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# Cultural Connection: Celebrating Arizona and America 250 at Yavapai County Libraries

By By STUART ROSEBROOK, Ph.D., Special to the Courier
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Prescott Public Library is located at 215 E Goodwin St, Prescott. (Friends of Prescott Library/Courtesy)

I love libraries. Growing up in North Hollywood, California, my parents took my sister and me regularly to the Studio City Library, a branch of the Los Angeles Public Library system. The little library was on a circuit of regular after school or weekend activities that rotated betw

going to the park or errands with our parents. In those days, the Library was even open on Sunday's, and a visit after Church was often a great treat to get a new stack of books. You'd lift your books up to the counter, open them up for the librarian so she could pull the card and stamp it. I remember just roaming the library, learning to use the Dewey Decimal card catalog, and the excitement of finding the book I was looking for–and showing my parents what I had found. Many times my sister Katherine and I would share books that we liked. A trip to the library was a wonderful family experience. Afterwards, we might even stop at the drive-in Alta Dena Dairy for a box of fudgesicles! Chocolate on your church clothes is a whole other story!

Recently, I was asked by Kristi King, the Public Services Librarian of the Yavapai County Free Library District, to be part of an Arizona and America 250 speaker series at libraries across the county. My tour of Yavapai County libraries is just about to conclude for the year with a trip to the Beaver Creek branch in Rimrock, but I hope it is not an end to my tour of the county libraries, let alone the city libraries in Yavapai County or historical societies and local museums. My travels to Black Canyon City, Clarkdale, Congress, Crown King, and Mayer have all been inspiring and reminded me of the importance of libraries in my life–and why they remain so important as centers of learning and community activities in our city, county, state, and country.

Each library visit has been inspiring, reminding me of the important roles that our local libraries play in our small towns. In Prescott, Sharlot Hall Museum's Research Center, Library and Archives is part of the Yavapai County Free Library District, but while the Museum is nearly a century old, it is not the oldest–or the first library in Prescott. In fact, Prescott is the site of the first library in the territory or the state. Did you know that the first Territorial Secretary Richard McCormick brought 300 books with him to start the first territorial library? Less than 15 years later, the Prescott Library Association was founded and according to the Prescott Public Library website, the Carnegie Library opened in our County Seat on November 24, 1903 with "one paid librarian [was] on staff, managing a closed (not browsable) collection of 1,300 books."

Today, 163 years since McCormick brought his library to Prescott for the public good, libraries are thriving in our county. In fact, Crown King will be expanding their library services into the former Crown King Ranger Station, an exciting partnership between Yavapai County and Prescott National Forest. I can't wait to return to the historic mountain town (rain or no rain, mud or no mud) to visit the Crown King Library on its grand opening.

Reflecting on my tour of the County libraries, I remain grateful for the enthusiastic guests of all ages, volunteers, and librarians, who seamlessly carried on their work attending to the needs of the customers and the guests. I loved meeting the local organizers and boosters, many from their town's historical societies. I have pledged to each of them support from Sharlot Hall Museum and our Research Center, Library and Archives and look forward to continuing my tour of county, city, and historical society libraries in 2027.

And by the way, did you know that according to the American Library Association, November is International Games Month? Sounds like a great family outing or inspiration to play a game at home with friends and loved ones this holiday season.

*Stuart Rosebrook, Ph.D., is the executive director of Sharlot Hall Museum and has great memories volunteering at his junior high and high school libraries. The Museum's Research Center is open to the public, by appointment only, noon to 4 p.m. Wednesday to Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays.*

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