Baldwin Hotel

In 1907, George Baldwin opened the Baldwin Hotel in Klamath Falls, which he had built on a steep hillside of hard volcanic rock. Because of its location, the four-story structure was built with longer floors at higher stories, like steps. Early on, it was called the Baldwin Brick.

Baldwin's hardware store was on the ground floor, and the other three floors contained offices, some of which were combined with apartments. Baldwin's daughter, Maud, had her photography studio on the fourth floor. By 1909, Baldwin had remodeled the building to make it into a hotel and restaurant.

Baldwin was the president of the local Chamber of Commerce and was active in promoting the region. In 1907, he hosted a visit by the U.S. secretary of the interior and raised $100,000 to pay a bonus to the Southern Pacific Railroad if it reached Klamath Falls by 1907 (it did not get there until 1909). The first freight to arrive on the railroad was an order for the Baldwin Hotel.

At the turn of the twentieth century, it was considered modern to have electricity and indoor plumbing, and the electric conduit and plumbing pipes in the Baldwin Hotel were left in view to advertise those conveniences. Every room had a sink, but only two or three rooms had their own tubs and toilets. Still, having toilets down the hall were first-class accommodations for people who were used to chamber pots.

Baldwin died in 1920, and his daughter Maud sold the hotel in 1923. It remained in business until 1977, when it was no longer safe for accommodations, and Klamath County purchased it with the intention of making it into a museum.

Some rooms in the Baldwin Hotel Museum were restored to resemble business offices and their adjoining apartments. Others are preserved hotel rooms or contain reconstructions of a Victorian-era kitchen, a sewing room, a child's playroom, dentist and attorney offices, grocery and sporting goods stores, and a schoolroom.

Maud Baldwin's photographic studio is on the fourth floor, where some of her large glass plate cameras are on display. She took hundreds of photographs of the Klamath Basin during the early 1900s, and a large collection of her plates and negatives are held by the Klamath County Museum.

The Baldwin Hotel Museum is open for guided tours during the summer months only.

Written by Charles Edson

Further Reading:

Baldwin Hotel Museum. http://www.co.klamath.or.us/museum/Profile%20BHM.htm.

Drew, Harry J. *George T. Baldwin: His Life and Achievements* (Klamath County Museum Research Paper No. 9). Klamath Falls: County Museum, 1980.

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