



Answering the Call

Explore the history of Search and Rescue in Central Oregon
See page 2

The Fight for Restoration

October History Pub explores the Klamath Tribe's journey after termination See page 6

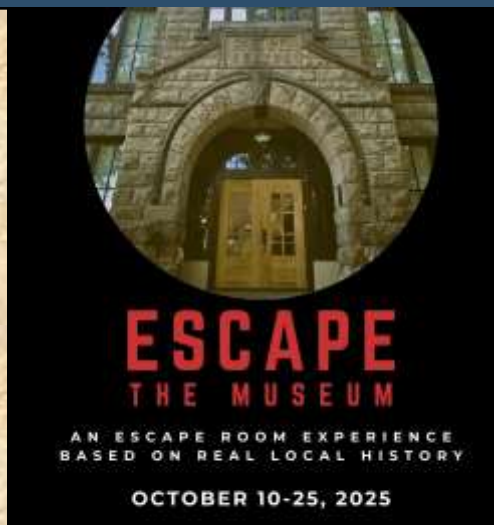


The Homesteader

Deschutes County Historical Society Newsletter—OCTOBER 2025

Deschutes Historical Museum's Newest Fall Fundraiser

Escape the Museum: The Curse of the Curate's Collection escape room experience kicks off October 10 and 11, **tickets go on sale October 1st!**



Escape Room Dates:

October 10 & 11

October 17 & 18

October 24 & 25

Visit deschuteshistory.org for ticket information

The Curse of the Curate's Collection

The Deschutes Historical Museum announces an escape room experience based on real local history. Your team of up to six players work together to find clues, solve puzzles and escape *The Curse of the Curate's Collection*. Playing the part of Research Interns, participants assist historian A.R. Chive in locating the missing collection before your rivals do. Oh, and times-a-ticking...you only have 60-minutes on the clock, so every moment is crucial to your escape.

The real history:

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 a city museum, were never found... UNTIL now!

Tickets go on sale October 1 at deschuteshistory.org

A fundraiser and membership drive, *Escape the Museum* is sold as an immersive adventure designed for up to six people. Escape the Museum costs \$180 for non-members, \$150 for members. **As a bonus**, each non-member purchase receives one free household membership.

Grab your friends and family, form a team, and get ready to uncover the location of Father Mitchell's collection.

For more information contact the Deschutes Historical Museum, 541-389-1813 or email info@deschuteshistory.org

The History of Search and Rescue in Central Oregon

By Glenn Voelz

It's no exaggeration to say that the tradition of volunteer Search and Rescue (SAR) in Central Oregon is older than the state itself. While the modern acronym - SAR - didn't appear until after World War II, volunteer rescuers have been helping fellow Oregonians in the mountains and wilderness dating back to the territorial era.

The legendary fur trapper and scout Moses "Black" Harris rightfully earns the title of Oregon's first volunteer rescuer for his actions during two of the Oregon Trail's most infamous tragedies. Harris began guiding into Oregon Country in the 1830s and settled in Yamhill County in the mid-1840s. He was traveling through The Dalles in late September 1845 when he volunteered to lead a small party of Indigenous Oregonians from the Wasco band to rescue over a thousand emigrants led by Stephen Meek, stuck on the steep banks of the Deschutes River near present-day Maupin. In the weeks prior, around two dozen of the settlers died during an ill-fated detour through the Harney Basin, suffering from illness and lack of food and water.

Harris and his fellow rescuers arrived with food and provisions and began building a pulley system of wagon beds to ferry the settlers across the river. One observer described Harris' rescue apparatus as "novel in the extreme." The mission lasted nearly two weeks before everyone was safely across the river.



Moses "Black" Harris
Painting by Jacob Miller.
Courtesy of the Walters
Art Museum.

The following year, Harris led a group helping settlers caught in the Calapooya Mountains during an early-season storm in November 1846 - part of the same historic weather system that trapped the Donner Party in the Sierra Nevada mountains to the south. Despite Harris' heroic actions, his reputation suffered because he had promoted the untested route along with Jesse and Lindsay Applegate. Also, as a mixed-race man, his residency in Oregon at the time violated the

territory's Black Exclusion Law of 1844. Harris left the territory the year after his rescue mission in the Calapooya Mountains and died of cholera a few years later in Missouri.

Through the end of the 19th century, Good Samaritans in Central Oregon often risked their lives to help those in need. One of the more famous incidents was the search for the missing postmaster John Templeton Craig during the winter of 1877. Craig left Belknap Springs on snowshoes in December carrying mail heading for Camp Polk, near present-day Sisters. Craig was familiar with the route but left just as a storm hit the mountains. Authorities grew concerned when he didn't arrive at Camp Polk in early January.



John Templeton
Craig memorial
near the summit of
McKenzie Highway

An initial search party set out several weeks later but was forced back after the rescuers suffered snow blindness. A second party of two experienced mountain men struggled through ten feet of snow and eventually made it to a cabin west of McKenzie Pass. Inside the cabin, they found Craig's body curled around a pile of ashes. The rescuers guessed that Craig had pushed through the storm to make it to the cabin, arriving cold and exhausted before falling asleep and succumbing to exposure. Today, a historical marker along the McKenzie Highway can be found near the site where Craig took shelter and died.

Central Oregon's First Rescue Group - The Skyliners Era

In the late 1920s Central Oregon created a formal group performing wilderness search and rescue: Bend's famous ski club, the Skyliners. The club's origin story is famously linked

- Continued on page 3

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
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:

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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— The History of Search and Rescue

to the search for the climbers Guy Ferry and Henry Cramer, who went missing during an early season snowstorm in the Three Sisters over Labor Day weekend of 1927. The search was one of Oregon's most extensive rescue operations up to that time, involving over one hundred ground searchers, climbers, skiers, and pilots. The mission drew searchers from Eugene, Portland, Bend, Hood River, and The Dalles. For nearly two weeks, Oregonians followed the events in the newspapers.



Skyliners ski club rescue unit during training in early 1930s courtesy of DCHS

The Bend contingent of rescuers included four of Central Oregon's best skiers and mountaineers: Nils Wulfsberg, Emil Nordeen, Nels Skjersaa, and Chris Kostol, collectively known as the "four musketeers of the mountains." After joining the search party, the men set out on a twelve-mile cross-country journey by skis from Frog Camp to the base of Middle Sister. They climbed Middle and South Sisters before returning to camp without finding the young men. Ultimately, the search was unsuccessful and called off after two weeks. The bodies of Ferry and Cramer were found two years later by hikers near Chambers Lake, between South and Middle Sister. Despite the disappointing outcome, Skjersaa and Kostol became the nucleus of the Skyliners' rescue squad that would serve as Central Oregon's unofficial search and rescue unit until the late 1950s.

The Central Oregon Search and Rescue Era

By the late 1950s, the Skyliners decided to refocus their activities on sports education and step back from their search and rescue role. In its place, a separate volunteer organization emerged in the early 1960s, offering a dedicated, multi-purpose search and rescue capability for the region: Central Oregon Search and Rescue (CoSAR).

Around fifty people attended the first organizational session for CoSAR in January 1960, held at the Bend Municipal Airport. Participants included the county's Civil Defense group, the sheriff's office, the Forest Service, members of the Skyliners ski patrol, the High Desert Skin Divers, and a local jeep club. Eventually, CoSAR formed with ten affiliated organizations, each providing its own personnel and equipment. While these groups cooperated with the county sheriff's office for SAR missions, they were not directly under its control and did not receive county funding or equipment.

CoSAR's first mission came just weeks after the group's

formation when an off-duty forester was severely injured during a winter camping trip near Lava Camp Lake, west of Sisters. He couldn't walk after cutting his foot with an axe and losing a great deal of blood. Fortunately, his companion was an experienced alpinist and member of the Obsidians outdoor club. She provided first aid to stop the bleeding and built a hasty shelter where they spent the night as a major storm hit the Cascades. She skied ten miles back to Sisters to alert the authorities, arriving late in the evening. Due to darkness

and blizzard conditions, the rescue team waited until the next morning to deploy. The following day, the team reached the injured man using a snow tractor owned by the state game department and evacuated him back to Sisters. The rescuers credited his courageous companion with saving his life.

During CoSAR's first year, it performed over a dozen missions involving fourteen people. CoSAR continued to operate as an informal group of volunteers through the early 1960s until it was no longer able to meet the growing demand for SAR services in Central Oregon. That left Deschutes County without a dedicated SAR unit by the end of the 1960s when the sheriff had to request assistance from Willamette Valley SAR units for Deschutes County calls.

The issue came to a head in 1970 when a private helicopter was used to evacuate an injured hiker from Broken Top in the Three Sisters, violating Forest Service prohibitions on motorized vehicles operating in a wilderness area. Deputy Sheriff Chris Williams called for a dedicated SAR team to serve Deschutes County, and vented his frustration over the situation in the pages of *The Bulletin*, noting that when SAR was needed in Central Oregon, "there was no one to take command, no organized group to function automatically, no specifically trained volunteers."

The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue Era

In July 1970, the Deschutes County Commissioners, the sheriff's office, and the Department of Emergency Services met to discuss establishing a formal SAR group under the sheriff's office. Deputy Williams called the local jeep, equestrian, and snowmobile clubs to the first organizational meeting, leading to the formation of Deschutes County Search and Rescue (DCSOSAR) in September 1970.

Under the authority of the sheriff's office, the group gained

- Continued on page 5



Map and Document of the Quarter

The October – December 2025 Document of the Quarter is an old sign that says strangers must provide a fingerprint to cash a check in Bend. If anyone knows what years this was enforced, let the museum know, and we'll add an explanation to the display.

The Map of the Quarter is *Indian Tribes and Languages of the Old Oregon Country*, which was published by the Oregon Historical Society in 1958. It is based on information compiled by Claude Schaeffer, a prominent ethnologist. Part of the map shows the extent of the Wasco, Northern Paiute, and Tenino tribes that make up the Warm Springs Confederation.

2025 Creepy Doll Contest



The Creepy Dolls are Back and they are Creepier Than Ever!

When the fall air turns crisp and woodsmoke starts wafting, the dolls in the DCHS archives start getting restless. October is their time to shine! These winsome delights only get one month in the limelight and they are ready to make the most of it! This year's creepy doll contestants are glammed up, glowed up, and ready for their moment.

Visitors with pediophobia (fear of dolls) be forewarned because the creepy dolls vying for the 2026 "Creepiest Doll" crown will be strutting their stuff around the museum between October 7 and October 31.

In early October the finalists for this year's Creepiest Doll will be featured on our socials, so stay tuned!

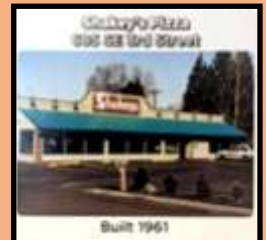
Legacy Business Reception Success!

The DCHS held its first ever Legacy Business Reception on September 6, hosting businesses that Deschutes County-born owners have maintained for generations. They were asked to share memories and possibly objects or displays to help tell their story. They did not disappoint!

Members of the Fassett family brought albums chronicling the history of Owl Taxi and Red Carpet Carwash, including a special clock that showed appointments for cab pick-ups (at right).

Other businesses that shared histories were Satterlee Jewelry and Repair from Redmond, the Fagen's Aiken Well Drilling, Osprey Physical Therapy Sports Medicine, Johnson Brothers Appliance, The Metropolitan Barbershop, Newport Avenue Market, and the Scott family's many businesses like Shakey's Pizza (current home of Abby's Pizza), Dandy's Drive-in, and Scott Realty.

A huge thank you to Carla Hunt, Jerrie Allison-Melton, and Jane Williamson for making this reception a reality, and potentially an annual event!



Satterlee Jewelry and Repair then (left) and now (right)

Volunteer Meeting: *The Homesteader* Planning

Wednesday, October 8, 2025 1:00 p.m.

If you love what you see in our monthly *Homesteader* newsletter, please consider joining the volunteer newsletter team! This will be an opportunity to suggest articles, monthly segments, or other content. Volunteers may enjoy writing articles, creating content, or just proofreading drafts. Sometimes we have volunteers who enjoy doing the research, and others who enjoy writing, and we match them together.

Bring a sack lunch and your ideas for fun, interesting, and engaging content.



Do you have a suggestion for The Homesteader newsletter?

What do you enjoy most, what would you like to see or learn about?

Please send your input to Tracy Alexander: tracy@deschuteshistory.org

access to supplies, funding, and equipment previously unavailable to the unaffiliated groups under CoSAR. Williams obtained \$60,000 in surplus military equipment from the federal government, including six jeeps, four all-terrain vehicles, a one-hundred-kilowatt generator, a mobile command truck, and a military field kitchen unit. In addition to government funding and equipment, the new organization could request state support for air operations via the sheriff's office, reimbursement for aviation fuel, and accident insurance for pilots and aerial observers.

Within the unit's first year, the new organization faced a dramatic mission that made headlines across the county. At the end of August 1971, three young women, aged 17, 18, and 21, departed the Pole Creek trailhead West of Sisters, heading out on their capstone exercise for an Outward Bound survival course. The three women were assigned a 35-mile route through Three Sisters Wilderness, crossing the Cascade Crest and ending at Cougar Reservoir south of the McKenzie Highway. As with the 1927 tragedy that led to the creation of the Skyliners, an unexpected early-season storm brought cold temperatures, rain, and snow to the mountains during the Labor Day weekend.

The Outward Bound party reached the Chambers Lakes basin on Monday, August 30, with weather soaking their clothing and gear. The three women remained there Tuesday and Wednesday in camp, trying to keep warm. Cold temperatures and snow continued into Thursday, September 2 as the women spent another day trapped in camp. The Outward Bound staff began internal notifications when the group was reported as overdue. The women tried to leave camp, hoping to make it over the Cascade Crest, but one member of the party was hypothermic and unable to continue, so they returned to camp.

On Friday, September 3, one woman left camp to find help while the other two remained behind. Sometime later that day, the hypothermic woman died of exposure. The surviving woman followed the tracks of the woman who left the day before and eventually found her a short distance away, alive but struggling in the snow. That night, the two surviving women huddled together for warmth, but the one who had gone to find help became unresponsive sometime that night.

By Saturday, September 4, Outward Bound instructors began searching the trails between Soap Creek and Camp Lake, hoping to find the women. An instructor discovered the lone surviving student asleep in a hasty camp near Chambers Lake, not far from the body of her companion. The instructor and woman walked out together and reached the trailhead late that evening. They alerted the authorities about the suspected fatalities.

Starting early the next morning, Deputy Chris Williams, who helped establish DCSOSAR the previous year, assumed command of the search operation. DCSOSAR horse and ground teams began moving toward Chambers Lakes hoping to find the two missing women. Later in the afternoon, an Army National Guard helicopter was able to land near Chambers Lake and recover one woman's body. The ground search teams covered 14 miles of rugged terrain, but didn't find the third woman. On Monday, September 6, around 50 SAR members from Lane County took over operations from the exhausted Deschutes County searchers. On Tuesday, September 7 the team located the body of the last woman not far from the group's final camp near Chambers Lake. Her remains were flown out by helicopter later that day.

Despite the heartbreaking outcome, media reports praised the hard work of the search teams. The 1971 operation was eerily reminiscent of the mission leading to the creation of the Skyliners forty-four years earlier. Both began with a storm hitting the Cascades during Labor Day week. The two young women from the Outward Bound group died at the same spot and time of year as the two young climbers during the famous 1927 search.

Central Oregon's Long Legacy of Volunteer Search and Rescue

Since the territorial era, volunteer rescuers have ventured into the mountains and



Modern unit of DCSOSAR evacuating hiker from Misery Ridge at Smith Rock State Park. Courtesy of DCSOSAR

wilderness of Central Oregon to assist their neighbors when called upon. Deschutes County has had organized SAR groups for nearly a century, starting with the Skyliners ski club in the 1920s and continuing to this day. With the growing popularity of outdoor recreation and the region's bustling tourism economy, there is greater demand than ever for search and rescue in Central Oregon. Today, Deschutes County SAR provides professional, high-quality search and rescue for the citizens of Central Oregon and visitors.



Search area map for Outward Bound students. Courtesy of DCHS and The Bulletin.

Memorials

Don Rooper

Darla and Jerry Rozelle

Sheila Kelly

Andrea Hunnell-DuPree

Tributes

Ralph C. Curtis

Jean Rotter

Christopher Smith

Kathy Sabatier

History Pub: The Klamath Termination Act of 1954

To help Native Americans, or take what they have?



Tuesday, October 28, 2025

Presented by Perry Chocktoot
Doors open at 6:00 p.m.,
Presentation at 7:00 p.m.



In 1954, the Klamath Termination Act of 1954 revoked the federal recognition of the Klamath Tribes which resulted in the sale of their tribal lands. Join Klamath tribal member Perry Chocktoot for a presentation on the history of this termination, its impacts, and the long fight for tribal restoration.

Perry Chocktoot is a member of all three of the Klamath Tribes: Klamath, Modoc, and Yahooskin Paiute. He was raised in the traditional lands of the Klamath Tribes, and the history of his family is found throughout the area. Chocktoot is the former director of the Culture and Heritage Department, former chairman of the Intertribal Fish and Water Commission, and former member of the Oregon Governor's Task Force for Cultural Resource Identification.

Reservations required, \$5 per person:

www.mcmenamins.com/events/



deschuteshistory.org

Mark Your Calendars!

Annual Chili Feed and Raffle

November 7 & 8

11:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Wanted: Baskets for Raffle packages!

If you have large baskets to donate, please bring them to the museum by October 28, attention Tracy Alexander.

Mark Your Calendars

OCTOBER

10 & 11 ESCAPE THE MUSEUM; AN ESCAPE ROOM EXPERIENCE

17 & 18 Deschutes Historical Museum

24 & 25 Reservations required visit deschuteshistory.org for tickets

28 **HISTORY PUB: THE KLAMATH TERMINATION ACT OF 1954**

Presented by Perry Chocktoot

McMenamins Old St. Francis; 700 NW Bond St., Bend

Father Luke Room, 7:00 p.m., doors open at 6:00 p.m.

[Reservations required, \\$5 per person](#)



SAVE THE DATE!

November 7 & 8: Chili Feed and Raffle

