaging improved and dropped in cost, the library began to look for software and hardware to catalog the photos and provide improved access to the images. In 1991, thanks to funds from the Salem Public Library Foundation, the library signed a contract with Questor Systems, Inc., of Pasadena, California. Questor's clients at that time were mainly museums throughout the country. Their software, the ARGUS Collection Management System, was used to catalog museum objects and photographs, to digitize images, and provide staff and public access to the images. One of Questor's strongest selling points is its proprietary lexicon, which serves to link related photos via a standardized, yet flexible, list of subject terms.

As part of the Questor contracts, library staff and volunteers were trained to catalog and scan the photos. The system consisted of two workstations located in the Technical Services Division and a public access computer located near the reference desk. The systems were linked via a small local area network. One workstation was DOS-based, equipped with a large hard drive and a color scanner, and used to scan and "tweak" the photos. The other workstation used the UNIX operating system and contained the database and cataloging software.

Much of the work of scanning and cataloging the photos was accomplished by volunteers. Ruby Friesen, retried Salem Public Library assistant director, was invaluable in her research and cataloging efforts. Don Christensen's contribution as resident volunteer computer expert has been tremendous.

The first phase of the project was completely funded by the Library Foundation. Approximately 7,000 prints were scanned and cataloged. The public

Two Salem residents in a two-cylinder Maxwell automobile in 1909.

could search the database using key words from descriptions of the photos. The resulting thumbnail photos and descriptions could be quickly located, the photos enlarged on the screen, and printed on a desktop printer.

The system didn't see as much use as originally anticipated. In an effort to expand access and upgrade the hardware, the library requested and received an LSCA grant in 1993-1994. The grant allowed the library to hire a temporary staff member who worked with Questor to improve the system, scan more photos, and link the system to the Marion County Historical Society and the Oregon State Archives. As a result, the Historical Society and Archives continue to access the photos remotely using computers and modems provided by the grant.

Street scene in Salem on a work day in 1898.

Shaw Tour

historical photographs, and taped interviews with local people: The challenge is to provide access!

During the past year the Shaw has received several donations that lend themselves to illustration. The Collier Collection is a large group of images and papers related to logging. The photographs document a variety of logging and lumbering technologies and show the forests and landscape around Klamath County since the turn of the century. Within the Collier collection are about 100 photographs of Klamath Indians, which also date back to the beginning of this century.

Last fall the library received several dozen books on railroads and a handful of brochures published by railroad companies. This augmented an existing collection on railroads in the West and logging railroads.
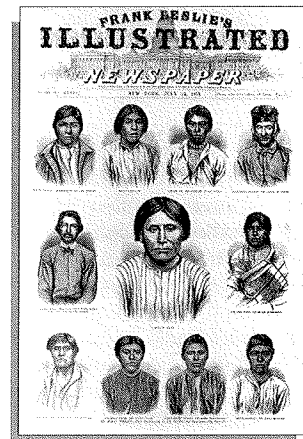
The Shaw library publishes the *Journal of the Shaw Historical Library*, an annual journal with scholarly articles on all aspects of the Land of Lakes. Past articles have included excerpts from journals written by pioneers, soldiers, and early settlers; articles on contact and conflicts between Land of Lakes Indian tribes and early settlers; and articles on other topics such as archaeology, railroads, and water usage. The 1996 *Journal* was devoted to the Applegate Trail, and the 1997 issue will be a celebration of the Oregon Institute of Technology's 50th anniversary. ◘

Front page of Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Weekly* newspaper, New York, July 12, 1973. Portraits of Modoc Indians.

Photograph taken by Maud Baldwin and from the collection of photographs by her. Klamath Indians in a dugout canoe on Upper Klamath Lake, selling baskets to the white people.

Image Database

Both the Archives and the Historical Society provided additional photos for scanning and inclusion in the database. Additional photos were also added from *Statesman-Journal* newspaper files and historical houses photo projects.

Not being content to limit access to in-library patrons, the Archives, and the Historical Society, the library continued to explore ways to improve access to the collection. The development of the Salem Public Library and Marion/Salem Data Center's OPEN internet project created a new avenue to allow access to the images and database. In December 1996, several thousand images and the related descriptions and headings were copied to the data center's internet server. John Mitchell, the OPEN webmaster, was instrumental in converting the images and designing the search engine. The process of converting the images from the Questor System to the internet is ongoing. Volunteers' work, namely Don Christensen's, is cleaning up the images and transferring them to the data center.

At this time, anyone connected to the World Wide Web can link to Salem Public Library's historical photographs web page (www.open.org.library/foto-find.html.), search via key word, and retrieve photos and descriptions from Salem's and Oregon's past. ◘