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**The First 100 Years:  
A Centennial History of  
The Cedar City Public Library:  
By Steven D. Decker  
Last Updated: November 30, 2009**

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Introduction

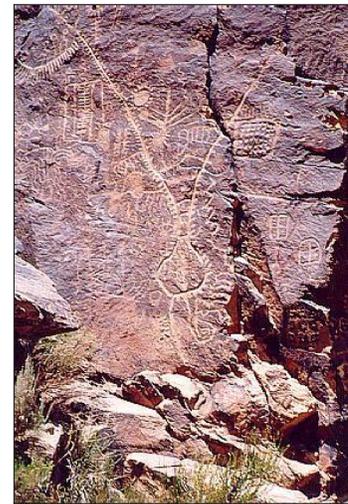
Humans are record keepers. We want others to know where we have been and what we have done. Religious text, historical documentation, even modern jurisprudence is based on what was recorded in the first person, by witnesses, or by historians and scholars. Compilations of records are kept in libraries. Arguably, the petroglyphs at the Parowan Gap represent an ancient Iron County library.

Libraries are a recognized foundation of democratic society. Perhaps Benjamin Franklin foresaw that role when he set into motion the historical roots of the modern public library.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps Thomas Jefferson foresaw it when he donated the collection that became the seed for the Library of Congress – the world’s largest library.

Patrons of modern libraries have access to vast resources through various means of retrieval. Technology changes the manner in which information is stored, retrieved, and used; it does not change the role of the library, to house, or the librarian, to collect and dispense information.

This is the story of the Cedar City Public Library. It is written to celebrate a century of public library service in Cedar City, Utah (1909-2009). Perhaps reflective of the times, it is written and formatted on a personal computer, and published in electronic form.

History, especially local history, is always tricky. No matter what is written, someone will forward the claim that his or her ancestor did it first; his or her family member was robbed of deserved acclaim; his or her forebear has been slighted. Unfortunately, many records are lost or, perhaps, destroyed through one means or another. The best any author of history can strive for is fairness and accuracy.



The Parowan Gap  
Iron County's First Library?  
Photo from: surweb.org

In 1731, Franklin began the Philadelphia Library Company. The cost was supported by its fifty subscribers. By 1790, a 116 volume library was open to all inhabitants of Franklin, Massachusetts but, “though public [in use and concept], it was not supported by public funding”. The first publicly owned library is credited to Peterborough, New Hampshire (Johnson, 6-7).

Beginnings

Cedar City has been progressive in developing and attracting institutions of education, culture, and sport. Yet, as the clock turned to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Library was grinding along in an inadequate building with inadequate funding for either materials or staff. Of the ten municipal libraries in Utah that served communities with populations between 10,000 and 24,999, Cedar City ranked second for open service hours, fourth in population, ninth in total expenditures per capita, and dead last in operating expenditures per capita.<sup>2</sup> The 11,315 square foot library was inadequate in size and lacked the utility necessary to accommodate the technological advancements

When the library opened in 1909, nearly all library materials would have been in print format. By the Library's centennial year the circulating items would be broadened to include a variety of print materials, audio books, music collections, downloadable formats, DVD, MP3, video games, and other "holdings."

since its 1957 opening.

Yet, this story begins much earlier. In 1905, the local weekly newspaper, the *Iron County Record*, hereafter *Record*, called for a library with a collection of materials that was not "trashy and frivolous" but one that would contain "a variety [of subjects] embracing other fields for thought as well as history and church works [presumably The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints], as these seem to have little charm for the class of young people it [the Library] is

expected to reach." The *Record* editorialized that, "If we as a community expect to improve and advance, it must largely be brought about by education, and the public library seems to offer good results in this direction."

Cedar City's previous attempts at a library were characterized as "half-hearted" and "feeble." Early efforts lacked two essential elements: capital and books. Editors of the *Record* went so far as to suggest that a subscription library could be effective in raising the necessary capital.<sup>3</sup> That is, users or "patrons"\* would pay a fee for library use and, thus, raise capital for the Library.

In 1908 a two-mil levy was assessed for a new library and gymnasium.<sup>4</sup> In March, 1909, at the urging of influential educator Howard Driggs, the City Council instructed the Mayor to appoint three additional members to the Free Public Library and Gymnasium Committee.<sup>5</sup> On April 1, Mrs. C. G. (Catherine) Bell, John H. Walker, and Richard Williams were appointed to serve with the existing committee of William R. Palmer, Mrs. Alice L. Knell, and Willard E. Corry (whose wife, Lillian, would become Cedar City's third Library Director and serve from 1931 to 1944).



**Howard R. Driggs**  
Photo courtesy of SUU  
Special Collections

In seeking a suitable site for a library, the committee asked to use a portion of City Hall. One councilman suggested the use of the lower portions of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' Ward building. "After considerable discussion was had" a motion to allow the use of three vacant rooms of City Hall carried,<sup>6</sup> though it is unclear whether the rooms were ever used. In July (1909) two mils were again assessed for the library and gymnasium.<sup>7</sup>

Notwithstanding the tax, Mayor Woodbury won reelection in 1909. Barbara Tweedie, who would become the first City Librarian, lost a bid for Treasurer, and James Tweedie, Barbara's twenty-five-year-old son, lost his bid to become a Director of the Library and Gymnasium Commission.<sup>8</sup>

In December, the City Attorney was instructed to draft an ordinance setting forth the qualifications for the Free Public Library and Gymnasium Committee.<sup>9</sup> The ordinance passed during the same month,<sup>10</sup> and the Library's rules were published.

The Library was open from 3:00 until 9:00 daily (excluding Sunday). It would charge

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\* There has long been debate over just what term to use for library users. "Users" seems distant and, in light of the drug culture, seems inappropriate. Some libraries want to promote a more business-like atmosphere and use terms like client or customer. Many libraries prefer "patrons" believing it gives library users a more austere persona, like patrons of the arts.



William R. Palmer,  
Photo courtesy of SUU  
Special Collections

five-cents each day an item was late. Patron cards were not issued to a child until he or she was “over 8 years of age.”\* The Librarian was given control of circulation periods but no book could be checked out for more than one week. It could be renewed for one-week if nobody was waiting for it. The rules also contained the *hush factor*: “All conversation and other conduct not consistent [sic] with the quiet and orderly use of the library are prohibited and for such conduct a person may be excluded from the use and privileges of the library until satisfactory amends have been made.”<sup>11</sup>

Lillian Corry described this first library as “a room upstairs above the Mercantile Store” (thus the question of whether the city hall rooms were ever used): “This room was 18 feet x 25 feet with two windows, and a hall entrance from the street. The room did not face Main Street but was situated in an office facing west. There were 22 feet of shelving built on the west side, 6 or 8 feet on the south side and magazines and papers were kept on the east side.”<sup>12</sup> The space had been occupied by the Commercial Club, which was now petitioning to use the City Council Room for their meetings without charge.<sup>13</sup>

In his personal history, William R. Palmer places the opening inventory at 250 volumes: 150 ordered by the Library Committee and 100 presented by Howard R. Driggs. Palmer indicated that Andrew Carnegie was involved in Cedar City’s Library as early as 1909. Carnegie, says Palmer, “made a gift to Cedar City, a public library, on condition that the people would maintain it.” Palmer and Mrs. Catherine G. Bell met in Salt Lake City and selected the first furniture for the Over-the-Mercantile Library. (Palmer’s personal history is quick to note that they traveled separately and at their own expense). Barbara Tweedie, the “educated English lady with a wide knowledge of books” was the first Librarian. She was paid \$15 a month.<sup>14</sup>

### Carnegie Library

Evelyn and York Jones refer to March 12, 1912 City Council minutes when the Council opted to request \$15,000 for a library building and guaranteed the Carnegie Corporation \$1,500 annually for the maintenance of the building. A tax was to be levied to raise the \$1,500.<sup>15</sup>

By March of 1913, Librarian Emily C. Watson (Barbara Tweedie having passed away in 1911) announced a series of “entertainments” to be used as fundraisers to catalogue the Library’s collection (estimated at 15 cents per book), and to purchase “picture portfolios . . . stere[o]scopes, views, etc. so that all classes and grades education[a]lly may find something suited to their various tastes and desires. . . .”<sup>16</sup>

Within a month the bids were opened and Watson’s plea for money to catalog the collection probably seemed premature. All of the bids exceeded the architect’s estimate. Further, Carnegie would grant only \$10,000, rather than the \$15,000 requested. In fact, the Carnegie grant would cover only a percentage of the estimated \$12,600 necessary.<sup>17</sup> Jones reports that City Council minutes indicate the lowest bid was \$9,500 exclusive of heating and plumbing – an estimated addition of \$2,600.<sup>18</sup> As if calculated to place matters in national, even world-wide perspective, the *Record’s* April 11, 1913 headline “Library Bids Exceed Estimate” occupied the same page as “The Japs Threaten War Against U. S.”

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\*\* Perhaps the age of eight was influenced by Mormon teachings that at eight years old a child reaches an accountable age. Later the age moved to five years, the age when children usually enter public schools. Currently, any minor can receive a library card with the signature of a responsible adult.

A mass meeting of citizens was quickly convened, and a resolution passed “giving the approval of the public to any action the city council might take to secure the completion of the Carnegie Library according to the original plans and specifications.” An unsuccessful attempt was forwarded during the meeting to limit any tax levy to an amount not exceeding \$2,500.<sup>19</sup> In June, 1913 the *Record* carried an architects rendering of the new building. It would have a 70-foot frontage along Main Street and be 80-feet deep. The new 5,600 square foot facility would be 12 times the size of the over-the-mercantile space. The price, however, had risen to “\$15,000, of which \$10,000 has been donated by the Carnegie Corporation, and \$2,500



Carnegie Library Dedication

will be added [b]y the city council to assist in installing furnishings.” Excavation, it was reported, was to begin within ten days with an estimated completion date of October 15, 1913<sup>20</sup> – just four months hence.

It all came together but not by the warp-speed October 15<sup>th</sup> schedule. Not until January 30, 1914 did the headlines exclaim, “Public Library No Longer a Vagabond, But Comfortably Housed in New Building.” The task of moving from the Mercantile Building was complete and “the present supply of books and furniture seem[ed] entirely inadequate to the apartment.” The building was steam heated, “an ornament to Main street (sic), and a credit to any town.”<sup>21</sup> The Carnegie Building was located near 20 North Main Street.

The article of the Library’s opening was relegated to page 10, the final page of the edition. After so much flurry about getting the Library, once it was up and running, the steam seems to have left the media boiler.

By 1922, Cedar City Library boasted “nearly” 6,000 books, thirty-seven magazine subscriptions, and 1,300 registered borrowers. Still, Librarian Watson expressed concern that materials were insufficient in numbers and in a worn condition.

Amnesty was declared! “Book Home-Coming Week” was announced, during which “house-wives” (apparently this issue was either too important or too mundane to be left to the men folk) were to search for overdue books. Books could be returned to the Library without question or fine. If there were any extra children’s books or works of popular fiction that one would wish to donate, they would be gladly received.<sup>22</sup>

Watson’s call for works of popular fiction brings to bear an age-old conundrum in libraries: Is the role of a library to collect “everything” or only “worthy” materials? Gabriel

Naudé (17<sup>th</sup> Century) forwarded the notion of collecting everything when he wrote, “It may be laid down as a maxim that there is no book whatsoever, be it never so bad or disparaged, but may be in time sought for by someone.” In 1780, Jean-Baptiste Cotton des Houssayes suggested libraries collect only works “of genuine merit and a well approved utility” (Johnson, 4). The argument lives on as collection choices expand into new electronic formats and even new print formats such as graphic novels.

Regardless of philosophy, a-year-and-a-half later, Watson was rallying library support through prose that seems as relevant as when she wrote it:

“The library is the one public institution which has the privilege of serving humanity through periods of life from early children to the day the spirit leaves its earthy home; and being a non-political, non-religious, and non-compulsory institution has possibilities not to be realized by another educational source.

The Public Library is no mean temple of learning, it is an intergral (sic) part of education, as it aids the citizen in obtaining an education as well as furnishing him with information suited to his needed subjects also the progress and improvements of governments along all lines thus making it possible for him to perform more intelligently his duties and obligations as a citizen.

...Our tourist travelers enjoy special privileges when ever desired, patients at the hospital and prisoners are welcome borrowers.”

### County Library

In the article, Watson mentions an interesting point. She notes that the Library’s service reaches “not only our own population and college students but also six of the adjoining [but unidentified] towns in our county, *being as we are a branch of the Iron County Library system* (emphasis added).”<sup>23</sup>

Watson’s reference to a county library system is interesting. The history, thus far, shows all of the actions toward libraries in Cedar City, including the levying of taxes, were the sole project of Cedar City. One may note reports of similarly developing activities for the Parowan Library, but no mention of a county system.

Yet, evidence of a county system still exists in the books themselves. Books still held at the Cedar City Library carry various evolutions of stamps such as “Public Library Cedar City, Utah,” “Carnegie Public Library Cedar City, Utah,” “Cedar City Free Public Library,” or “Cedar City Public Library Cedar City, Utah.” Occasionally, one finds a stamp, as in *The 1949 Banyon*, BYU’s yearbook, that reads “Iron Co. Public Library Dist. No. 2.” Further, five years after Watson’s “County system” statement, the *Record* carried “The yearly report of 1927 of the County Library of the Cedar City distributing headquarters...”<sup>24</sup>

So, what happened? Cedar City levied taxes for a new library as early as 1908. A jump ahead to 1949 shows the City was again levying a tax for library service. Today there is no City library tax but there is a small County library tax. City Council minutes from August 2000 indicate that Mayor Harold Shirley thought that “a county library system was needed 30 years ago.” In response, Library Director Steven Decker indicated “that the Library Board [had] brought this subject up to the County before, and they [the Library Board] were not encouraged to pursue it.”<sup>25</sup>

This matter of a county library becomes especially intriguing when one reads that in 1957, about the time the Memorial Library was completed at 136 West Center Street, Harry

Leigh was denied use of the “driveway” on library property because of the joint city/county ownership,<sup>26</sup> but there is no evidence of county ownership. True, the county did pay for a generous portion of the land and building but no title was transferred. In fact, a title search of the Memorial Library property (Lot 1, Block 35) provides the following sequence of transfer:

1. June 25, 1855: Surveyors Certificate from William H. Dame, Surveyor, to John Smith.
2. August 19, 1871: Quit Claim Deed from John Smith to William C. Stewart.
3. August 24, 1874: Mayor’s Warranty Deed from Francis Webster, Mayor, to William C. Stewart.
4. September 1874: Gift Warranty Deed from William C. Stewart to Mary Ann Stewart.
5. September 18, 1907: Decree of Distribution from Mary Ann Stewart, deceased, to Adelia Murie, Sarah Thorley, and Maggie Bennett (Mary Ann’s three living children).
6. May 23, 1916: Warranty deed from Sarah Thorley, members of the Murie family, and Maggie Bennett (now married to a Cunningham), to Adelia Murie.
7. March 13, 1928: Warranty Deed from Adelia Murie to American Legion Post 74.
8. June 30, 1947: Warranty Deed from American Legion Post 74 to Cedar City.
9. February 13, 2004: Warranty Deed from Cedar City to Leavitt Group Enterprises, Inc.<sup>27</sup>

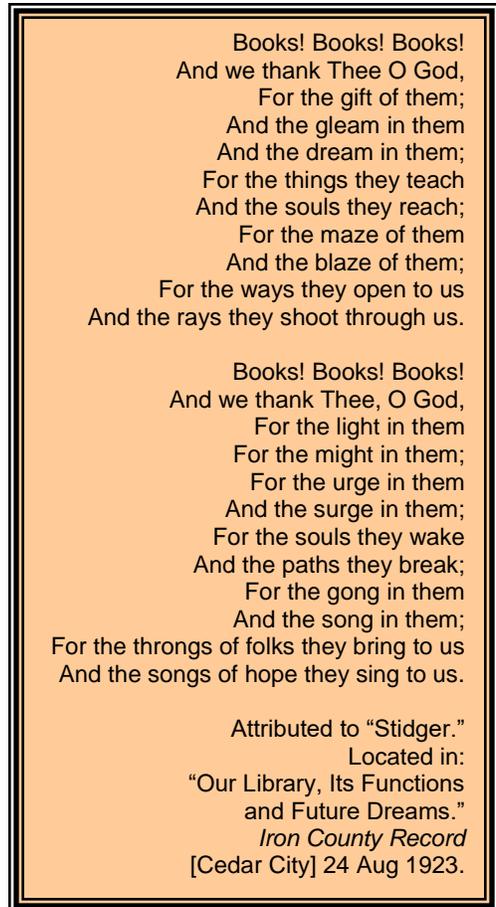
So, what of this question of an Iron County Library? Iron County Commission minutes in August 1919 show, for the first time, a .3 mil library-specific levy. The County Commissioners scheduled a meeting for the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> of September 1919 (the typed minutes indicate the 8<sup>th</sup>, but they are penciled over to indicate the 7<sup>th</sup>), to discuss the “matter of a county Library.” The local Parowan and Cedar City boards were to be notified and their presence was requested. By June 1920, the County Clerk was instructed to notify “Parowan, Cedar City, and Paragoonah\* of available taxes collected for library purposes and for them to submit their demands to the Library Board of the County.”

In March 1921, a County Library Board was appointed consisting of “Geo. B. Williams, J. Clayton Mitchell, H. Claude Lewis, Wm. F. Barton, and R. C. Knell.” The mil levy decreased to .2 in 1921.

Fifteen months thereafter, F. C. VanBuren, Mrs. R. J. Williams Jr., Myron D. Higbee, and Susie Hulet were appointed “as members of” the County Library Board. A separate levy is noted for Cedar City and for Parowan in 1922 (both set at 1.5 mils). The split in taxing entities seems to correspond with Watson’s August 1923 article describing a county system and certainly precedes, and helps defend, statements about “Iron Co Public Library Dist. No. 2” and “the County Library of Cedar City distributing headquarters.”

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\* Note the traditional spelling.



Finally, in August 1922, “Geo. Berry Williams, H. L. Adams, Myron D. Higbee” (all county commissioners), along with F. C. VanBuren (Parowan City Mayor), and County Clerk John W. Bentley were named “as the County Library Board.”<sup>28</sup> The language of the last appointment seems to suggest that all others were released from their service and the County was taking over.

Indeed, something must have begun to happen. By June 1923, there is record of books being purchased for the County Library; August County Commission minutes indicate the setting of the 1923 mil levy, 1.5 mils for Cedar City and 2.5 mils for Parowan; \$100 was appropriated to Mayhew Dalley noted only as “appropriations to Library,” (Dalley was the Cedar City Recorder); the plural “Books for Libraries” was used noting a \$71.26 disbursement in September. One disbursement was as little as 81 cents. August 1924 minutes indicate that 2 mils were levied on Cedar City for library service but, this year, no levy is recorded for Parowan.

There is a rare copy of the minutes of the Iron County Library Board for September 10, 1923 – perhaps the only extant copy of such minutes. Those present included all who were appointed in August 1922, except there is no mention of Van Buren either as present or excused. The entire minute entry is: “Meeting of the Iron County Library Board. County Library Board met in regular Session September 10, 1923. Present, Myron D. Higbee, Geo. B. Williams, H. L. Adams, and John W. Bentley. The matter of payment of bills for books purchased by the Libraries [plural] of the County, were order[e]d paid as soon as possible, amounting to \$\_\_\_\_[no amount was identified].”

Disbursements were sporadic. The only book vendor noted in the early days of County Library disbursements was Deseret Book. Disbursements were made to Mayhew Dalley, Cedar City Recorder (as mentioned), \$100 to the Parowan Library, and \$100 to Mrs. J. W. Bergstrom (a member of the Cedar City Library Board). Disbursements to individuals were noted as appropriation for books but no detailed information was given as to whether it was reimbursement for monies spent or delivery of monies to be spent. No disbursements were recorded in the eight months between May 1924 and January 1925, when a new Board was formed including J. Clayton Mitchell, Walter K. Granger, Superintendent of Schools N. J. Barlow, County Commissioner Lyman E. Sevy (who had defeated Commissioner Higbee), and Kate Taylor.<sup>29</sup>

Whatever the evolution, the county continues to fund a small portion of operation and maintenance for the Cedar City and Parowan Libraries, as well as provide cooperative funding with the State of Utah for bookmobile service.

### Memorial Library

By the spring of 1943, Mayor Henry H. Lunt was informing the Council of the possibility that the twenty-nine year old Carnegie building could be condemned. Within months the Council was discussing plans for a new library on the American Legion property at the north-west corner of Center Street and 100 West.<sup>30</sup>

In 1947, amid the events commemorating the centennial of the Mormon Pioneers’ entering the Salt Lake Valley, property was purchased for what would become the Memorial Library. The furniture and collection that were so “inadequate to the apartment” (or unable to fill the spaciousness of the Carnegie building) in 1914 were now insufficient. The Carnegie building had been condemned and property at the corner of 100 West and Center Street (Lot 1, Block 35, Plat B) was purchased from the American Legion for \$15,000. There is lore that the

American Legion donated the property to the City, but evidence does not support that claim. However, proceeds of the sale were dedicated to the construction of new equestrian racetrack,<sup>31</sup> a project upon which construction had begun a few weeks earlier,<sup>32</sup> so the transaction might have been considered a trade of sorts.

The deed was signed June 30, 1947 by Commander J. Frank Dalley of the Cedar City Post of the American Legion and attested by Orville Isom, Adjutant. It references an agreement dated May 31, 1947, that granted a meeting room and memorial hall “to the Veterans of Cedar City, Utah.”<sup>33</sup> A similar agreement governing the Library in the Park was reached in 2003. This new agreement allows the “American Legion, or similar veterans groups, free meeting space...[and] a memorial to war veterans in the new library.”<sup>34</sup>

The process for the Memorial Library did not move quickly. Two years after the purchase of the 100 West and Center Street property, the *Iron County Record* ran the headline: “New Public Library Doubtful.” The article explained how the Carnegie building had been sold to the Elks Club for \$35,000 and the “Tourist Park” property had been sold to Premium Oil for the same price. (The property sold to Premium Oil would be bought back for the Library in the Park in 2002 for over \$250,000). The money from the two sales was marked for a new library honoring veterans. Assurance was given the day prior to the November 1949 election – the \$70,000 was appropriately earmarked for the new library. However, budgetary overruns in other departments (particularly the water and fire departments<sup>35</sup>) siphoned off, at least, the money from the sale of the park.<sup>36</sup> It placed the city in a problematic position at best because, five months earlier, L. Robert Gardner, the project’s architect, had received instructions to proceed immediately.<sup>37</sup>



Cedar City Memorial Library



Photo property of Cedar City Public Library

Inside the Memorial Library (Northwest Corner)

The sale of the property to Premium Oil and the Elks Club was not an overwhelming favorite of the serving City Council. Council minutes reflect that Frank Milne made the motion “That the city take action to let bids for the sale of the [Carnegie] Library Building and property used by Premium Oil Co. That the money from the sale of the property be earmarked for a Library Building.” Kumen Gardner and Mayor Gronway Parry joined Milne. The motion was opposed by M. C. Roberts and H. E. Christensen. Myles Walker abstained. Three for, two against, one abstention<sup>38</sup> – even with the Mayor’s vote, the

victory was hardly resounding.

Two months later, by a 3-to-2 vote, Gardner was instructed to proceed with the design of a library that would not exceed \$70,000. Negotiation took place to retain use of the Carnegie building for 18 months.<sup>39</sup> Soon after, a library levy of 1.7 mils was assessed to real and personal property within Cedar City.<sup>40</sup>

So, what does one do when the architect is working, the current library building is condemned<sup>41</sup> and the property is sold, and at least half of the money for the project is spent on other things? In November 1949 the *Record* reported that the City Council had resolved to bond for the needed funds, but no timing or definite amount of bonding was established. A limit of \$110,000 was set for the new library project making it necessary to bond for \$75,000 (with the \$35,000 from the sale of the Carnegie Library property).<sup>42</sup> By June 1950, federal funds amounting to \$4,400 had been approved for Cedar City and were to be used in preparing plans for a new library building. The Library was to be closed on June 5 to facilitate the re-cataloging of books with the promise that the children's department would reopen two weeks later.<sup>43</sup> During the same month, L. Robert Gardner presented plans for a building upon which additions could be attached to accommodate an art gallery or a display of pioneer relics.<sup>44</sup>

Two years after Gardner's instructions to draw plans not to exceed \$70,000 the Library was still unbuilt and the architect reported to the City Council that the estimated cost could reach \$120,000, of which only \$35,000 was available. Gardner also suggested that because of the restrictions and shortage of steel at the time (1951) the cost could be expected to rise. The issue went back to the Library Board with instructions to investigate the possibility of "outside help" and report back.<sup>45</sup>

July 1951 found the city council considering the possibility of renting the Carnegie building previously sold to the Elks Club, or extending the lease, or buying the previously condemned building back. The City Manager was instructed by a two-to-one vote to enter negotiations with the Elks Club.<sup>46</sup> During December, J. L. Fakler, M. F. Grames, and H. E. Christensen voted to accept the conditions of the Elks Club and repurchase the building for the amount paid to the Elks, plus the amount of the effected repairs, plus 2% interest on the down payment (or \$6,967.69 plus appropriate interest). Council Members Frank Milne and Gail Seegmiller opposed the deal.<sup>47</sup>

In 1954, Mayor Arnold Anderson advised the Cedar City Council that the joint City/County Library Board had asked Iron County to levy a one mil tax to support libraries. Two-tenths of the mil was to be split between the two libraries in the county for operating expenses. Cedar City was to receive two-thirds of the distribution and Parowan was to receive one-third. The other eight-tenths of one mil went to fund buildings.<sup>48</sup>

In December 1955, bids were accepted – six-and-a-half years after the *Record* reported that Gardner had been commissioned to design the Library. The six bids ranged from \$164,600 to \$176,400. Robert Weyher Construction was the low bidder (235% over the original not-to-exceed limit) and was awarded the contract. After years of financial wrangling, Iron County would pay 70% of the expense for the new Memorial Library and land, and Cedar City was to pay 30%.<sup>49</sup> Furniture bids for the Memorial Library, three in total, ranged from \$5,969.00 to \$7,281.80.<sup>50</sup> Probably in answer to the request to have glass-fronted cabinetry in the Rare Book Room, the Woman's Reading Club offered to pay for the furnishings of the Rare Book Room. The offer was accepted.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, on April 4, 1957, Gardner offered the City a Certificate of Completion. Data

from the 2000 Decennial Census indicated that, at the turn of the millennium, only one of four current city residents was of an age to remember any other building being used as a public library. Dedication services were scheduled for Sunday, May 12, but because of the Quarterly Conference of the Cedar Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the dedication was moved to the 11<sup>th</sup>.

On April 1, 1965, Mayor Kumen S. Gardner requested the City Council to consider selling the Carnegie building. Apparently the city had already been in negotiation because the Mayor noted that the city “has a sale.” In a later meeting, Councilman Frank Petty moved to take the steps necessary to receive bids on the property, then resigned to accept an appointment as Post Master. Only one bid was received. It was accepted August 18, 1966, and came from State Bank of Southern Utah. It was for \$35,000 – the same price being negotiated with the Elks Club seventeen years earlier.

By mid-1969, Mayor Loren A. Whetten reported to the City Council that State Bank of Southern Utah had issued the City a Notice to Vacate.<sup>52</sup> Whetten not only served as Cedar City’s Mayor but he served on the Board of Directors of the bank – an interesting position in which to be. Nevertheless, State Bank was ready for the property and wanted the City out.

Fund raising was a continual battle. In 1966, Elloyd Marchant, Chairman of the Library Development Foundation, announced that April was a record setting month. During the month the Library garnered donations of \$1,461 – more than the total donations of 1965. In addition to cash, the Library received books, pamphlets, periodicals, and 23 rare opera scores. Marchant cited the reason for the donations as being an increased awareness of the public’s need for new books and books related to technical fields being promoted by the College of Southern Utah.<sup>53</sup>

#### Library in the Park

By the mid-1990s, work had begun in earnest to locate and design a new library. All of the arguments of the past presented themselves anew. The Memorial Library had become antiquated and lost its utility. Gardner Partnership Architects (GPA), descendants of L. Robert Gardner, the architect of the Memorial Library, completed a feasibility study in August 1997. Of the three options considered by GPA, two deserved serious consideration: (1) Renovation of the



Architects Rendering  
Cedar City Library in the Park

existing Memorial Library with an addition nearly equaling the existing building (something for which L. Robert Gardner was farsighted enough to design decades earlier), and (2) demolition of the current building and the erection of another library on the site of the Memorial Library. Estimated costs were essentially equal: \$2,940,635 for Option 1 and \$3,098,800 for Option 2. The third, and most expensive option, considered the purchase, ironically, of the Elks property located on the corner of 100 East and 200 North. The plan review committee considered the alternatives and elected to promote a building at the site of the Memorial Library (136 West Center Street).

Funding was to be raised equally from bonding and private or governmental sources.<sup>54</sup>

The Library Board huddled regularly to strategize and review options. Operational monies were squirreled away to help pay for this or that. Director Steven Decker reported to the City Council that prior directors had even refused to turn on lights during daylight hours to save money.<sup>55</sup> The Fire Chief inspected the building and estimated \$11,215 was needed just to bring the building up to fire code. The money was approved by the City Council from the executive discretion fund.<sup>56</sup>

Small fundraisers were held. Architectural firms offered jots and tittles of free advice, in hopes of being selected if the project were to advance. Though some expertise was solicited and received from Cedar City, much of the planning looked to non-City sources for information. At the time, the Library was not a department of the City. By August 2000, Decker was before the City Council suggesting “closer ties with the city and library” and again the concept of a county library system reared its head. Representatives were to meet with the County Commissioners.<sup>57</sup>

At the time, the Library operated from separate, monthly lump-sum remunerations from Cedar City that included county monies raised through tax levy. The Library Board acted as the primary governing body for the Library. Based on the City’s remuneration, the Library Board established and administered its own budget, accounted for appropriate employment taxes and retirement contributions, deposited receipts into its own account – all issues for which the City received audit criticism, but it was legal and allowable by state law.

This practice was soon to change. So was the Library’s look and location. A bond issue for a new library passed in the general election of 2001. The struggle was not as difficult as some of those in the past; neither was it without certain bumps in the road.

Bonding was discussed, but first application was prepared and submitted to the Permanent Community Impact Board.<sup>58</sup> A survey of residents was completed by honors program students from Southern Utah University. The survey indicated that two-thirds of residents indicated they would “probably vote for a General Obligation Bond to finance a new facility.”<sup>59</sup>

The City Council approved the bonding process on June 13, 2001. The bond would not exceed \$6 million nor would it exceed a 25 year repayment schedule. The euphoria of getting permission to pursue a bond was relatively short-lived. As Library representatives left the city council meeting, the “off-the-record” comments suggested that the City Council had approved the bonding procedure, the rest was up to the Board – the City was going to remain hands off. The minutes put it more gently: “The Library Board will be responsible for educating the public and getting input in the planning process for the facility.”<sup>60</sup>



Entrance to the Cedar City Library in the Park



Programming has become an important part of the library's mission. This picture was taken during the library's "book burning" held as part of *The Big Read* prompted study of *Fahrenheit 451*

The options of the 1997 feasibility study were not the only ones to be reviewed. Some within the city continually looked to other alternatives – a former government building here, a vacant commercial building there. The Elks Lodge property repeatedly resurfaced as an option, though whether the Elks Club ever knew that it was on the table is unconfirmed. While location and access were questionable for most sites, all of the already-built properties had the same fault – they were built to commercial standards, not the increased structural load necessary for a library.<sup>61</sup>

Other bumps were generated in the press. In something of a backdoor endorsement, *The Spectrum/Daily News* complimented the two 2001 Cedar City mayoral candidates (Gerald Sherratt and Evan Vickers) for pledging to step “up to the plate and promising to take control should the voters approve a proposed \$6 million bond issue for a new library.” The paper described the Memorial Library as “a shambles...old and small” with a “woefully out of date” collection, yet with a staff that did “a marvelous job of keeping the old facility afloat and working magic by stretching its annual budget....” With one voice, they noted their opinion that taxpayer concern was well founded because the Library Board was still collecting public input to design a building for a yet undetermined

location, and that \$6 million was “a lot of money to hand over in good faith.” With another voice, editors tried to belay those concerns stating that, “with Sherratt and Vickers willing to take responsibility for the project...we can breathe a little easier.”

Less than a week later, *The Spectrum/Daily News*' support seemed a bit more solid. It carried an article outlining the foreseen services of the new library and an opinion piece suggesting that citizens should vote for the issuance of bonds.<sup>62</sup>

The *Salt Lake Tribune* ran an article on Tuesday, October 20, 2001 suggesting that the bond would meet with difficulty for two reasons: (1) a \$16 million downtown revitalization project (a project that generated much controversy), and (2) the belief among some residents that the new Sherratt Library at Southern Utah University was sufficient. Decker tried to assuage both concerns by explaining the illegality of diverting funds to pay for other projects (a fear expressed by some in light of the downtown project), and explaining the differing roles between a public library and an academic library.<sup>63</sup>

The *Tribune* was wrong. The November 6, 2001 bonding issue carried in every voting district and garnered nearly 72% of the total vote. Former Southern Utah University President Gerald R. Sherratt was elected with over two-thirds of the popular vote and Joe Burgess and Raymond A. Green were elected to City Council Seats.<sup>64</sup> One *Spectrum* newspaper representative telephoned Director Decker who was at the Memorial Library with a group of well-wishers with the comment, “Well, you got your damn library!”

Supporters whose names appear in City Council Minutes include: Lori Nickerson, Suzanne Julian, Shelly Goodwin, Penny Brown, and Douglas Bonzo (all of whom served as Library Board Chair during their stint on the Board), Pam Crowther (Library Board Member),

and City Council representatives to the Library Board Kip Hansen, Dale Brinkerhoff, and Joe Burgess. Cedar City's Board Chairs, including Nickerson's predecessor Sue Harris and Library Director Steve Decker, were honored for their efforts by receiving the Utah Library Association's 2004 Special Services to Libraries Award.

The open forum design process, espoused by architects from GouldEvans Affiliates and supported by the Library Board, petitioned and accepted input from the public through a series of public meetings. The local firm, Blackburn Associates, was selected as construction manager.

Property earlier sold to Premium Oil for \$35,000 in the 1940's, was repurchased for \$251,480 in 2002.<sup>65</sup> Some funding was received from the Permanent Community Impact Board and that funding was estimated to generate "a significant savings of \$800,000 with an interest rate of 2.5%."<sup>66</sup> The city sold the Memorial Library property in 2004 for \$477,656.02.<sup>67</sup>

Progress had been made; hoops had been cleared. The ground breaking ceremony for the new Cedar City Library in the Park was held at 4:00 p.m., September 18, 2002, with Board Chair Penny Brown, Director Decker, and Mayor Gerald Sherratt offering remarks. The dedication was held one year and two hours later, with Board Chair Douglas Bonzo, Decker, Sherratt, representatives of the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, GouldEvans, and Blackburn Associates participating.

The first library held 250 volumes in a 450 square foot room. As of June 30, 2009 the current facility housed 76,686 volumes in a 26,000 square foot facility. The Library in the Park circulated 362,472 items (288,297 print or recorded items and 74,175 computer uses) during its most recently completed year (Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2009), and boasted 25,026 registered borrowers, 209,897 visits by patrons, 600 programs with 5,764 attendees, dozens of serial subscriptions, and an ever increasing access to online resources. Its FY 2009 budget exceeded \$500,000. Library hours, at the time of this writing, are 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday (66 hours each week).

## Librarians

No history of the Cedar City Libraries can be complete without mentioning those Directors who helped make it a success, and the countless Board members, elected officials, staff, and volunteers who have built and reinforced the bulwark of the Library. The following information about Library Directors was extrapolated from Library Board minutes, payroll records, and histories (held at the Library), in addition to the documented sources.



**Barbara Sarah Ingram Tweedie, 1857-1911**  
**Librarian, 1909 - 1911**

Barbara Sarah Ingram was born in Reading, England. She married Richard Tweedie of Alnwick, England. They immigrated to Kansas. She lived for a time in Summit, Utah then moved to Cedar City. She was LDS Stake Librarian. Tweedie was eulogized as a true friend to children and as one who was loved and esteemed by adults.<sup>68</sup>



**Emily Adeline Crane Watson, 1855-1933**  
**Librarian, 1911 - 1931**

Emily Adeline Crane was born in Bolnhurst, Bedfordshire, England. She came to the United States in 1868 and married Lorenzo Dow Watson in 1879. She taught school in Kanosh and Fillmore, served as the Parowan City Recorder for two years, and the Iron County Recorder from 1900-1906. After moving to Cedar City in 1907, she served as Librarian for two decades, 1911-1931.<sup>69</sup> (Photo: Supplied by Territorial Statehouse State Park).



**Lillian Bunker Corry, 1885 – 1965**  
**Librarian, 1931 – 1944**

Lillian Bunker was born in Bunkerville, Nevada. She married Willard Ernest Corry. After serving as the City Librarian for 13 years, she moved to Springville, Utah where she engaged in a “merchandising business in a small shop for children’s clothing.” She then moved back to Cedar City, and then to Arizona.<sup>70</sup> She was an avid oil painter and an optimist. “The world is full of opportunities for anyone at any age!” she said.<sup>71</sup>

**Myrtle Jansen**, a Library Board Member, was appointed to take interim charge of the Library from November 1944 to early April 1945.



**Margaret Elizabeth Parry Mackelprang Urie, 1885 – 1965**  
**Librarian, 1945 - 1953**

The first Cedar City born Librarian, Margaret reportedly struggled with a “long illness” before she passed away and was eulogized by her successor at the Library, Elene Jenson. She married George Kenneth Urie in 1907.<sup>72</sup> She was an avid historian, authoring many of the local histories currently held at the Cedar City Library. (Photo: Courtesy, SUU Special Collections).



**Julia Elene Smith Jenson**

**1904 – 2005**

**Librarian, 1954 – 1973**

Julia Elene Smith was born in Salt Lake City. She grew up in Kane County (Glendale). Elene attended college in Cedar City where she met Heber C. Kimball Jenson. They were married in 1923. She is eulogized as a patriotic citizen who never failed to vote and as one who was happy in the service of others.



**Lillian H. Bulloch**

**Librarian, 1974 – 1985**

Lillian Hansen came to Cedar City in 1941 to attend B.A.C. (now SUU), where she met and married Cedar McRae Bulloch, a native of Cedar City. An avid oil painter, Lillian also has a great love for books, learning, and reading. She became Children's Librarian in 1972 and Library Director in 1974. In her own words, "I love books. That coupled with a great Library staff and the choice people who served on the Library Board made my experience as librarian a very enjoyable time in my life."



**Afton Stokes LeFevre**

**Librarian, 1985 – 1998**

Afton Stokes LeFevre became Library Director of the Cedar City Public Library in the fall of 1985. She implemented the first computerized circulation system at the Library. She was one of the pivotal players in a pilot study launched by the Utah State Library Division (USL) to bring the Internet to rural libraries. She also obtained grant monies to purchase new shelving and books to develop a Young Adult section of the Library and acquired books-on-tape and videos for circulation. Trained as a teacher, she earned her Librarian certification through UPLIFT (Utah Public Library Training Institute), sponsored by USL and held at the University of Utah. (Photo: Karl Hugh/Studio West).



**Sherry Lynn Jenkins Bohman**

**Librarian, 1998**

Sherry Lynn Jenkins was born in Idaho Falls, Id. She married R. Arthur Bohman and moved to Cedar City, where Art had secured a teaching position, in 1964. She has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and Language Arts from College of Southern Utah (now SUU). Prior to coming to the Library, Sherry was a teacher's aide and substitute teacher for Iron County School District. She has worked at the Library since 1985. Sherry is currently the Assistant Director/Director of Technical Services. She served as Interim Director during much of 1998 while the Library Board searched for a permanent Director. (Photo: Art Bohman)



**Steven Dalton Decker**

**Librarian, 1998 –**

Prior to being named Cedar City Library Director, Steve served as a City Recorder, a Librarian, a City Council member and Mayor, and Branch Manager/Assistant Vice President of a bank. He received his bachelor's degree from Southern Utah State College (now SUU), and his Master of Library Science degree from Emporia State University, Kansas. He was honored by the Utah Library Association in 2004, along with the Library Board Chairs, for his efforts in obtaining a new library for Cedar City; in 2005 by the American Library Association for library advocacy; and in 2007 as Utah's Librarian of the Year. He is currently serving as the Past-president of the Utah Library Association. (Photo: Art Bohman).

## Notes:

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- <sup>1</sup> Johnson, Peggy. *Fundamentals of Collection Development & Management*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2004. 6-7. Print.
  - <sup>2</sup> Utah State Library Division, Department of Community and Economic Development, *Utah Public Library Service 1999*.
  - <sup>3</sup> "Free Public Library." Iron County Record [Cedar City, UT] 24 Nov 1905.
  - <sup>4</sup> Woodbury, J. S., Mayor. "That 19 1-2 Mills Tax." Iron County Record [Cedar City, UT] 18 Sep 1908: 1.
  - <sup>5</sup> Cedar City Minutes, March 4, 1909.
  - <sup>6</sup> Cedar City Minutes, April 8, 1909.
  - <sup>7</sup> Cedar City Minutes, July 13, 1909.
  - <sup>8</sup> "Results of the Election in Cedar City Last Tuesday. Republicans Capture Everything in Sight. ---Woodbury Succeeds Himself." Iron County Record [Cedar City, UT] 5 Nov 1909.
  - <sup>9</sup> Cedar City Minutes, December 2, 1909.
  - <sup>10</sup> Cedar City Minutes, December 31, 1909.
  - <sup>11</sup> "Rules: Governing the Cedar City Free Public Library." Iron County Record [Cedar City, UT] 31 Dec 1909.
  - <sup>12</sup> Corry, Lillian B. History of the Carnegie public library. 1935, p. 1.
  - <sup>13</sup> "Public library opens." Iron County record [Cedar City] 24 Dec 1909 and Cedar City Minutes, January 26, 1910.
  - <sup>14</sup> *Personal History of William R. Palmer* in the possession of Boyd Snow, pp. 115–116.
  - <sup>15</sup> Jones, Evelyn K., and York F. Jones. Mayors of Cedar City. Cedar City, UT: Southern Utah State College, 1986, p. 190.
  - <sup>16</sup> Watson, Mrs. E. C. "Library notes by Mrs. E. C. Watson Librarian." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 28 Mar 1913.
  - <sup>17</sup> "Library bids exceed estimate." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 11 Apr 1913.
  - <sup>18</sup> Op Cit, Jones, pp. 193-194.
  - <sup>19</sup> "Citizens endorse tax levy." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 25 Apr 1913.
  - <sup>20</sup> "Cedar City Carnegie library." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 13 Jun 1913.
  - <sup>21</sup> "Flits to splendid permanent home: Public library no longer vagabond, but comfortably housed in new building." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 30 Jan 1914.
  - <sup>22</sup> "Our Carnegie Public Library." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 10 Feb 1922: 1.
  - <sup>23</sup> "Our library, its functions and future dreams." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 24 Aug 1923.
  - <sup>24</sup> "Report of Iron County Library District No. 2." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 27 Jan 1928.
  - <sup>25</sup> City Council Minutes, August 23, 2000.
  - <sup>26</sup> City Council Minutes, April 4, 1957.
  - <sup>27</sup> Iron County, Utah. Records Office. Abstract of title: Town lots 1 (pp. 104-105, 198) and Abstract of title: Town lots 2 (n.p.), Iron County, UT., and electronic access to Book 919, Page 1386, Entry 479392.
  - <sup>28</sup> Iron County Commission. Commissioners minute book No. 3, June 1913 to January 1923. Parowan, UT, pp. 125, 162, 184, 211, 228, 271, & 280-281.
  - <sup>29</sup> Iron County Commission. Commissioners minute book #4, from February 1923 to November 1928. Parowan, UT, pp. 18, 20, 24, 24, 28, 37, 48, 55, 69, 80, & 90.
  - <sup>30</sup> Op Cit., Jones, pp. 316 & 319.
  - <sup>31</sup> "New library site purchased, plans to be prepared." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 22 May 1947.
  - <sup>32</sup> "Civic leaders pledge support to veterans on race track project." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 01 May 1947.
  - <sup>33</sup> Iron County, Utah. County Recorder. Warranty Deed #81062. Parowan, UT: 1947.
  - <sup>34</sup> Cedar City Corporation. Agreement between Cedar City Corporation & the American Legion. Cedar City: 2003.
  - <sup>35</sup> "City council votes to bond for funds to construct new municipal library." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 24 November, 1949.
  - <sup>36</sup> "New public library doubtful." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 17 Nov 1949.
  - <sup>37</sup> "Library building and tourist court sold by city council for \$70,000; new library plans to be rushed." Iron County Record [Cedar City] 09 June 1949.
  - <sup>38</sup> Cedar City Minutes, April 7, 1949.
  - <sup>39</sup> Cedar City Council Minutes, June 6, 1949.
  - <sup>40</sup> Cedar City Council Minutes, August 8, 1949.
  - <sup>41</sup> "New library site purchased; plans to be prepared." Iron County Record [Cedar City, UT] 22 May 1947.
  - <sup>42</sup> Op. Cit., Record, 24 November 1949.

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- <sup>43</sup> “Plans again pushed for new library” and “Library closes.” Iron County Record [Cedar City] 01 June 1950.
- <sup>44</sup> Library plans presented at special meeting.” Iron County Record [Cedar City] 28 June 1950.
- <sup>45</sup> Cedar City Council Minutes, February 15, 1951.
- <sup>46</sup> Cedar City Council Minutes, July 5, 1951.
- <sup>47</sup> Cedar City Council Minutes, December 6, 1951.
- <sup>48</sup> Cedar City Council Minutes, August 5, 1954.
- <sup>49</sup> Cedar City Council Minutes, December 6, 1955.
- <sup>50</sup> Cedar City Council Minutes, January 3, 1957.
- <sup>51</sup> “Library dedication date moved to Saturday, May 11.” Iron County Record [Cedar City] 02 May 1957 and Cedar City Council Minutes, April 4, 1957 and May 2, 1957.
- <sup>52</sup> Op. Cit., Jones, pp. 394, 400-401, 408.
- <sup>53</sup> “Library fund swells with new donations.” Iron County Record [Cedar City] 12 May 1966.
- <sup>54</sup> The Gardner Partnership Architects, *Draft Planning Report, Cedar City Pubic Library*, August 25, 1997.
- <sup>55</sup> City Council Minutes, March 17, 1999.
- <sup>56</sup> City Council Minutes, October 27, 1999.
- <sup>57</sup> City Council Minutes, August 16, 2000.
- <sup>58</sup> City Council Minutes, February 21, 2001.
- <sup>59</sup> City Council Minutes, March 7, 2001.
- <sup>60</sup> City Council Minutes, June 13, 2001.
- <sup>61</sup> See: City Council Minutes, June 6, 2001, June 13, 2001, August 1, 2001, and August 22, 2001.
- <sup>62</sup> Editorial Board, In our view: Cedar's mayoral hopefuls ready to take on library." The Spectrum/Daily News [St. George, UT] 30 Oct 2001: A6 and Voters to consider bond." The Spectrum/Daily News [St. George, UT]04 Nov 2001: A1 and Editorial Board, In our view: Vote 'yes' in area bond issues." The Spectrum/Daily News [St. George, UT]04 Nov 2001: A6.
- <sup>63</sup> Burr, Thomas. "\$6m library bond also on ballot." Salt Lake Tribune 30 Oct 2001: B2. NewsBank. PIONEER: Utah's online library. Cedar City Public Library. 20 Feb 2008 <<http://pioneer.utah.gov/>>.
- <sup>64</sup> Cedar City Council Minutes, November 9, 2001 (includes image).
- <sup>65</sup> Cedar City Council Minutes, May 8, 2002.
- <sup>66</sup> Cedar City Council Minutes, May 22, 2002.
- <sup>67</sup> Cedar City Council Minutes, February 11, 2004.
- <sup>68</sup> “Mrs. Barbara Tweedie dead: After suffering several months she goes quietly to her rest.” Iron County Record [Cedar City] 25 Aug 1911 and FamilySearch. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 15 Feb 2008 <<http://www.familysearch.org>> and "Cemetery Burials Database." Utah State History. 05 May 2005. Utah History Research Center Archives & History. 15 Feb 2008 <<http://history.utah.gov/apps/burials/execute/searchburials>>.
- <sup>69</sup> “Last rights held for prominent Cedar woman.” Iron County Record [Cedar City] 16 Mar 1933 and FamilySearch. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 15 Feb 2008 <<http://www.familysearch.org>> and "Cemetery Burials Database." Utah State History. 05 May 2005. Utah History Research Center Archives & History. 15 Feb 2008 <<http://history.utah.gov/apps/burials/execute/searchburials>>.
- <sup>70</sup> “Funeral service held for Lillian B. Corry.” Iron County Record [Cedar City] 16 Sep 1965 and FamilySearch. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 15 Feb 2008 <<http://www.familysearch.org>> and "Cemetery Burials Database." Utah State History. 05 May 2005. Utah History Research Center Archives & History. 15 Feb 2008 <<http://history.utah.gov/apps/burials/execute/searchburials>>.
- <sup>71</sup> “A Paint-Brush Hobby.” The Relief Society Magazine Aug. 1952: 533. Print.
- <sup>72</sup> Margaret M. Urie Dies After Long Illness.” Iron County Record [Cedar City] 24 June 1965.