



## The Big Boom

*It's the centennial of a moonshiner's revenge that blasted downtown apartments.*

*See page 2*

## Behind the Lens

*Meet the geologist and photographer behind the newest exhibit at DHM*

*See page 6*



# The Homesteader

Deschutes County Historical Society Newsletter—MARCH 2026

## 2026 Annual Members' Luncheon Recap

Thank you to all who joined us at the 2026 Annual Members' Luncheon at the Bend Elks hall last month. It is truly a joy to reconnect with our members and their families to catch up on community projects, museum developments, and share some good news with each other!

While folks were getting settled, Collections Manager Rebekah Averette-Zaback welcomed members to try their hand at using our new online portal for our collections database. Then, outgoing DCHS board president Jane Williamson introduced new president Heidi Kennedy and the 2026 executive committee. Executive Director Kelly Cannon-Miller shared updates and accomplishments like the newly painted museum lobby, partnerships with the Oregon Historical Society and Bend Parks and Recreation District, as well as other plans for 2026.

Pioneer Committee member Jane Williamson introduced this year's Pioneer Queen... and King! We are excited to announce His and Her Royal Highnesses, Jim and Judy Crowell.

Judy and Jim have been married for 63 years. Jim grew up in Bend and is a 1955 Bend Senior High graduate. Judy grew up in Salem, and is a 1957 South Salem High graduate. Jim and Judy met in Portland when Jim was a reporter for the Oregonian and Judy was an x-ray technician living with a high school friend of Jim's. They moved from Portland to Bend in 1966 after marrying in 1963.

Judy graduated from the Emanuel Hospital School of X-Ray Technology. She is a two-time past president to both the Cascade Child Treatment Center and her PEO Sisterhood chapter.

Jim earned his Bachelor of Science and Masters degrees from the University of Oregon, and returned to Deschutes County where he got involved in many community organizations including the Bend Chamber of Commerce, the Boys and Girls Club of Bend, and the Cascades Theater. He is the author of several plays, screenplays and books (one of which is available at the DHM gift shop!).

Both Jim and Judy love their Central Oregon home where they raised three children, and have demonstrated a commitment to celebrating its shared histories.



# Moonshiner's Revenge - A Bombing in Bend

**By Mike Berry**

Mac, Buck and Fern were probably getting fairly antsy when dawn broke the morning of Thursday, February 18, 1926. They had spent 16 hours huddling in a primitive log and earth dugout along the upper reaches of Bear Creek in southern Crook County, just north of the Deschutes County line. They were setting up a bushwhack that they'd spring in two and a half hours.

Two of the men, C.C. "Mac" McBride and A.F. "Buck" Mariott, were Oregon Bureau of Prohibition officers, also known as "prohi men". The third man, Fern Lowell, was a high desert resident helping the lawmen locate this remote moonshiner's still. They had been tipped off about the existence of the operation and arrived the previous day at 3:00 p.m. to find ten barrels of mash brewing in the dugout. In a nearby shed they found two 50-gallon stills and another 24 barrels of mash. This was one of the biggest illegal operations they had ever seen.



*Moonshiner stirring mash barrels ca 1925. Photo from Ray Nelson's "Memories of an Oregon Moonshiner" by Caxton Press, Caldwell, Idaho*

The dugout was an active "mash house," where grain, sugar and yeast fermented in barrels of water for days or weeks until the mash soured and was ready to be run through the still. A crude wood-fired furnace burned in the dugout to expedite the fermentation process. The mash needed constant tending as did the warming fire, so it was inevitable that the moonshiner would be along sometime soon to stir the mash and stoke the fires. It was difficult to catch

moonshiners working stills. They were located in remote areas and had lookouts posted to sound the alarm to skedaddle when the law approached. The law could confiscate the still and 'shine and the ever-elusive moonshiners could face up to 10 years in the state pen if they were apprehended.

It took patience, persistence and cunning to catch moonshiners. Since the officers' vehicle was hidden far away from the operation, this afforded a rare opportunity to ambush moonshiners at the operation from inside the mash house! Lady luck was smiling on these "prohi" men!

The trio had removed the window from the locked door, entered the dugout, replaced the window and settled in to wait for the arrival of the moonshiners and apprehend them when they entered. The wait was much longer than they had anticipated. Finally, at 9:30 that Thursday morning, 25-year-old Vayle Taylor, a hand at the Tom Ewing ranch near Brothers, rode in from the south leading a pack horse. He apparently spied the tracks of the lawmen and, turning the tables on them, wedged a 12-foot-long 2-by-4 plank against the door of the dugout. Lighting a match to see through the smoke-blackened window, he reached his hand through a gap in the door. McBride clamped ahold of Taylor's wrist and announced he was under arrest.

Taylor wrenched his hand away from McBride and leaned hard into the plank bracing the door. The two prohibition officers drew their guns and rushed the door, breaking it down in unison with their shoulders. When the door gave way, McBride's .38 automatic pistol accidentally discharged and young Vayle Taylor fell dead. The bullet hit him on the left side of the neck and exited through his right shoulder. His neck broken, he died instantly, slumped over the plank.

Buck Mariott drove 21 miles to Millican and telephoned Deschutes and Crook County officials. Deschutes County's Deputy Sheriff George Stokoe and District



*Moonshiner on a lookout perch ca 1925. From "Memories of an Oregon Moonshiner" by Caxton Press, Caldwell, ID*

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## 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  
Donna Burklo, Development Director  
Tracy Alexander, Membership Officer  
Rashelle Maplethorpe, Support Staff



### 2026 DCHS Board of Directors:

Heidi Kennedy, President  
Karen Green, Vice President  
Eric King, Secretary/Treasurer  
Jane Williamson, Past President

### Board Members:

Adrian Bennett, Paul Claeysens,  
Tony DeBone, Greg Fulton,  
Brad Lemmon, Julie Lowy,  
Liz Rink, Glenn Voelz,  
Deb Zitella



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— Moonshiner's Revenge

Attorney A.J. Moore arrived around 3:00 p.m. At about the same time, residents of the surrounding area began arriving at the scene. Word had traveled fast through the wild desert lands and sullen groups of ranchers, buckaroos and homesteaders mingled around the area. Feelings against the state officers ran high. Around 5:00 p.m., Crook County Sheriff Steve Yancey, Coroner P.B. Poindexter and Dr. J.H. Rosenberg arrived from Prineville. Poindexter commenced impaneling a coroner's jury until he recognized the hostility seething in the gathered crowd, whereupon he announced that the inquest would be held in Prineville the next day.

Mac, Buck and Fern kept isolated from the gathering crowd of ranchers and cow hands. McBride was clearly crushed by his accidental killing of Taylor and surrendered his service pistol to Sheriff Yancey. The county officials and state men broke up the stills and set the structures on fire. The three prohibition men were escorted to their car by the county officials, ensuring protection from possible mob harm. Vayle Taylor's body was strapped across the saddle of the horse he rode in on and taken to Prineville. The *Bend Bulletin* reported that the prohibition men lighting out to the west for Bend witnessed the procession accompanying Taylor's body climbing out of the canyon northward towards Prineville as smoke from the burning moonshine plant rolled down into the Bear Creek valley.

The February 19, 1926 headline in the *Bend Bulletin* read:

### STATE OFFICER IS EXONERATED AFTER KILLING Accidental, Coroner's Jury Finds DESERT FOLK ANGRY

This summed it up neatly in a nutshell. The six-person jury heard the testimony of Mac, Buck and Fern along with Sheriff Yancey, Coroner Poindexter and Dr. Rosenberg. They recounted that Mac McBride stated he would not have shot young Taylor even if his own life was at stake. A number of desert folk said Taylor was a light-hearted and well-known practical joker and was probably having fun with the idea of penning the lawmen in the dugout just to "kid" them for awhile before his inevitable arrest. This wasn't Taylor's first moonshine rodeo. He had been rumored to be a prolific moonshiner and at the time of his death had \$195 in cash on his person— equivalent to around \$2,000 today. And he had previous minor brushes with the law concerning illegal liquor, but none of his transgressions had been violent.

Wild conspiracies abounded and rumors ran rampant. In the "dry" contingent it was speculated that Taylor's lighting of the match to peer into the dugout indicated he was going to set fire to the dugout and roast the imprisoned officers alive. Past events in his life were examined and, where possible, demonized.

On the other side of the coin, some on the "wet" side of the issue believed Taylor was summarily executed up on Bear Creek. Days later an elderly rancher in the Brothers area, Marshall T. Green was assaulted by one of Taylor's friends. Green hadn't found out about the tragedy until three days after the shooting. He immediately headed to the Tom Ewing

ranch to tell Taylor's father, Walter Taylor, about the incident. Three men were in front of Ewing's house and as Green recounted the story (of which they were already aware) one of the men picked up an automobile jack and threw it at Green, hitting him on the side of his face and knocking him out. The attacker believed Green had alerted the law to the still's whereabouts, which Green vehemently denied. Green drove into Bend to have the deep gash in his cheek stitched up. A couple of days later, Green fired shots at Tom Ewing who, according to Green, was dogging him around and refused to stay off his property.

Ranchers in the Bear Creek country started a fund to retain attorneys to file suit for a probe of the incident. Emotions were raw and a veritable powder keg was close to igniting. Then things went quiet... for a week...



March 8, 1926 Bombing Damage

...until 2:57 a.m. on Monday, March 8, 1926, when the explosion of a 25-pound box of dynamite rocked downtown Bend and ripped off the back wall of Myrtle and Buck Mariott's little room at the Congress Apartments. The bomb was placed outside under the rear corner of the apartment but since the Mariotts slept 15 feet away in the front of the small apartment, they were only hurled into the air, covered by broken glass and plaster but, remarkably, uninjured. Nor were any of the residents of the other four units in the apartments.

Miss Alice Bush, a Shevlin-Hixon office employee who lived in the house next to the Mariott apartment, was covered with falling debris from her severely damaged house and according to the *Bend Bulletin*, "was carried out by rescue workers, her lower extremities paralyzed temporarily". The blast woke up the entire town and by sunrise several hundred people were at the scene. The *Bend Bulletin* reported that despite being thrown into the air by the blast and then covered with debris, Myrtle Mariott had the poise to salvage a fashionable wardrobe from the rubble and accompany husband Buck to a hotel, "becomingly dressed" like "a well clad hotel guest come to spend a holiday, so well did she maintain her composure through an experience bad enough to shake the nerve of an iron man."

It was believed that McBride was the intended target of the attack, but he had recently moved out of the Congress Apartments. He frequently dined

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### *Continued from page 3— Moonshiner's Revenge*

with the Mariotts, so if the apartments had been recently surveilled by assassins they may have believed he still boarded there. A few days before the dynamiting, a friend of Vayle Taylor confided to McBride that he had been asked by members of the “Bear Creek and High Desert Gang” to do away with McBride in any way possible. He declined the opportunity, but apparently someone else took the task to hand. The names of the gang members were not revealed to McBride.

On March 9, 1926 the *Bend Bulletin* reported that the Deschutes County Commissioners offered a reward of \$750 for the arrest and conviction of any person who may have been implicated in the bombing. At the time of this writing, none of the perpetrators have been identified and the reward remains unclaimed.

### **Epilogue**

Prohibition of alcohol, “the Noble Experiment”, was in effect from 1916 to 1933 in Oregon. It was intended to reduce crime, violence and corruption in America. To the contrary, corruption and crime skyrocketed, enforcement was daunting and tax revenue declined. Rural Central Oregon in the 1920s and ‘30s presented a hardscrabble life for most residents and the prospect of moonshining and bootlegging was an enticing and lucrative lure to otherwise law-abiding, hardworking citizens. The vast region was peppered with illegal stills and, just beneath the decorum of proper, sober society, a wide-ranging underground network made illegal home-grown booze readily available for anyone hankering for a drink.

The Congress Apartments still exist at the corner of Congress Street and Hood Place in Bend. They were built in 1924 for J.M Perry in the craftsman style with walls of locally made brick.

The people involved in these tragic events had lives before 1926 and, excepting Vayle Taylor, afterwards. It’s hard to flesh out their lives 100 years later, however the perusal of newspapers helps cast a faint, ghostly shadow of the four men who crossed paths that disastrous morning in 1926 in the cold, remote desert plateau country east of Bend.



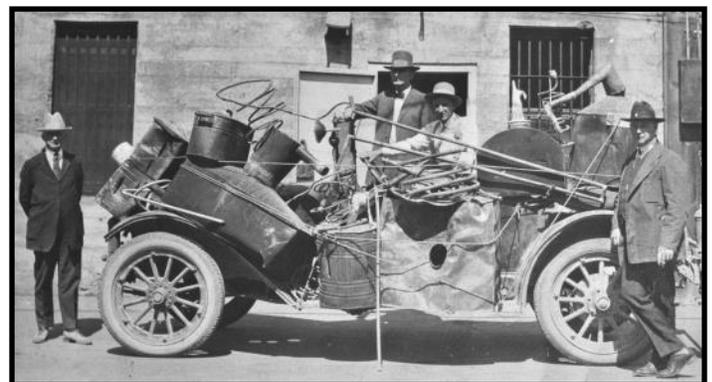
*Congress Apartments 1926 (left) and 2026 (right)*

Clarendon Crawford “Mac” McBride was born in 1897 in Eddyville, Oregon. He was an Army Veteran of WWI and had attended 3 years of college at the Oregon Agricultural College (today’s OSU). To earn money to complete his education he went to work for the Oregon State Prohibition Bureau where his brother, L.L. McBride, was a veteran officer. Based out of the Eugene office, he was called back to the Willamette Valley after Taylor’s killing. Three months later, on the night of June 11, 1926, he was working undercover with four other officers outside of Woodburn, Oregon, when he was involved in a gunfight. After a moonshiner named Brown loaded over 50 gallons of liquor into his car, McBride arrested and handcuffed him. Brown yelled out to his three confederates hiding in a nearby barn who rushed out, guns a-blazing. McBride shot and killed John Kaboris and wounded another man in the leg. The third fled into the night. McBride later finished college and became a farmer in the Willamette Valley. He died in 1963, aged 66.

Alvie Franklin “Buck” Mariott was born in Versailles, Missouri, in 1888. He had been a Marine sergeant during World War I. After a 40 year career in law enforcement in Oregon, he retired as a criminal investigator of the alcohol and tobacco division of the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Mariott died in 1979, aged 91. Myrtle lived another 6 years. They are both buried at Willamette National Cemetery.

Fern Edward Lowell was born in 1901 in Idaho and died at the age of 65 in Livermore, California. Prior to moving to Central Oregon, he served in the Marines. After the shooting he moved to Klamath Falls, possibly because Deschutes County Sheriff Bert Roberts had referred to him as a “stool pigeon” (informant) in the first newspaper account of the shooting. Lowell was a grocer in Klamath Falls and in 1942 he re-enlisted in the USMC at the age of 41 during WWII.

Vayle Taylor was born in Missoula, Montana, in 1900 and came to Central Oregon with parents Walter and Mildred Taylor in 1910. They lived in Bend while Walter worked on their homestead west of Brothers near Pringle Flat. The homestead was a mile from the famous Klondike Kate Rockwell’s homestead on Camp Creek Road. They later bought a ranch near Alfalfa and Vayle worked ranching and farming for most of his short life. His mother died when he was 20 and, five years later, he was laid to rest beside her in the Pilot Butte cemetery in an unmarked grave.



*A confiscated still behind the Bend jail ca 1920s. DCHS Forrest Sholes collection*

## Volunteer opportunity: Hollinshead-Matson Homestead Museum greeter and tour host



The Hollinshead-Matson Homestead Museum is located in Hollinshead Park. Hollinshead Park is a former working ranch donated by Dean and Lily Hollinshead to Bend Park and Recreation District (BPRD) in 1984. The homestead house and accompanying bunkhouse/tack shed offer a look back to living on a farm in Central Oregon during the 1930s and '40s. Sharron (Matson) Rosengarth was born in the house and along with her late husband and family, has been instrumental in bringing her childhood home to life as a museum. Sharron regularly hosts tours for families and groups and shares important stories about her family and Bend during that era.

Deschutes County Historical Society and BPRD are working together to offer a regular schedule of open house dates and are looking for a few volunteers to help with hosting the open house events and other tours of the museum.

The open house events will be held on the second Saturday each month from May through October, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. A special holiday open house is held in December. Volunteers will sign up to help with at least two event dates per year and may be invited to help on other dates as needed.

Ideal volunteers will:

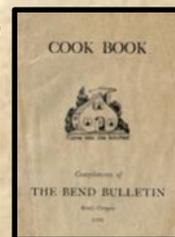
- Be familiar with the history of Bend and Central Oregon.
- Enjoy interacting with people of all ages and abilities.
- Feel comfortable going up a few steps at the entrance and exit of the museum house and walking on uneven ground between the two buildings.
- Be willing and able to support museum operations including: turning off alarms, adjusting lights and heat, setting out signs, turning on video players, moving a buggy, sweeping and minor cleaning.

An information session and tour will be offered on March 30 for people interested in volunteering. For more details and to sign up for the information session, contact: [info@deschuteshistory.org](mailto:info@deschuteshistory.org).

Training will be held in April for all volunteers selected to help at the Hollinshead-Matson Homestead museum.

Candidates will need to complete a Bend Park & Recreation District volunteer application, and a criminal history background check will be processed prior to volunteering.

## Recipe of The Month: Chocolate Cake from the 1930 *Bend Bulletin* Cookbook



Between April 16-18, 1930, the *Bend Bulletin* hosted a free cooking school taught by home economics expert Julia Perrin Lindley.

“Every woman in Central Oregon” was invited to attend the event, held at the Hippodrome in downtown Bend. The first day of the event, over 500 women attended (the population of Deschutes County was not quite 15,000 in 1930 and the population of Bend was a little less than 9,000). Over 700 women attended the last day, which featured a cake contest with 106 entries. It took over two hours for the four judges to sample and judge all the cakes. A complimentary cookbook, sent to attendees after the event, featured recipes taught at the cooking school and the prize-winning cake recipes. Mrs. Walter G. Coombs won first prize and a Hotpoint Range for this recipe:

### Mrs. Walter G. Coombs – Chocolate Cake

- 2 squares Baker’s unsweetened chocolate melted in 5 Tbsp boiling water.
- Pour above while hot over ½ cup butter and mix thoroughly.
- Add two cups sugar and yolks of four eggs, well beaten.
- Add alternately 2/3 cup of sweet milk, 1 2/3 cups flour, 1 tsp baking powder
- 2/3 tsp vanilla
- 4 egg whites beaten stiff
- Bake in two layers.



Notably, cooking times and temperature are not included because of the differences in baking conditions and technology between households. Many people still used wood-burning stoves or ranges lacking thermostats, which meant that bakers relied more on experience, aroma, or visual cues to decide when a cake was done.

## Tributes

**Bruce White**

Cathy White

# March History Pub: Tuesday, March 31, 2026



## About The Changing Skyline 100 Years of Landscape Change in Central Oregon

During the summer of 1920, Frederick William Cleator (1883-1957), a Forest Service recreational planner, surveyed and signposted the Skyline Trail. This trail, first laid out between Crater Lake and Mount Jefferson, was a predecessor to the Pacific Crest Trail, which, decades later, completed Cleator's dream of a recreational trail running from Mexico to Canada. During his survey, Cleator took more than two hundred photographs of peaks, forest glens, lake shorelines and scenic vistas. These photographs show the landscape of the time.



In the summer of 2020, with the help of many friends and colleagues, Jim O'Connor retraced Cleator's steps, re-photographing the landscape almost exactly a hundred years later, to the hour. These centennial counterparts show in ways otherwise hard to know or describe the changing skyline, forests and glaciers, and the human influence on the Central Oregon Cascade Range.

**Jim O'Connor** is a geologist in Portland, Oregon. He is an expert in the processes and events that shape the Pacific Northwest's remarkable and diverse scenery. Jim holds a degree in geological science from the University of Washington and a Masters and PhD from the University of Arizona. He has spent the last 30+ years hiking, wading, boating, studying and writing about the rivers, glaciers, and landscapes of Oregon.

**Doors open at 6:00 p.m., Presentation at 7:00 p.m.**  
**Reservations required; \$5 per person** [www.mcmenamins.com/events/](http://www.mcmenamins.com/events/)

## The 2026 Leon Devereaux Pioneer Scholarship

Continuing the Deschutes County Pioneers tradition established years ago, the Deschutes County Historical Society (DCHS), will award the Leon Devereaux Pioneer Scholarship in the spring of 2026. The mission of DCHS is to preserve, promote and celebrate our shared local history. The purpose of the scholarship is to carry out this mission by encouraging high school seniors in Central Oregon to foster an interest in the community's history through qualitative and quantitative research and evaluation of archives and sources presented in a form that inspires others to learn and take action to shape the future.

DCHS will award two \$2,000 nonrenewable scholarships to eligible students who submit their application no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 31, 2026. Please visit [deschuteshistory.org/ld-scholar/](http://deschuteshistory.org/ld-scholar/) for complete details and online application form. Scholarship winners will be announced in late April, 2026.

## Mark Your Calendars

### MARCH

- 30 VOLUNTEER TOUR FOR HOLLINSHEAD-MATSON MUSEUM**  
1:00 p.m. Hollinshead-Matson Homestead Museum  
1235 NE Jones Rd, Bend *RSVP:* [info@deschuteshistory.org](mailto:info@deschuteshistory.org)
- 31 HISTORY PUB: THE CHANGING SKYLINE:  
100 YEARS OF LANDSCAPE CHANGE IN CENTRAL OREGON**  
**Presented by Geologist and exhibit photographer Jim O'Connor**  
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](http://www.mcmenamins.com/events/)
- DEADLINE to apply for the Leon Devereaux Pioneer Scholarship**  
5:00 p.m.

