

Meet C.S. Jackson: Former owner of the East Oregonian and supporter of libraries

By Heather Estrada

For Go! Eastern Oregon

Each year as we begin planning for the new calendar year, the libraries in the Umatilla County Special Library District are gifted a small pot of money to purchase books.

This money comes from a perhaps forgotten, but nonetheless foundational, member of this very newspaper publication — a person who was instrumental in the establishment and longevity of the East Oregonian, C.S. “Sam” Jackson.

Samuel Jackson was born in Virginia in 1860 and came west, landing in Pendleton, in 1880. He worked for the stagecoach and because of his interest in printing, he got a second job at the East Oregonian.

He purchased the newspaper in 1882. At the time it was a weekly paper, but he soon increased it to a bi-weekly paper and then to a daily (minus Sunday), where it continued a successful run up to present day.

Jackson was so successful in making the paper popular and profitable that in

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1902 he was lured to Portland to turn around a fledging newspaper, The Portland Evening Journal, which eventually became the The Journal and continued in print until 1982.

He ran that paper until his death in 1924, when his son Philip took it over and ran it for another 29 years. His work in publishing was so successful that he was able to indulge his desire to give and did so generously. After his wife's death in 1956, a foundation in his name was set up that continues to give money to Oregon causes today.

Jackson donated 88 acres on the top of Marquam Hill in Portland to the University of Oregon Medical School in 1917 which is today the site of the main campus of Oregon Health & Science University.

Jackson Tower in downtown Portland bears his name, and all the Umatilla County libraries benefit on a yearly basis from a fund set up to encourage "...charitable, educational or eleemosynary (charitable) purposes and for the advancement of public welfare."

In other words, the libraries in our county receive funds on an annual basis from a grant in C.S. Jackson's name held by the Umatilla County Historical Society.

This year the library district received just over \$2,500. The money is split evenly among the libraries to purchase books, games, CDs, artwork, and to digitize historical documents.

The only catch: the materials must be "items that are related to the history of Oregon, with particular emphasis on the history of Eastern Oregon and Umatilla County." In this way the funds are used to purchase items that can further residents' knowledge and understanding of the area in which we live.

In the coming months look for new purchases at your local library that bear



Oregon Historical Society/Contributed Photo
C.S. “Sam” Jackson came west in 1880 and purchased the East Oregonian in 1882. Today, his foundation grants money to libraries in Umatilla County to purchase items related to the history of Oregon, with emphasis on Eastern Oregon and Umatilla County.

the name of the foundational member of the EO, C.S. Jackson.

— Heather Estrada is director of the Umatilla County Special Library District.