



### Return Address

Discover the federal roots of the Westman Hotel.

See page 2

### Historic Perspectives

Meet the 2026 winners of the Leon Devereaux Pioneer Scholarships.

See page 5



# The Homesteader

## Deschutes County Historical Society Newsletter—MAY 2026

### PRESERVATION MONTH

May is National Historic Preservation Month, and it's our time to shine! There are ways to celebrate all over Deschutes County, from Sisters to La Pine, Redmond and Bend.

In recognition of the importance of preserving historic landmarks, we have featured the Bend US Federal Post Office building that has recently been renovated as the Westman Hotel (see page 2). We are also shining a spotlight on our new Board President, Heidi Kennedy, who happens to be on the Bend Landmarks Commission (see page 4). And, we are thrilled to announce the winners of the Leon Devereaux Pioneer Scholarships (see page 5), who demonstrate that you are never too young to be inspired by history!

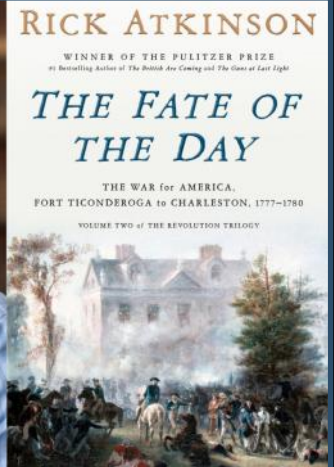
What we are MOST excited about is that, as part of the America 250 Oregon campaign, DCHS is hosting a special event with Pulitzer Prize-winning author Rick Atkinson. Mr. Atkinson can most recently be seen on PBS in Ken Burns' *The American Revolution*. A limited number of free tickets are available for teachers, email Kelly@deschuteshistory.org for information.

We hope you will bookmark the [schedule of events](#) on our website, and mark your calendars for a month filled with discovery and appreciation for the historic places in your life!



The Hatfield Lecture Series Presents

## Rick Atkinson



May 13, 2026  
The Tower Theatre



Deschutes Historical Museum is proud to host a special event with Pulitzer Prize-winning author Rick Atkinson. Mr. Atkinson can most recently be seen on PBS in Ken Burns' *The American Revolution*.

Tickets are \$25 for members, \$30 for non-members. (An additional \$8 Tower Preservation Fund Fee will be applied at check-out): [TowerTheatre.org](http://TowerTheatre.org)

To navigate the ticket process, place the member code in the redeem code box and click "Apply Code" **BEFORE** you click "Book Now." Once the code is applied you will be able to access the ticket selection page with the \$5.00 discount.

# The Bend US Federal Post Office

By Vanessa Ivey

Before Bend had *The Bulletin*, or was laid out between Bond and Wall Streets, the tiny community had a post office, established in 1886. The story goes that John Sisemore applied for a post office under the name of "Farewell Bend." That name was already in use, so the Postmaster General dropped the word Farewell, and hence Bend was born. In 1899, the postmaster position passed to Sisemore's neighbor, rancher William Staats.

Mail addressed to Bend, Farewell Bend, or even Deschutes, arrived by stagecoach to Staats' two-story house sitting next to a bend in the Deschutes River. Residents today will recognize this site as Miller's Landing Park.

## A growing community



1905 Post Office on Newport Ave and Wall St; [1980.050.0110](#)

The townsite of Bend was changing. By the end of 1904 the community had become incorporated, and the residents numbered over 300 strong. The post office by the river closed and a new post office was raised within the city's limits, across from the Pilot Butte Inn on the southwest corner of Newport Avenue and Wall Street.

Over the next fifteen years Bend's post office relocated four times throughout downtown, before finding residency at the O'Donnell brothers' newly constructed brick building at 923 Wall Street, the current location of Jack and Millie's clothing store. However, Bend's growth wasn't slowing down, and city officials knew a permanent solution with more space would be required soon.

In January 1917, Judge J.A. Eastes sent a letter to Washington



1940s- US Federal Post Office completed June 1933; [Image 2004.001.0483 from the DCHS collection](#)

D.C. urging US Senator Harry Lane, OR-Democrat, to grant the construction of a federal building in Bend. In his letter Eastes pointed out that Bend was quickly reaching a population of 5,000. He estimated postal receipts for 1917 were \$25,000 up \$5,000 over the previous year. Bend was rapidly becoming the distributing point for all Central Oregon. In fact, with the railroad's arrival in 1911 and two super pine mills operating along the Deschutes River since 1915, it isn't surprising that Bend reached a population of 5,400 by 1920. That was a 910% increase between 1910 and 1920, resulting in the largest population boom the city has seen to date.

But the US then entered World War I, delaying the funding. In fact, Bend wouldn't get the federal approval for a new post office and federal building until 1931.

## Launching the project

The federal officers inspecting the fifteen proposed sites for the new building selected four lots at the corner of Wall Street and Franklin Avenue for the new federal building. The owners were William Staats, Bend's retired postmaster, J.N. Hunter, and P.B. Johnson.

*The Bulletin* reported a total project cost of \$155,000. Planning and construction of the federal building was snail-paced to start. Standing on the chosen property was a building constructed in 1903. Known as the Lawrence building, it had once been occupied by Dr. Charles Spencer Edwards, the second home of the *Bend Bulletin*, the city library, and a repair shop. This and the pavilion just to the north of the building

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

### Museum Staff:

Kelly Cannon-Miller, Executive Director  
Vanessa Ivey, Museum Manager  
Rebekah Averette-Zaback, 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— The Bend US Federal PO

were required to be vacated and razed before construction could begin.

The Treasury Department was very particular about the look of the building. The plans, comprising over 26 large blueprints, included 121 pages of detailed specifications. The two-story building's exterior was to be terra cotta, with a basement and front steps of granite. Construction bids opened February 9, 1932. Charles Weitz' Sons, Inc., of Des Moines, Iowa, was awarded the general contractor, with a low bid of \$97,386.00. Construction began in April 1932.

### Local work



1932— US Federal Post Office Wall St entrance, first floor under construction.

At a time when jobs were scarce and unemployment was high; the city's public building contract provided an opportune boost to the local economy. Charles Weitz' Sons hired locals as subcontractors. Using local materials whenever possible, they transformed the corner at Wall and Franklin from a bare lot into a "Federal Presence."

Fred Van Matre did the excavation work. The removed basement rock was used in Harmon Park as fill dirt extending the park out along the footbridge, and in the creation of a "sea wall" near the north end of the river front. William Montgomery received the plumbing and heating contract. Electrician Lloyd Robinson wired the building. The local sand and gravel were secured from James Crawford.

What a surprise the government must have had upon learning that billions of fossils were used in the construction of their building: "Mined at Lower Bridge...Approximately three tons of the [diatomaceous] white earth, composed of the silica covering of minute, one-celled plants which flourished in a Deschutes lake thousands of years ago will be used on the Bend building. It will form an important part of all structural concrete placed in the Bend building." (*The Bend Bulletin*, 7/20/1932)

Of course, Bend being home to two of the largest pine mills in the nation, it was only natural to incorporate Central Oregon's wood products into the construction of the building. Showcasing the local species contributed to the overall interior

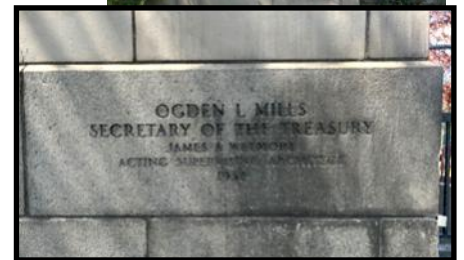
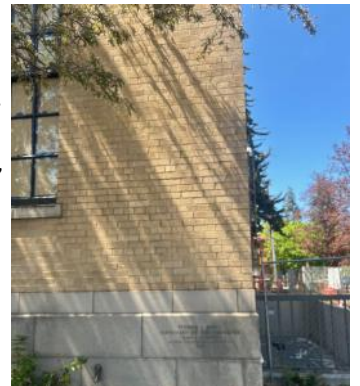


1942-WWII Post Office Ground Observer Corps Operations Room

beauty of the building.

Once the basement and cement work were complete, momentum on the rectangular, 17,306-square-foot structure quickened. April 22, 1933, *The Bulletin* announced the closing of post office services in the O'Donnell building. "Shortly before the window of the old post office closed today noon, for the last time, Miss Jane Ryan of the Magill Drug Co., received the last stamps sold in the quarters in the O'Donnell building." Simultaneously, less than a mile south, was the distribution of the first letter at the new post office to Charles Shaw. A day earlier the forest service staff had moved from their offices in the O'Kane Building to their new location on the second floor of the United States Federal Building. Although the building would not be completed for another two months, it was certainly ship-shape and ready for business come Monday morning April 24, 1933.

"NEW BUILDING IS VISITED BY 2,000" *The Bend Bulletin* heralded across the Saturday May 12, 1933, morning edition. The open house had been a success. Mrs. George Sedgwick, the only woman member of the postal staff in Bend, greeted visitors as they streamed through the building, touring rooms in unbroken lines. Every nook and cranny was exposed to the public. From the basement's "swing room"- a 1930s break room; combination lounge, locker room, and changing area, where postal workers hung out between shifts; to the "catwalk"- a small four-foot room overhanging the first floor discreetly designed with "peep holes" where inspectors checked the honesty of postal workers. With only the landscaping left to be completed, the government checked the project as done in June, several months over schedule, but far exceeding expectations.



Cornerstone placed at the NE corner of US Federal Post Office Building July 1932; photo 2025

### Changing purpose

At the onset of war in 1942, rooms in the federal building were transitioned for the war efforts and civilian services. It didn't take long for the post office to outgrow its residence and when the US Forest Service moved elsewhere in the mid-40s, the mail operations took over the building completely.

But like all things, age catches up and change is constant. The increased volume and demands on the post office became too

- Continued on page 6

# VOLUNTEER CORNER

## Heidi

### Kennedy

By *Rebekah Averette-Zaback*



Our new board president, Heidi Kennedy, is probably a familiar face to many who frequent the Deschutes Historical Museum. She volunteers at nearly every museum event, consistently attends the monthly History Pub, and has been a valuable member of the Deschutes County Historical Society board for numerous years. In 2026 Heidi stepped up to become President of the DCHS Board of Directors. Let's find out a little bit more about the talented and multi-faceted Heidi and learn why she is so uniquely suited to her role at the museum.

Heidi is a self-proclaimed "military kid" who was born in Heidelberg, Germany, but moved every few years as she was growing up. She attended high school in Ft. Washington, Maryland and college in California and Oregon.

An "Introduction to Planning" class her sophomore year in college inspired her career path and her experiences living all around the world nurtured her love for old buildings and beautiful cities. Heidi earned both undergraduate and graduate degrees in City and Regional Planning and has been a City of Bend Planner for almost 27 years.

Heidi has been visiting Central Oregon since she was a child, so the area has always felt like home. She moved permanently to the High Desert in 1992 for her first planning job with the City of Sisters and transferred her skills to the City of Bend in 1995.

Among her many duties at the City of Bend, she is responsible for staffing the Bend Landmarks Commission and says that helping preserve the City of Bend's historical places is one of the most meaningful parts of her job. Over the years she has frequently collaborated with DCHS staff on a variety of projects, including efforts to promote the importance of history and historical places during National Historic Preservation Month every May.

Heidi loves the outdoors and enjoys hiking and skiing in her spare time. She also loves to travel and has been many places, although she most often travels to Germany because of her connections there. When looking for a quieter pursuit, Heidi enjoys knitting. She frequently attends live music and theater, although opera is her favorite.

Not only does Heidi enjoy listening to music, she also makes it and is an accomplished accordion player. In fact, she practices once a month at the museum with the Accordion Club of Central Oregon – Fisarmonicats!

As if she doesn't have a full enough schedule anyway, Heidi enjoys doing a wide variety of other volunteer work when she has the time. For example, she recently volunteered at the Environmental Center's "Repair Café," the highlight of which was helping reattach an arm for a dragon named Ruby.

So when you see Heidi next, ask her about some favorite accordion songs, her latest knitting project, recent travels, Ruby the Dragon, and thank her for her service to the museum. We are certainly grateful!



# Leon Devereaux Pioneer Scholarship 2026 Winners: Makena Vandebos and Jude Jarrett

The mission of DCHS is to preserve, promote and celebrate our shared local history. The purpose of this 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.

Of the six entries received, the Leon Devereaux Pioneer Scholarship committee awarded a \$2,000 nonrenewable scholarship to the following high school seniors. Please join us in congratulating all the applicants for their hard work in researching stories from Deschutes County's history.



**Makena Vandebos** is a senior at Bend Senior High School where she volunteers with her school's volleyball programming. She has also completed an internship with Kate Dardin Interior Designs, nurturing her love for architecture. Makena's winning essay about the Tetherow homestead was inspired by her interest in how communities tie new development to historic landmarks.

"I began scrolling through the Deschutes Historical Museum's random images collection. This is how I stumbled upon photos of the Tetherow house. I was instantly intrigued."

Makena will attend the University of Oregon to study architecture in the fall.

**Jude Jarrett** is a senior at Summit High School where he has competed on the school's soccer and track teams, and has served as a Peer Leader in the school's Sources of Strength mental health program.

Jude's winning essay reflects on the unlikely founding of the town of Bend by Alexander and Florence Drake in 1900, its rapid growth, and its lasting legacy. Looking ahead, Jude recognizes that "growth is real, and it requires something from the people who love this place: attention, care, and a willingness to ask hard questions about the future."

Jude will attend the University of Miami in the fall.



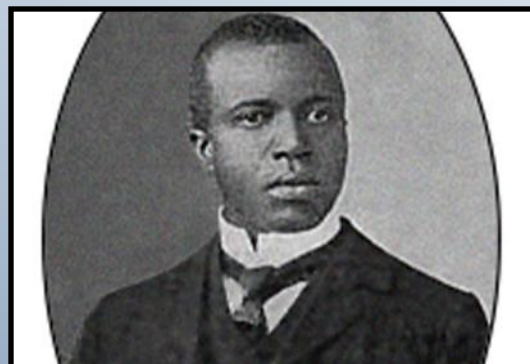
## May History Pub: Tuesday, May 26, 2026

### Scott Joplin and the Ragtime Spaces of Deschutes County: 1900-1918

When Bend became a city in 1905, ragtime music by Midwesterner Scott Joplin and other African American composers dominated entertainment venues across the US. Even in Deschutes County, Oregon, ragtime enlivened town life for at least 20 years, proving unexpected ties to Tin Pan Alley and the Eastern commercial music industry at the turn of the 20th century.

Join local music educator, pianist, and scholar Kendra Kay Friar for an interactive discussion of Scott Joplin's enduring influence on American culture and on the popular entertainment scene of Deschutes County's early years.

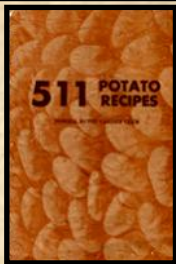
Kendra Kay Friar, EdD, is an adjunct professor of music at Pacific University and the academic editor of the *Journal of General Music Education*. She has worked as an elementary music teacher, a children's choir director, and Portland-based collaborative pianist for over 20 years. Her work has been published in *Music Educators Journal*, *Journal of General Music Education*, and *Oregon Music Educator*. She researches music education history to restore multicultural voices to modern teaching resources.



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/)



## Recipe of the Month: "Vegeburgers" from the 1947 Powell Butte Garden Club "511 Potato Recipes" cookbook

**POTATO IS KING-** In 1906 the first annual Redmond Potato Festival announced to the world that

Central Oregon potatoes had arrived! The most famous local potato, the Deschutes Netted Gem, was introduced in 1922. The importance of potatoes to the local economy and in the hearts of Central Oregon residents is evidenced by Powell Butte Garden Club's 1947 cookbook, "511 Potato Recipes," in which every recipe starred, you guessed it, POTATOES! Here is one of our favorites, a self-proclaimed "vegeburger" with none other than ground beef as the first ingredient. *Bon appetit!*



*Image 2009.048.0003 from the DCHS Collection*

### Ingredients:

½ lb. ground beef	½ cup chopped celery
1 cup raw carrots	1 egg slightly beaten
1 cup ground unpeeled raw potatoes	¼ cup light cream
2 tbsp. chopped onion	¼ cup wheat germ
2 tbsp. chopped parsley	2 tsp. vegetable salt

*Mix all the ingredients thoroughly. Form into 8 patties and place on a greased shallow pan. Bake in a hot oven (425 degrees) 20 minutes. The patties should be quite moist.*

For a deeper dive into the role of potato farming in Deschutes County, check out the new exhibit "Over There, Over Here," which highlights the role of Braceros in potato farming during WWII. Also, visit our online exhibit [A Tribute to Bracero Workers in Central Oregon: From the Potato Harvest to our Community's Success.](#)

## "What Was That Address?" Property Research Workshop



I ♥ SAVING PLACES

The most asked questions at the museum are those pertaining to property. "When was my home built? Who lived in my house? What was here when...?"

Join Vanessa Ivey, Museum Manager, as she shares tricks and tips of uncovering property history, **May 23, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** in the Deschutes Historical Museum's research library.

Vanessa will expand on an earlier workshop she led in 2021 on researching rural properties and include ways to track down urban homes and businesses within Bend's city limits. Learn what resources you have at your fingertips from home, and reference materials you can find available at the museum.

**Space is limited, [Registration is required.](#) \$50 Program Fee**

We suggest bringing a sack lunch, laptop/tablet, and possible address of interest. For more information: [info@deschuteshistory.org](mailto:info@deschuteshistory.org) or call 541-389-1813.

### Continued from page 3— The Bend US Federal PO

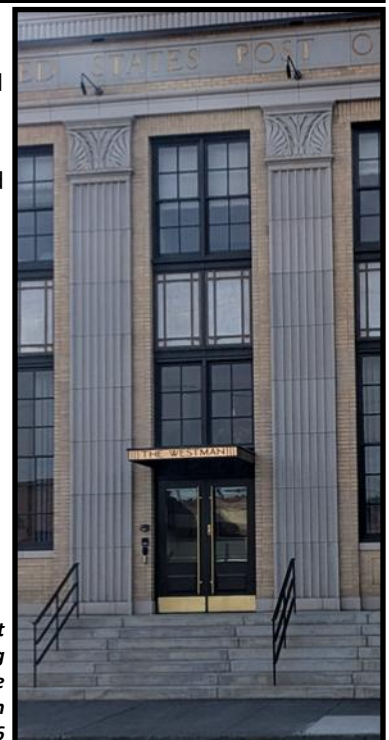
much for the older building, insufficient technology and space became a problem. The US Federal Post Office building served the residents of Bend from 1933 to 1978. The main post office moved to 2300 NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street in 1978 and a few years later the downtown classified branch moved to a new smaller location off Oregon Avenue, closing the service window at the corner of Franklin and Wall building permanently. Today, Bend's mail is still sorted, accepted, and delivered through both the 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Oregon Avenue branches.

So, what happened to the United States Federal Post office building on the corner of Wall Street and Franklin Avenue? Although showing its age, the American classicism-style architecture, with its columns of concrete and granite stairway found new purpose in 1985. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places, receiving recognition as a historic and cultural resource.

In 2001, the Bend Chamber of Commerce moved into the building occupying the old post office's territory. Today it continues to stand. After a major renovation giving new life and purpose to a splendid building, it has become the home to the Westman Hotel, named for Oregon's first female postal carrier, Minnie Westman.

Visit [Inside The Westman Hotel in Bend's Historic Post Office — Bend Magazine](#) for a look inside the new hotel, and to learn about the design details that honor the building's history. [An extended version of this article is available on our website.](#)

*The US Federal Post Office building re-opened as the Westman Hotel on February 1, 2026*



# NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH

## 2026 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

For full descriptions and details visit [deschuteshistory.org/about-us/historic-preservation-month/](https://deschuteshistory.org/about-us/historic-preservation-month/)

May 1, 5-7:00 p.m.

### Power of a Place Kick-off Event

The Westman Hotel, 777 NW Wall St, Bend



May 2, 16, 30  
10:30 a.m.

### Heritage Walking Tour: The Early Days of Bend

Deschutes Historical Museum, 129 NW Idaho Ave, Bend

Reservations Required: [deschuteshistory.org/programs-and-education/museum-tours/](https://deschuteshistory.org/programs-and-education/museum-tours/)

May 4, 5:30 p.m.

### Deschutes County Landmarks Commission Meeting

Deschutes Services Building, 1300 NW Wall St, Bend

May 6, 7:00 p.m.

### Bend City Council Proclamation in support of National Historic Preservation Month

City Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall St, Bend

May 9, 23  
10:30 a.m.

### Heritage Walking Tour: Reflections of History: An Architectural Tour

Deschutes Historical Museum, 129 NW Idaho Ave, Bend

Reservations Required: [deschuteshistory.org/programs-and-education/museum-tours/](https://deschuteshistory.org/programs-and-education/museum-tours/)

May 13, 7:00 p.m.

### An Evening with Rick Atkinson: The War for America, 1777-1780

The Tower Theatre, 835 NW Wall St, Bend [Ticketed event](#)

May 14, 17, 30  
10-11:30 a.m.

### Sisters Landmark Walking Tour

Sisters Museum, 151 N Spruce St, Sisters

Preregistration Required: [museum@threesistershistoricalsociety.org](mailto:museum@threesistershistoricalsociety.org)



May 14, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

### Redmond Landmarks Commission Work Session

Redmond City Hall, 411 SW 9th St, Room 207, Redmond

May 16, 9-4:00 p.m.

### Redmond Preservation Day

Multiple events; See [Redmond Historic Landmarks Commission webpage](#) for details and locations

May 19, 6:00 p.m.

### Bend Landmarks Commission meeting

City Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall St, Bend

May 23, 10-3:00 p.m.

### Opening Doors to History

Rosland Park, 16525 Burgess Rd, La Pine

May 23, 11-3:00 p.m.

### Property Research Workshop: "What Was at That Address"

Deschutes Historical Museum, 129 NW Idaho Ave, Bend [Registration Required, \\$50 program fee](#)

May 26, 5:30 p.m.

### Heritage Walking Tour: Redmond Historic Homes Tour

Redmond City Hall, 411 SW 9th St, Redmond

May 27, 11:00 a.m.

### [Preserving America for the Next Generation: Involving Younger People in Preservation Zoom Meeting](#)

[Live link to Zoom meeting in the title](#)

May 28, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

### Redmond Landmarks Commission Meeting

Redmond City Hall, 411 SW 9th St, Redmond

May 28, 4:30-7:00 p.m.

### EDCO Central Oregon Pub Talk: 100 Years of Bend Water

Open Space Events Studio, 220 NE Lafayette Ave, Bend



May 29, 2:30 p.m.

### *Come Along on the Oregon Trail: Archaeological Society of Central Oregon*

The Deschutes Historical Museum, 129 NW Idaho Ave, Bend

The  
Archaeology  
Roadshow

2026

# The Archaeology of Fire & Water

A prescribed fire at William L. Finlay  
National Wildlife Refuge  
by Brent Lawrence/USFS

Crater Lake taken from  
Watchman Lookout Station  
by Athleticamps

**Saturday, June 6**

**11:00 a.m.– 3:00 p.m.**

- Throw a spear
- Expert ID of your personal objects (no financial appraisals)
- Meet regional professional archaeologists
- Family Friendly
- Free event and museum admission

**For more information:**

[archaeologyroadshow.org](http://archaeologyroadshow.org)

**Volunteers needed, contact  
Tracy Alexander:**

[tracy@deschuteshistory.org](mailto:tracy@deschuteshistory.org)

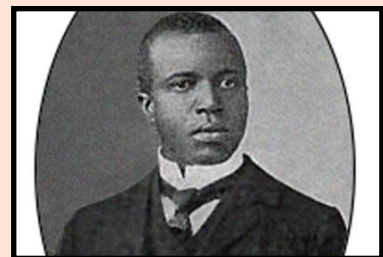


**AMERICA  
250  
OREGON**  
OFFICIAL EVENT

## Mark Your Calendars

**MAY**

- 2, 16, 30 HERITAGE WALKING TOUR: Early Days of Bend**  
10:30 a.m. Deschutes Historical Museum
- 13 HATFIELD LECTURE SERIES: AN EVENING WITH RICK ATKINSON**  
7:00 p.m. The Tower Theatre; 835 NW Wall St Bend  
Visit [towertheatre.org](http://towertheatre.org) for tickets
- 9, 23 HERITAGE WALKING TOUR: Architectural Tour**  
10:30 a.m. Deschutes Historical Museum
- 23 WORKSHOP: "What was That Address?" Property Research in a Nutshell**  
11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Deschutes Historical Society  
See p. 6 for details; [Registration Required](#)
- 26 HISTORY PUB: SCOTT JOPLIN AND RAGTIME SPACES OF DESCHUTES COUNTY: 1900-1918**  
Presented by Kendra Kay Friar  
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!**

**June 6: Oregon Archaeology Roadshow- "The Archaeology of Fire and Water"**

**June 28: Volunteer Appreciation Party**

