



Long Live the Queen!

*Deschutes Pioneers' Association
Crowns a new queen, and votes
to merge with DCHS.*

See p. 3

A historian with a watery past!

Meet volunteer Lisa Lee.

See p. 4



The Homesteader

Deschutes County Historical Society Newsletter—FEBRUARY 2023



*Envelopes from love letters exchanged by Ernest
Smith and Flossie Reed during their courtship from
1906 to 1907*

It's Valentine's Day season, and love is in the air!

A love for archives, that is!

**Collections Manager Rebekah Averette reflects on the
importance of keeping an archive of love letters from
around Deschutes County.**

Holding a 118-year old letter in my hand leaves me a bit breathless. I get quite swoony whenever a letter or collection of letters makes its way to the museum. I greet them with a mix of relief that their contents weren't lost to time and giddy anticipation about the secrets and stories the old pages might hold. There is also a tinge of guilt at being an uninvited witness to words that were never meant for my eyes.

A few months ago, the museum became the caretakers of one such collection of letters, written between locals Ernest Smith and Flossie Reed. Mostly written between 1905 and 1908, they detail the gentle courtship of a couple who would wed in 1909 and spent their married life raising a family in Bend.

They are, on the surface, relatively undramatic. There is no whiff of scandal or dramatic lover's quarrel. But they are a very human time capsule and tell of real people making plans for very real lives. Ernest and Flossie had to spend long periods of time apart. Ernest worked for the telephone company hanging lines and traveled extensively for work. He struggled to find permanent work in Bend and Redmond. He wrote to Flossie from the relative discomfort of the rugged forest camps where his work crews were based. She answered from her family home in Central Oregon, telling him of the goings-on of local society, church, family, and work, and sharing her hopes and plans for their future.

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Mount Bachelor Main Lodge (West Village)

By Steve Stenkamp

When it opened for the 1965/66 ski season, the West Village Lodge was known as the Main Lodge. A new parking lot was built to the north of the new lodge to handle increased skier traffic. When the lodge was built it was owned by a group of five shareholders. The lodge General Manager was Felix Marcoulier. The lodge had 8 two-room suites, 16 single-room suites, a café, bar, and small ski shop.

The lodge was sold to Mount Bachelor Inc. in February of 1968. Vince Genna, Recreation Director for the City of Bend, was hired to be the new General Manager on March 1, 1968, a position he held for less than a year before returning to the City of Bend.

At the end of the 1971/1972 ski season, Mount Bachelor Inc. announced the end of overnight accommodations on the mountain. The lodge was remodeled to provide room for expanded food and beverage service, retail, and rentals. In September of 1972 thieves broke into the lodge and started a fire to cover up the burglary. Damage was estimated at \$75,000 but Bill Healy, President of Mount Bachelor, promised the repairs would be made prior to the upcoming season.

In 1973, with the installation of a beginner's chairlift in front of the lodge, parking was expanded and moved below the lodge. The beginner chair was Oregon's first triple chairlift and the names of the lifts were given as colors instead of numbers. The new lift would be called Orange Chair.

Numerous renovations and small additions have been added to West Village Lodge since 1973 adding more food and beverage space and childcare.



**Deschutes
Historical Museum**

129 NW Idaho Avenue
Bend, OR 97703
Open Tuesdays-Saturdays
10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
541.389.1813

Museum Staff:

Kelly Cannon-Miller, Executive Director
Vanessa Ivey, Museum Manager
Rebekah Averette, Collections Manager
Tracy Alexander, Membership Officer
Michelle Patrick, Visitor Services



DCHS Board of Directors:

Adrian Bennett, President
Jane Williamson, Vice President
Dan Ellingson, Secretary/Treasurer

Board Members:

Mike Berry, Mark Capell, Paul Claeysens,
Tony DeBone, Beau Eastes, Terry Foley,
Greg Fulton, Karen Green, Loren Irving,
Heidi Kennedy, and Susie Penhollow, Liz Rink.



Complete minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors are on file with the Museum office.



www.deschuteshistory.org
info@deschuteshistory.org

Deschutes Pioneers' Association Votes to Merge

By Kelly Cannon-Miller, Executive Director

In the 1940s, the Deschutes Pioneers' Association (DPA) became the first organization dedicated to documenting the history of Deschutes County. Their legacy included not only the earliest oral histories, which can be heard today through the library's audiobook program, but also Pioneer Park and the original Deschutes Pioneer Museum. The artifact collection of the pioneer museum became the nucleus of the Deschutes County Historical Society collections as the museum and its holding were transferred to the Deschutes County Historical Society in the late 1970s for the purposes of creating a new museum in Reid School. The missions of DPA and DCHS have always been intertwined, but it is safe to say that without the dedication of the pioneers, the historical society would not have many of its earliest artifacts, documents, and photographs in our possession. The cross-over between our organizations continued in other ways, as the museum serves as the location for all the DPA records and their regular meeting location and the DCHS board has always required a space for one DPA board member representative.

Two years ago, the Deschutes Pioneers' Association board of directors entered into conversations with the Deschutes County Historical Society board of directors to propose moving their programs under the umbrella of the historical society and dissolving as a separate non-profit. A decline in DPA membership, combined with difficulty recruiting new board members to handle the administrative duties of running a non-profit were the issues plaguing the current board. The culmination of that conversation occurred this past Saturday, January 21, at the Deschutes Pioneers' Association Winter Dinner. Held at the Larkspur Community Center, the nearly 80 DPA members in attendance voted unanimously to dissolve as an organization and place their memberships with DCHS.

What does this mean? For those of you who have had memberships in both organizations, it means that you now only have one membership to renew! DPA members will carry a special pioneer designation in our membership database. DCHS will create a Pioneer Committee to oversee the Deschutes Pioneer Scholarship and the Deschutes Pioneer Queen programs. This group will also be responsible for coordinating future pioneer member gatherings like the picnic and winter luncheon. The DPA board will spend the next several months completing the steps necessary to dissolve.

In spite of the large decision at hand, the meeting maintained some return to normalcy with the crowning of a new Pioneer Queen for 2023. Outgoing Pioneer Queen Shirley Kilpatrick thanked the group for supporting her this past year before turning over the crown to the new Pioneer Queen, Charleen McKee. Charleen is a 1949 graduate of Bend High School, where she was a member of student council, among many, many other pursuits, including being selected as a Mirror Pond Water Pageant Princess. She attended Oregon State College (University) and married fellow Bend High grad Ted McKee before heading into a career in education that took her family to California. Ted and Charleen returned to their hometown in retirement. Also in attendance were former Pioneer Queens Ann Reynolds, Sharron Rosengarth, Virginia Young-Ewell, Helen O'Brien, Harriet Langmas, Andrea DuPree, and Ruth Burleigh.

DCHS looks forward to working with the DPA board members to honor the legacy of DPA's historic preservation work and moving into the future as one organization.



2023 Deschutes Pioneer Association Winter Lunch



2023 Pioneer Queen Charleen McKee and son Rick McKee



Sharron Rosengarth with outgoing Pioneer Queen Shirley Kilpatrick



Former Pioneer Queens Sharron Rosengarth and Harriet Langmas

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Lisa



Around Central Oregon, irrigation and water rights are a big deal. Understanding the distribution and history of water rights and how they work can be a daunting matter. At the Deschutes Historical Museum, we often receive inquiries involving questions about the canals, the river that feeds them and how water plays a role in the everyday, especially related to agriculture and homesteading. Thank goodness we have Lisa Lee to help us navigate through this involved subject.

Lee

By Vanessa Ivey

Recently retired from the Central Oregon Irrigation District (COID), Lisa has an amazing knowledge on the workings of irrigation and water rights in this high desert region. Her roll as COID historian grew from many years of working with Geographic Info System (GIS) maps, understanding the appurtenance specific to a piece of property, and taking care of the network that holds this information. It was while she was working on historic research projects for the district that first brought Lisa to the museum. "The history, archeology and the environmental studies surrounding Central Oregon are so fascinating. This project introduced me to the museum and its resources, and I've continued that relationship to this day."



A confessed history and sci-fi geek, Lisa was born in Oregon City and grew up in Eugene and Lake Oswego. Her sense of adventure took her to Hawaii, later returning to Oregon and making a home in Sisters, where she raised her two daughters, Crystal and Rachel.



For twelve years she ran *Mexicali Rose*, a restaurant at the corner of Greenwood and Franklin Avenue. Working nights allowed Lisa the daytime to spend with her girls, and later to attend college. Interested in Central Oregon Community College's GIS mapping program, she contacted the instructors and signed up right away, completing her degree in 1999 with an Associates of Applied Sciences in Geography. An intern position with COID quickly turned into full time employment, a company that has been around since 1904– a historic point not lost on Lisa.



Still living outside of Sisters, Oregon, Lisa's home is filled with dogs Beau, a Belgian Malinois, and Lincoln, a mini-Aussie, a 30-year-old turtle, a Maine Coon cat, and last year she adopted two part-Siamese kittens. She always has something going on between travelling abroad (her favorite locations being New Zealand, Scotland, and Paris) and visiting family in other parts of the country. No matter the season she and sweetheart Jon are hiking, kayaking, skiing, and exploring the spaces closer to home. Her love of local history is an easy motivator for searching out land survey markers, old homesteads, and following old maps.

Retirement also means more time to hang out at the museum, sharing her knowledge as a guide with students, attending history pubs, and welcoming visitors to one of her favorite places in town.

Nous t'aimons! We love you Lisa and are so happy to have you in the fold.

-Continued from page 1: Archiving Love Letters

Later, Flossie and her family stayed for several months at a boarding house in Portland, where her brother was awaiting surgery. She writes of the hustle and bustle of life there, forging friendships with fellow lodgers, and witnessing the sometimes colorful goings-on of life in downtown Portland.

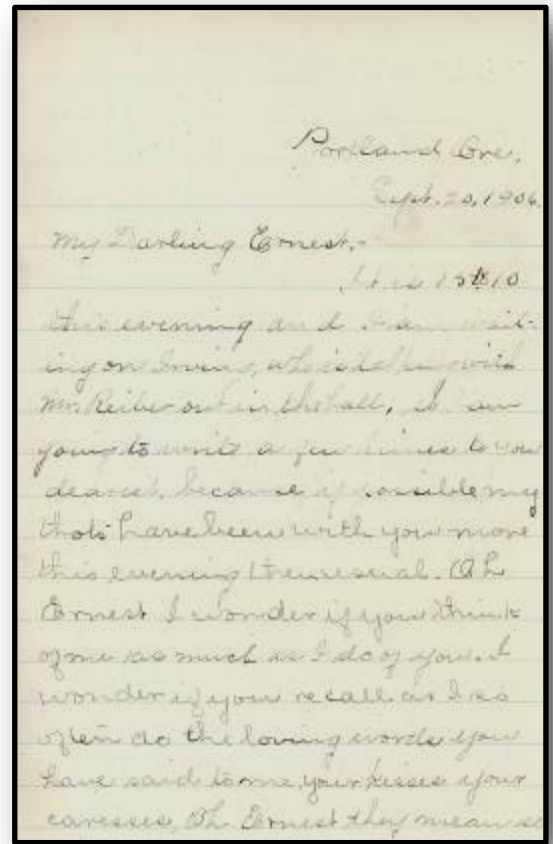
An important part of preserving these letters is transcribing and scanning them. Not only is this an additional layer of preservation, but an avenue to make them more accessible to researchers and the public. By transcribing and scanning letters, researchers, staff and visitors can access the letters more readily and avoid handling the delicate material.

Although the “Ernest and Flossie Smith” letters are the most recent collection of letters we are working with, DCHS is home to many other missives. Some are simple correspondences about daily life or business, others weightier, such as the wartime letters between soldiers on the front and their families and loved ones at home.

The Alfred Aya collection is another large collection of letters that volunteers transcribed in the last couple of years. Also a collection of love letters, they span the courtship and engagement of society girl Grace Honeyman of Portland and Alfred Aya, one of the early founders of La Pine. They are not only charming and romantic, they bring to vivid light both the efforts and sometimes failures of early pioneers to attract settlers to the region and establish business, agricultural, and irrigation infrastructure.

Kathryn Grace Vandeventer was another early pioneer of Deschutes County and tragically died quite young during the 1918 flu pandemic. DCHS recently borrowed a large collection of letters between Kathryn Grace and various family members and friends, which we have finished transcribing and are now in the process of scanning.

The letters in our museum collection tell intimate stories of human lives from the pen and point of view of those who lived them. They show us what everyday life was like for people from all walks of life, both the “movers and the shakers” and those just struggling to make ends meet. Ultimately, they remind us that the aspirations, dreams, and affections of people living in early Deschutes County were in many ways not so very different from our own.



Volunteer Ed Barnum transcribing letters



Left: Ernest and Flossie Smith in the Holsman, Bend's first car, circa 1955



Right: A lock of hair sent with a love letter

Memorials

Michael Kent

Mike Berry

Tributes

Ralph C. Curtis

Jean Rotter



The Second Annual DCHS Antique Fair is on the books for **August 12, 2023!** After last year's trial run and overwhelming success on all fronts, we are doing it again. More vendors are expected, and we are repeating last year's members booth of contributed items, plus of course the Rastovich Barley Beef sandwich truck

in addition to ice cream/coffee/pastry offerings. However, the members booth is only successful if members check their garages, closets and shelves for items (roughly pre 1970 vintage), realize these items are no longer needed or wanted, and contribute them to the DCHS members' booth. All proceeds benefit the DCHS and last year our booth made a huge contribution.

Jane Williamson, DCHS board vice president, has again volunteered her garage as a storage space, starting now, for items you have located and are willing to contribute. Contact her at jwilliamson1375@gmail.com or 541-390-4351



The DHM would like to thank Eckworth Antiques and The Merry Moth for their participation in our successful 2022 Antique Fair.



February Worthy History Pub: Blue Mountains, Gold Fever: Chinese Mining on the The Middle Fork of the John Day River

This talk will cover the recently completed multi-year Oregon Chinese Diaspora Project excavations on the Malheur National Forest. From 2017-2021 archaeologists investigated three Chinese American Mining Complexes dating to the 19th century. The results provide detailed information about the creativity, community, and daily life for the hard working miners in Eastern Oregon over a century ago.

Chelsea Rose is an historical archaeologist who focuses on the settlement and development of the American West. Rose serves on the board of the Oregon Historical Quarterly and serves on the governor-appointed Oregon Heritage Commission. Rose has been featured in books and magazines promoting STEM education, she was a guest co-editor of the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* issue dedicated to the Chinese diaspora, and she co-edited *Chinese Diaspora Archaeology in North America*, available from the University Press at Florida.

Mark Your Calendars

FEBRUARY

- 14 OREGON'S 164TH BIRTHDAY
- 28 WORTHY HISTORY PUB: BLUE MOUNTAINS, GOLD FEVER: Chinese Mining on the The Middle Fork of the John Day River

Presented by Chelsea Rose, Historical Archaeologist and Principal Investigator in the award-winning Oregon Chinese Diaspora Project.



Worthy Brewing, Co. Eastside
 495 NE Bellevue Dr. Bend
 7:00 p.m. doors open at 6:00 p.m.
 Reservations required, [click here to register.](https://www.eventbrite.com)
www.eventbrite.com

SAVE THE DATE!

March 3: We Resume our **Volunteer Meetings!**
 Noon in the Research Library. Bring a sack lunch.

March 17: Opening of "Klunkers and Stumpjumpers", a Mountain Biking history of Central Oregon

