



## Keeping it Local!

Meet volunteer Jerrie  
Allison-Melton  
See page 4

## 100 Years of Education

Explore the history of  
Bend High's Schools  
See page 2



# The Homesteader

Deschutes County Historical Society Newsletter—SEPTEMBER 2025



*The main entrance to Camp Abbot, now known as Sunriver*

## Over There, Over Here An Exhibit about Camp Abbot

You may have noticed one of the second-floor galleries is currently closed with work in progress. What have we been up to? We have been painting, building a diorama, and writing text for our newest exhibit about the history of Camp Abbot and the experiences of Deschutes

County residents on the home front and abroad during World War II.

Camp Abbot was a World War II-era Army Corps of Engineers training camp that operated between 1943 and 1944 on the site of present day Sunriver.

In that short span of time, over 90,000 combat engineers trained at Camp Abbot, temporarily skyrocketing the population of Deschutes County as the troops cycled through in waves. The camp was also the base for the 1943 Oregon Maneuver, in which 10,000 square miles of the high desert were used to conduct large scale "war games," with over 100,000 troops participating.

The new exhibit will showcase the short but significant history of Camp Abbot and bring to life the stories of some of our local World War II heroes, Camp Wickiup and the conscientious objectors who worked there, civil defence efforts in Deschutes County, and the role Bracero workers played in keeping the local economy alive. We will also examine the way in which propaganda conveyed support for the war, but also fuelled racial prejudice, stereotyping, and ultimately internment of Japanese-American citizens swept up in fear of "the enemy."

"Over There, Over Here" opens in September.



# The Bend Union School Building

## Turns 100

By Vanessa Ivey



This summer Bend High School (BHS) alumni gathered on the Deschutes Historical Museum's lawn at an all inclusive BHS reunion. The party attracted nearly 200 alumni from classes spanning from 1953 to 2025, including future 2028 Lava Bears. The graduates represented 76 years of Bend High history, inhabiting both Bend Union High School (built in 1925) and Bend Senior High School (built in 1956).

This year Bend Union High School, once home to Cascade Junior High, and now the Bend-La Pine Schools building, is celebrating its centennial. The first high school in Bend was established in 1906. Oregon state law required the citizens of the community to establish a high school by special election. On February 27, 1906 the "yes" votes won, 38 to 9. A school bond for construction of a new school had passed a year earlier, so with the building of the new school underway, a high school classroom was added to the top floor. Central School, a wooden four-story, six room schoolhouse, sat on a rise at the north of Bend, east of the Deschutes County Courthouse's location today. The schoolhouse included grades 1st through 10th, with Ruth Reid (principal) and Anne Markel teaching the 9th and 10th grades.

"Bend Graduates Its First Class," reported the *Bend Bulletin* on May 26, 1909. The front page of the paper announced the community's first commencement would be held at the Lara Hall on May 27. The class of '09 was composed of three students: Pearl Hightower, George Vandevent, and Dorothy Schoolcraft. The class motto was "Great Things are Done by Devotion to One Idea." Both Pearl Hightower and Dorothy Schoolcraft went on to teach locally.

Change came quickly to the community of Bend with the completion of the Oregon Trunk Line (1911), the formation of Deschutes County (1916), and the operations of Shevlin-Hixon Lumber Co. and Brooks-Scanlon Lumber Co. (1916) on opposite sides of the Deschutes River. The community grew from a population of 536 in 1910 to 3200 in 1916. More work in the area meant more families moving into town which equated to a larger number of students in school. School district #12, under Crook county school board jurisdiction, had included the Bend schools. Now, with Bend no longer part of Crook County, the old district was reconfigured and Bend School District #1 was born. Bend now put to their voters a school bond that included a budget for construction of a new high school.

Bend High School opened February 12, 1917 with 115 students enrolled. The eight-room school was considered one of the most modern of the one-story school buildings in the state of Oregon, and would become a template for a new grammar school constructed on the west side of town in 1919, Kenwood School. Bend High School operated next door to Central School between 1917 to 1924, off Kearney Avenue and Harriman Street. In 1925, it became the home to Bend's middle school children and renamed Cascade School. A decade

- Continued on page 3

### Bend High School timeline

**1906**

February

Bend Bulletin prints editorial advocating for a special election re: high school to operate in Bend. Under Oregon law the citizens were required to establish a high school by voting on the question.

March

Bend voters elect to have a high school, 47 ballots were cast, 38 in favor, 9 opposed.

September

Bend's new school is opened. Central School, located north of Greenwood Ave. operated 1st through 10th grade, with the high school classrooms on the top floor.

**1909**

May

First high school graduating class of three students: Pearl Hightower, George Vandevent, and Dorothy Schoolcraft.

**1917**

With the formation of Deschutes County in 1916, School District #12 was split in 1917, creating Bend School District #1. Up until the split

## 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

[www.deschuteshistory.org](http://www.deschuteshistory.org)  
[info@deschuteshistory.org](mailto:info@deschuteshistory.org)

### Museum Staff:

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



### 2025 DCHS Board of Directors:

Jane Williamson, President  
Karen Green, Vice President  
Heidi Kennedy, Secretary/Treasurer  
Adrian Bennett, Past President

### Board Members:

Paul Claeysens, Tony DeBone,  
Greg Fulton, Eric King,  
Brad Lemmon, Julie Lowy,  
Liz Rink, Glenn Voelz



Complete minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors are on file with the Museum office.  
Tax ID# 51-0186079



**Continued from page 2— Bend Union School Turns 100**

later, in 1935, it was repurposed as the Deschutes County courthouse and mysteriously burned two years later.

In 1925 a world war had come and gone, two of the largest pine mills in the world were in full operation and Bend's population was a little more than 5400. A new high school building was taking shape on the south end of town. With the passing of a school bond and the creation of a Union High School District the previous year, Bend was working to alleviate the crowded conditions in their schools. The old Baptist Church off Irving was one of several buildings that was commissioned to serve as additional classroom space due to the overcrowding.

The school district took full advantage of the gymnasium (Bend Amateur Athletic Club) it now owned, having purchased it from the American Legion several years earlier. By building next to the gym the school district calculated it would save \$40,000. Hired as architect was Hugh Thompson, a Bend High alum and graduate from the University of Oregon. Ed Brosterhous won the construction contract. Brosterhous had built the Reid School building a decade earlier. The school was designed in the style of American Renaissance and made a strong statement that Bend, the seat of Deschutes County, was no longer a developing frontier town.

On September 3, 1925 the building was formally accepted by the Bend School Board, opening its doors September 7 for the start of school as promised. Taking nearly a year to construct and equip, the cost came in at \$275,000, approximately \$66,000 over budget. The start of the school year saw an enrollment of 425 students, with a graduating class of 69 seniors the following spring. As the town's population grew, Bend Union High School continued to fulfill its purpose of alleviating overcrowded classrooms. In 1956, it was retired as the city's high school and found new purpose as Cascade Junior High. It has been the home to Bend-La Pine School District administration building since 1979, and in 1993 received the National Register of Historic Places honor.

When the current Bend Senior High School opened in 1956, it was designed to feel like an open campus, laid out with covered breezeways connecting buildings for classrooms, an auditorium, sports stadium and grounds, gymnasium, library, parking lot, and more. This was very different from the previous high school layouts. Bend Union High School's sports fields were off-site, next to the railroad stock yards off Franklin Ave and 2nd Street, where Bi-Mart is today.

Opened for classes on September 9, the million dollar school plant, as it was referred to in the *Bulletin*, extended over four blocks along NE 6th Street from Emerson Avenue to Alden Avenue. The largest of the six buildings, the gymnasium and the auditorium, were at opposite ends of the campus, ready for the 550-student enrollment expected the inaugural year. On November 20, 1956 Bend Senior High School was formally dedicated in front of hundreds of high school pupils, townspeople, and past alumni.

Today, Bend Senior High School is the city's longest operating high school. Its estimated enrollment of 1,232 students is more than double what it was in 1956. Next year, Bend Senior High School will be seventy-years-old and is in the middle of reconstruction, bringing new life to the Lava Bears. Here's a celebratory shout-out to Bend High School and its past 120 years. May the "Long Blue Line" of BHS continue the course of community, creativity, and enrichment to all those within its walls.



*Bend High School's 1940 yearbook, "Bear Tracks"*

*Continued:* Bend schools were still under the Crook County school board.

January, 1917

Bend Public Schools had an enrollment of 960 students.

February

New Bend High School opens off Kearney Ave. and was considered one of the most modern of the one-story school buildings in the state of Oregon.

**1924**

January

The creation of a union high school district and construction of a new high school is passed by voters in a special election, 392 to 45. The union district consolidated District 1 and District 37 for high school purposes, forming School District #2.

The new union high school location to be built adjacent to the school gymnasium (Bend Amateur Athletic Club) off Wall Street.

**1925**

June

Largest class which ever graduated from the Bend high school, 58 students. Final commencement in old high school.

July

Bend Union High School completed, opening to students in September.

September

Bend Union High School was formally accepted by the school board. School registration reached 425 students. The old Bend High School was renamed Cascade School and was home to 200 junior high pupils.

**1956**

August

New Bend Senior High School opened August 1 for registration. The high school, located off 6th Street, expected 550 students to attend. The Bend Union High School was repurposed as Cascade Junior High with an expected attendance of 715 students.

September

Bend Senior High School opened for classes on September 10.

# VOLUNTEER CORNER

## Jerrie

### Allison-Melton

*By Jane Williamson*

I have a theory that many native-born Bendites have a rubber band growing out of their belly-button. If they wander too far away, they spring back at some point in their life. Such is the case of Jerrie Allison-Melton.

Jerrie was born at the old St. Charles "hospital on the hill" in downtown Bend. Her father worked in the woods as a logger for Brooks-Scanlon for 42 years, and she was raised in logging camps until she was nine years-old. Jerrie's family lived in camp in Sisters until she was three, when her family moved to a camp south of Beaver Marsh near Klamath Falls. She recalls a winter with over 10 feet of snow. Later, Jerrie's family lived in the Timbers camp north of Gilchrist until she was nine. It was there that the camp carpenter built a toboggan big enough for all 30 of the children living there! It was so big that it had to be pulled by a logging truck. At the time, Jerrie attended school in Gilchrist.

When her family moved to Bend, Jerrie attended Marshall School, which was in a quonset hut-style building that happened to be her grandfather's old horse corral! She attended Allen School for 5th and 6th grade, then junior high at what is now the Bend-La Pine School District building. After graduation from Bend High School, she attended Central Oregon Community College for her first year then transferred to the OHSU nursing program in Portland, where she lived for a number of years. She got her master's degree in Psychiatric Nursing and had many roles, including nurse practitioner and ambulatory care supervisor with the Veterans Administration, nursing educator at the University of Portland, and managed the St. Charles Home Health Services for 18 years.

Jerrie's family history in Bend is extensive. Her father's family moved from western North Carolina to northern Washington in the early 1900s. Her grandfather was the only one who chose to move south to Oregon, where he tried his hand at homesteading near Hampton Butte with dryland wheat farming. When her grandparents moved to Bend, her grandfather had many businesses, while her grandmother ran a boarding house near the corner of Kearney Avenue and Hill Street, which is currently part of the county maintenance complex. The boarding house catered mostly to railroad workers as it was just a block away from the train station (relocated to the Old Mill District). She loves to reminisce about the old Bend and knows that while growth is inevitable, honoring Bend's history is important to her.

She considers her marriage to Jim Melton as spectacular. Jim was a loving, outgoing, giving man who sold real estate, along with other jobs. He passed away too young, in 2010, of pneumonia. Jerrie has a wonderful group of friends here and keeps herself very busy!

She got involved with the Deschutes Historical Museum through the Chopp family. The Choppes and the Allisons were good friends, since Charlie Chopp and Jerrie's father worked in the woods together. Jerrie's mother would take her for a bowl of chili and to visit at Millie's café in what is now the Wagner mall. Naturally, Jerrie was recruited to work the Chili Feed, featuring Millie's chili recipe. Jerrie is also a docent who enjoys sharing information about the medical and logging exhibits on the second floor, and is a guide for the walking tours. Having someone with Jerrie's knowledge about medicine and the history of Deschutes County is invaluable to the museum.

Nowadays, Jerrie stays busy supporting her community by working with the DC Medical Reserve Corps advisory committee, and teaching classes in hands-only CPR and "Stop the Bleed" training. While she is available to help in any capacity, she enjoys teaching the most.

Along with volunteer Carla Hunt, Jerrie has created the Legacy Business Reception which will honor longtime businesses that are still in business and are run by folks who were born in Deschutes County. We hope you can join us and hear their stories while we enjoy refreshments on the front lawn. The event takes place Saturday, September 6 from 2-4:00 p.m.





# History Pub: The Lands Everyone Wanted



**Tuesday, September 30, 2025**

*Presented by Jeff Kitchens*

*Doors open at 6:00 p.m., Presentation at 7:00 p.m.*



Our public lands are the cornerstone of the history and story of America's relationship with its land as well as the women and men who forged that relationship. It is this legacy, combined with the modern needs and uses of society, that a multitude of local, state, and federal agencies carry upon their shoulders today. Join Jeff Kitchens, Bend resident and a not-so-novice historian, as he shares the story of America's relationship with its public lands.



**Jeff Kitchens** has been working in public land management for over 25 years. His career has taken him throughout the U.S. working in wildland fire management, forestry, wildlife management, lands and surveying, mining, and cultural resources, as well as wilderness and wild and scenic rivers.

**Reservations required, \$5 per person:**

[www.mcmenamins.com/events/](http://www.mcmenamins.com/events/)

## 2025 Antique Fair Recap

We could not have asked for a better day to celebrate our fourth annual Antique Fair last month. With 18 vendors, half of which were new this year, it was our biggest fair yet!

The returning vendors agreed that visitors were spending more this year than last. The clear air and temperate weather was complimented by the beautiful music of Jay Bowerman and Loren Irving. The Bend Genealogical Society saw a steady stream of enthusiastic folks, some of whom became new DCHS members.

Be sure to mark your calendars for next year's event: **August 8, 2026!**



## Remembering Don Rooper



**8/08/1949 - 6/27/2025**

We are sad to hear of the passing of Don Rooper, a friend and valuable resource to the DCHS. Donald James Rooper was born August 8, 1949, in Dallas, Oregon. He grew up in the Beaverton area as the 2<sup>nd</sup> of 5 children. He is also a direct descendant of HC Rooper, who moved to Antelope in 1876 to pursue his interest in sheep farming.

Don was proud to be a native Oregonian and career Forester working for many Central OR companies. He was born with a photographic memory, and his many stories are legendary. He will be missed for his wealth of information on Oregon history, which he widely shared with all. His experience and expertise was a gift to the Deschutes Historical Museum, and he was a Life Member of the DCHS.

Don was a Master Craftsman proficient in Timber Frame construction, and a proud Army veteran and Band of Brothers volunteer.

A Celebration of Life is planned for Sept. 20th at 1150 NE Yucca Lane, Redmond, OR at 2:00 p.m. All are welcome.

## Tributes

**Ralph C. Curtis**

Jean Rotter

# Escape the Museum: “The Curse of the Curate’s Collection,” the Deschutes Historical Museum's newest “FUN-raiser”



After 15 seasons of sharing stories of downtown Bend's haunts and history, the Deschutes Historical Museum's October walking tours have retired. But not to worry, our history who-done-its have been diligently working to bring you something completely new! Introducing *The Curse of the Curate's Collection*. DHM's new escape room adventure is based on a real local history mystery.

What is an Escape Room?

An escape room is an immersive adventure where participants, generally a group of 6 persons, are placed into a room and using teamwork, along with elements of the room, find hidden clues and solve puzzles to complete a mission or "escape" within a set time limit.



*Bend Public Library, built in 1938*

In 1909, the Bend Bulletin announced that Rev. J. Anthony Mitchell, local curate and acquirer of antiquities, was "collecting towards a museum" for the community of Bend. After his death in 1911, Mitchell's relics and curios were frequently exhibited around town, eventually finding a permanent home at the Deschutes Public Library.

However, in 1969, the few remaining items in the collection mysteriously disappeared from a small, locked room in the library's basement. The only remnants of the once-noted collection, purchased by the public and the city of Bend in 1912 to form the nucleus of a city museum, were never found....Until Now!

In the new escape room, teams will work together to find clues, solve puzzles and escape *The Curse of the Curate's Collection*. Playing the part of research interns, participants will be tasked to assist historian A.R. Chive in locating the missing collection before their rivals. Oh, and time's-a-ticking... there is only have 60-minutes on the clock so every moment is crucial for escape.

*The Curse of the Curate's Collection* escape room program will kick off October 10 and 11 with additional dates throughout the month of October. Stay tuned for ticketing information.



## Thanks to Kim Boddie

The DCHS museum staff wants to take a moment to recognize Kim Boddie, one of our longest serving museum volunteers. For years, Kim has served as our official collections photographer, doing the important work of photographing artifacts. This is a crucial part in documenting a museum collection and Kim did the job with dedication and great care. Notably, he often brought delicious baked goods made by his wonderfully skilled wife, Carolyn, to share with staff and fellow volunteers! (Thank you, Carolyn!)

Kim recently made the decision to officially retire and dedicate more of his time to his family and to photographing wildlife in the great outdoors. While his expertise and presence on the third floor will be sorely missed, Kim plans to stay connected with the museum and occasionally volunteer for special events.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you Kim for your many years of hard work! You are so appreciated!



# A Tribute to Braceros in Central Oregon: From the Potato Harvest to our Community's Success

By LeeAnn O'Neill

*LeeAnn is the principal of Allyship in Action and a Latino Community Association board member.*

September 15 marks the beginning of Hispanic and Latino Heritage Month, which invites us to explore and honor the diversity of cultures, stories, and contributions of our local Hispanic and Latine community. This date commemorates the [Cry of Dolores](#) and the start of the Mexican War of Independence that paved the way for independence for what is now Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

As a part of the St. Charles Belonging Grant research, I was drawn to a single article in the DCHS folder of "research threads." As I dug into an article that referenced Bracero workers in Redmond, I realized that the Redmond Bracero camp was a part of our potato farming history that had virtually been erased. So, we set out to partner with the [Latino Community Association](#) (LCA) and the [Deschutes Public Library](#) (DPL) to search for these stories. We reached out to LCA's connections and our personal networks, did a call for stories on Radio La Branca, and put fliers up at Mexican grocery stores in Bend, Redmond, and Madras.

With DCHS I researched as much as possible to support our joint celebration of Bracero Program Day on August 4, which is an [official Oregon holiday](#). We learned that Braceros were valued members of the Redmond agricultural community and that women from the tri-county faith organizations came together to support and advocate for them through the migrant ministry. We also learned that they experienced violence and discrimination, with one salient incident in 1960 where two white boys — Carl and Charles Johnson (ages 19 and 17) — attacked and injured Roberto Veliz (age 18) with a rock and belt buckle so badly he was hospitalized. The attack led to a near-riot at the Redmond camp. Although the case settled out of court, the *Redmond Spokesman* highlighted Judge Copenhaver's sentiments that this was "an offense against the City of Redmond, that the city statutes were for the protection of migrants as well as for local citizens, and while living here all have equal rights, privileges and obligations. He noted that the migrants were welcome in Redmond and that they were important to the economy of the area at harvest time."

At the Redmond Library at least 50 people attended a tribute to the Braceros who lived and worked out of a labor camp in Redmond. Participants included current and prospective Deschutes County Commissioners, Redmond City Council members, descendants of Braceros, community members, and dedicated members of the DCHS.

As for our call for Redmond camp Bracero stories, we found one community member who lived in the Redmond camp towards the end of its time, but we have not yet been successful in supporting them to share their story. We also identified community members who came to the U.S. as Braceros in other camps and now live in Central Oregon, and are in the process of reaching out to record their oral histories.

One of those folks is Nabor Vazquez Castañeda, who is now 102 years old. We recorded an oral history with him through his daughter Lidia Vazquez. Nabor was a Bracero during WWII and harvested strawberries Washington and grapes, lettuce, oranges, and almonds in California. He is originally from Guadalajara and came to the U.S. when he was 16 years old. He experienced a lot of discrimination when he came as a Bracero, recalling trying to go out to eat on a day off, but no one would serve him because he was Mexican. He was a Bracero until he was 20 years old, and then stayed in Mexico.

It wasn't until the late 1980s that he moved to the U.S. for good, at first to California and then to Idaho. There, he met a chef who really liked him and brought him to work in Sunriver in 1993. His experience moving to Central Oregon was initially hard because of the language barrier and not having a place to live, but the chef helped him find a house and he was able to bring his family a few years later. In those early days, he did not experience the same kind of discrimination that he did when he first came as a Bracero, and shared that people were very good to him.

Our hope though Hispanic Heritage Month is to keep recording oral histories of local Braceros and/or descendants of Braceros and to support efforts in the works for Historic Preservation Month next year to memorialize the contributions of both Warm Springs community members and Braceros to the prosperity of the Redmond agricultural community both past and present. We invite you to visit our online exhibit at: [deschuteshistory.org/exhibits/](https://deschuteshistory.org/exhibits/)



*Above: Highlights from the Bracero Day celebration. Photos courtesy of Eduardo Romero from Quetzal Creative!*

*Below: Nabor Vazquez Castañeda, 102, with his daughter Lidia Vazquez. Photo by LeeAnn O'Neill*





## Legacy Business Reception

**September 6 2-4:00 p.m.**

As part of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, DCHS is shining a light on other legacy businesses around Deschutes County that have reached 50, 75, or even 100+ years, as well as business owners who were born in Deschutes County. As we reflect on our own history, DCHS strives to ensure we preserve the stories of businesses throughout the county as well.

We have invited businesses with strong ties to the Deschutes County community for a celebration, and we encourage our members and the public to help us to celebrate these "legacy businesses."

Join us on the lawn of the Deschutes Historical Museum for socializing, root beer floats, and strawberry shortcake. Business owners will be available to share objects, stories, pictures, and reminisce about the history of their business.



We encourage all Deschutes County business owners to consider joining our newly "remodeled" Business Membership program, supporting our mission to preserve and celebrate our shared history.



**September 13  
10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**

Since 2018 the Deschutes Historical Museum has hosted one of Oregon's premier car enthusiasts' car shows in Central Oregon.



The festival is FREE to the public, showcasing sport and enthusiast cars from around the state. Cars load in at 8:30 a.m. and will be on display from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.



A portion of registration proceeds are donated to support the ongoing work of the Deschutes Historical Museum.



For more info: [oregonfestivalofcars.com](http://oregonfestivalofcars.com)

## Mark Your Calendars

### SEPTEMBER

**6 LEGACY BUSINESS RECEPTION**

2-4:00 p.m. Deschutes Historical Museum

**13 OREGON FESTIVAL OF CARS**

10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Deschutes Historical Museum

**HOLLINSHEAD-MATSON HOMESTEAD MUSEUM COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE**

10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Hollinshead Park, 1325 NE Jones Rd. Bend

**20 LAY IT OUT EVENTS' OKTOBERFEST**

2-9:00 p.m. Deschutes Historical Museum lawn  
visit [oktoberfestbend.com](http://oktoberfestbend.com) for information



**30 HISTORY PUB: THE LANDS EVERYONE WANTED**

Presented by Jeff Kitchens

McMenamins Old St. Francis School; 700 NW Bond St., Bend  
Father Luke's Room, 7:00 p.m., doors open at 6:00 p.m.

Reservations required, \$5 per person



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**October 10 & 11: Escape the Museum "Fun"-Raiser**

**November 7 & 8: Chili Feed and Raffle**

