LOOKING FORWARD

JANUARY

13  History Pub
Dr. M. Jackson: *The Secret lives of Glaciers*
Viking Braggot Southtowne. Doors at 6, program at 7:15. Additional Co-sponsor: University Center for Environmental Futures

FEBRUARY

5  History Trivia: Kitsch
Public Market Eateries. Doors at 5:30, Trivia at 6 pm. The hardest trivia night in Eugene returns to the 5th St. Market. Compete for prizes and pride!

7  Equality and Nothing Less:
*100 Years of the League of Women Voters*
LCHM Exhibit Opening
5-7 PM
Exhibits curator Faith Kreskey will give a talk on the exhibit starting at 6.

8  Annual Meeting
Lane Events Center Room 1
2-4 PM
Join us for a “Year in Review” by Board Chair Greg Moyce, presentation of LCHS Heritage Outreach Grants and History Excellence Awards, acclaimed author and speaker R. Gregory Nokes, and a reception at the Museum to celebrate Oregon statehood.

10  History Pub
Dr. Donald Worster, topic TBA
Viking Braggot Southtowne. Doors at 6, program at 7.

MARCH

9  History Pub, Speaker TBA
Viking Braggot Southtowne. Doors at 6, program at 7.
Serendipity. Both an interesting term and concept. How often do unrelated happenings coincide to bring about great results? They certainly occur, perhaps not as often as we might wish. But I wish to relate two such recent occurrences for the museum.

Twice during fall season the museum has benefited from unexpected financial assistance. The first was a windfall! Former volunteer Hattie Mae Nixon’s estate settlement check arrived, followed later that same day by an unanticipated check for the identical amount from the Giustina Family Foundation. Receiving two $10,000 donations in one day has not happened before in my tenure at LCHM!

The second occurrence began inauspiciously with a request that I come speak with a museum visitor who was interested in our Spanish-American War, Philippine-American War memorial. Just the previous week we had received word from the Oregon Community Foundation that our grant request to relocate the memorial had been approved. Retired Army Lt. Col. Mark Chapman, a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, and a student of military history, was our curious visitor. Mark was delighted to hear that the memorial was to be moved to a more prominent museum location. But he then asked about the bronze World War I Coast Artillery plaque located on the wall behind with the memorial.

When I explained that the plaque would become an orphan when the memorial was relocated, Mark offered to pay for relocation of the plaque to the Eugene Veterans Memorial Building downtown. Having gained agreement from the two veterans organizations comprising the Veterans Memorial Association, the whole process has now been set in motion.

This spring will see river rocking and memorial relocation courtesy of the Albert B. and Jean E. Hallstrom Family Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation grant, mural painting courtesy of that unanticipated Giustina Family Foundation donation, and relocation of the Coast Artillery plaque courtesy of Lt. Col. Mark Chapman. I would certainly label the conjunction of this generous financial support as serendipitous.

Congratulations are due Registrar and Artifacts Manager Tara Puyat, who traveled to the United Kingdom to receive a master’s degree in preventive conservation from Northumbria University. Effective January 1st, Tara will assume the role of Collections Manager at LCHM.

Finally, please acquaint yourselves with Allison Fischer-Olson, who will be our new Archivist and Research Librarian on Cheryl Roffe’s retirement. A short bio appears later in the newsletter. Please say “hi” to Allison on your next museum visit.

Sincerely,
Bob Hart
A New Chapter: LCHM Collections Manager Retires
by Cheryl Roffe

It is with mixed feelings that I am retiring after over 15 years as the Collections Manager for the Lane County History Museum. I am looking forward to a new chapter of life, and new adventures, but will miss the archival world that has been my domain. Although I have had oversight over all of the museum’s many types of collections, my day-to-day activity has focused on the archives and research library, a role I have greatly enjoyed.

When I first started in this position in September 2004, LCHM had a significant backlog of uncatalogued material. Some books had been waiting to be cataloged for 15 years, and dozens of boxes of uncatalogued manuscript material, maps and ephemera were inaccessible to researchers because there were no inventories or finding aids. In addition to providing relevant materials to our research patrons and our exhibit curators, it has been my goal to inventory, catalog, and enter as much of Lane County’s documentary history as possible into our database. With the valuable assistance of our excellent archival volunteers, Keith and Kathy Wolfe, Joanne Snyder, Steve Eccles and Rachael Gifford, we have made great progress, including cataloging thousands of photographs, 5852 books (thanks to the efforts of retired school librarian Keith Wolfe), 439 manuscript collections of various sizes, 221 maps and over 20 boxes of ephemera. Almost all of our archival collections can now be located through the database, a monumental task for the thousands of documents collected since the museum’s founding in 1951. The oral history collection was preserved on CDs and provided with interview transcripts under the guidance of former employee Virginia Sherwood, and the bulk of our huge historic photograph collection is now on-line for public access. Our digital archivist, Nick Chase and graphic artist, Stephen O’Brien, have established the Digital Lab and are beginning the process of digitizing selected maps from our unique collection for access on-line. The introductions to our manuscript collections are also on-line as of this past year, thus providing much better access to the public.

In 2013 one of the biggest challenges facing us was the safe disposal of our nitrate negative collection. Nitrate negatives, the first commercially available flexible film, are flammable and toxic. Nitrate film can self-ignite under certain circumstances, and a US Navy experiment revealed that it can burn under water since it generates its own oxygen. Moreover, nitrate negatives become less stable as they age, and much of our collection was 80 to 100 years old. A series of grants allowed us to digitize the negatives, and then with the help of Lane County Hazardous Waste, staff members removed 500 lbs. of nitrate film from storage envelopes, so they could be placed in protective barrels and hauled to a hazardous waste incinerator in El Dorado, Arkansas.

Now is a key transition time in the history of our museum. We have a very committed, capable and forward-looking young staff, who are bringing the museum up to current industry standards, including making many of our collections available digitally, and who are promoting the museum through special events and social media, making the museum an ever-active voice in the community.

I have enjoyed working with everyone here, and am delighted that my successor, Allison Fischer-Olson, is so experienced and so immediately capable of grasping our research processes and archival procedures. Allison’s title will be Archivist and Research Librarian, and Tara Puyat, who is in charge of the artifacts (3-dimensional objects) collection, will now carry the title of Collections Manager. I know that I am leaving the archives and the museum in good hands. Thank you to all of you for your ongoing support.
Thanks to an Oregon Heritage Scholarship from Oregon Parks and Recreation, I attended 2019’s Museum Computer Network conference last November. 550 cultural heritage professionals from museums as large as London’s Victoria and Albert, the Getty, and many more gathered in San Diego to discuss aspects of museum technology from the nerdiest discussion of metadata, to posting on Twitter. The topic of this year’s conference was *Interface: Communities + Museums*.

Presentations focused on “filling the gaps,” that is, giving voice to history, individuals, and communities who have not shared the stage of western history. Inclusivity is the new standard in museums, and presentations across topics, from metadata to marketing, focused on diverse representation of people, gender and communities in museums. “Data has the power to increase the representation of diverse populations in digital collections,” offered Effie Kapsalis, Senior Digital Program Officer at the Smithsonian.

Kapsalis cites that barely more than 17% of biographies on Wikipedia are of women (1). To illustrate how history has been folded—as opposed to unfolded—Kapsalis offered a parable of sorts. It was recently discovered that a notable (male) researcher under contract with the US government contributed research ongoing for several years after his death. As it turns out, US contracts at the turn of the previous century allowed only one signer and, in cases of co-gendered teams, that defaulted to the male member. In this case it was a husband-wife team, so the contract continued under the signer’s name, even though he was deceased.

The conference wasn’t all seriousness: I represented LCHM’s collection in a workshop about narratives for social media and am happy to have educated eight large institutions on the subject of butter molds. I made use of what I learned to write the Virtual Online Gala-vant for LCHM’s latest exhibit, *The Culture of Kitsch*, which you can follow from the LCHM website, our Facebook, or our Instagram.

Education was another focus of the conference, both classroom teaching and the role of museums in providing education to communities. I reviewed several case studies where museums collaborated with local organizations and institutions to represent ethnic or religious communities in their own voices. I also had the opportunity to discuss the future of online educational resources with Paula Gangopadhyay, Deputy Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, who is spearheading a national collaboration between three large institutions to make teaching materials not only available to elementary school teachers, but have that content sculpted by them.

Further Reading


[https://siarchives.si.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/2016_03_10_OpenCollections_Public.pdf](https://siarchives.si.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/2016_03_10_OpenCollections_Public.pdf)

[https://womenshistory.si.edu/news/2019/11/because-her-story-funk-list](https://womenshistory.si.edu/news/2019/11/because-her-story-funk-list)


Get Involved

For 72 years, women in the United States lobbied, campaigned, wrote letters, marched in parades, held sit-ins, and were even imprisoned in their fight for the right to vote. When the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was finally approved on August 26, 1920, the political power of women voters was unleashed.

Women Empowered
The 19th Amendment gave 20 million women a larger role in public affairs but also carried with it the responsibility to become informed about issues. To support the new voters, two groups, the Council of Women Voters and the National American Woman Suffrage Association, merged, launching “a mighty political experiment,” the League of Women Voters of the United States.

The League's mission is to encourage informed and active participation in government. It works to increase public understanding of public policy issues through education and advocacy. The League is nonpartisan and does not endorse individual candidates or political parties.

The League's advocacy work is based on research that considers all sides of an issue and the members' consensus. “As a result of this methodical examination of issues, the League's position on an issue is well respected and often has a significant impact on a community's decision making.”

Making an Impact
In 1939, a group of local women founded the Eugene League of Women Voters, later renamed the League of Women Voters of Lane County. During its 80 years, the LWVLC has influenced hundreds of policies that helped shape the community. Here are a few examples:

In 1944, LWVLC advocated, and Eugene voters approved, a city manager model of government. Beginning in 1953 and for years thereafter, the League advocated for air pollution oversight. The Lane Regional Air Protection Agency was created in 1968.

In 1965, the LWVLC brought together public and private social services to address the need for affordable day care. In 1968, a community-supported affordable day care center opened. In 1970, the LWVLC circulated a petition...
to put a measure on the ballot delaying construction of a nuclear power plant in the Willamette Valley. The measure was passed, and the project shelved.

In 1998, the League urged the Eugene City Council to build a new library and to place a four-year local option levy on the ballot to fund Eugene Library’s operation. The League worked to inform voters about the levy. The measure passed, as did renewal of the levy in 2002 and again in 2006.

Other examples of the wide-ranging issues the LWVLC has addressed include:
1946 – Rural Schools Bill, equalizing and raising rural school standards
1948 – Free countywide garbage disposal system
1970 & 2018 – A new county jail
1998 – Independent Citizen Police Commission
1999 – A regional transportation system
2001 & 2002 – Use of agricultural lands as aggregate mining in gravel pits
2012 – “Envision Eugene,” a 20-year growth plan
2018 – March for Our Lives - legislation to prevent gun violence

The League has used a variety of ways to increase understanding of public policies. LWVLC’s first speaker’s bureau in 1946 drew some 5,500 people to hear unbiased explanations of ballot measures. In 1952, LWVLC held its first candidate fair, giving citizens the opportunity to meet 50 candidates for elective offices ranging from Eugene Water and Electric Board Commissioners to U.S. Senators.

Today, the League’s biennial voter guides are available in English, Spanish, and online. Traditional, social media, and online resources such as www.411Vote.org provide information about elections, issues, and candidates.

A Century of Change
In 2020, the League of Women Voters will celebrate 100 years of encouraging active and informed participation in government. This “mighty political experiment” has invited millions of women to have a say in their government. Women couldn’t even vote 100 years ago. Today, women are one of the most influential voting blocs in the nation.

The Lane County History Museum’s exhibit, Equality and Nothing Less: 100 Years of the League of Women Voters opens on February 7, 2020. Several other events commemorating the League’s 100 years will be presented throughout 2020. Visit www.LWVLC.org for details.
Introducing Allison Fischer-Olson, Archivist and Research Librarian

by Cheryl Roffe

It is with great pleasure that we introduce our newest staff member, Allison Fischer-Olson. Allison takes over from former Collections Manager Cheryl Roffe as Archivist and Research Librarian at LCHM. Cheryl retired at the end of the year, after 15 years with LCHM.

Allison comes to us from California with significant research, archival and collections experience, with a focus on Native American history. She was Assistant Curator at the Fowler Museum of Archeology at UCLA, among other things, and has a B.A. in Anthropology and an M.A. in American Indian Studies, both from the University of California in Los Angeles. Since 2014, she has been the Head of Research and Community Outreach for the ONWARD project, a Los Angeles-based non-profit which has been developing a humanities-based virtual storytelling platform about a Depression-era expedition to the Southwest. Allison has been volunteering at the UO Museum of Natural and Cultural History, in addition to her work with the ONWARD project. She moved to Eugene with her husband Dean in 2016, so that he could attend graduate school at the University of Oregon. Dean is employed locally as a cartographer.

Allison worked alongside Cheryl for the month of December to learn as much as possible from Cheryl’s 15 years in LCHM’s Library and Archive. With her education and professional background, Allison has picked up rapidly. The archives will be in good hands, and we look forward to seeing a continual evolution in archival management and care.

DIGITAL DIARIES -

by Lee Harrison

March 21, 1853, Andrew McClure left the Indiana community of Shaker Prairie with the McClure-Bond-Bruce group headed for the Willamette Valley. He was 23 years old. The McClure train was headed by Andrew’s cousins, Vincent and James McClure, and included their families and some Bond and Bruce family members. Frances Blevins and William Howard also accompanied the McClure party, but were not related. Altogether their wagon train was composed of “23 souls.”

The Shaker Prairie area is approximately 173 miles from St. Louis by current roads. The McClure party saved about 16 miles by cutting diagonally across the prairie, but it still took them 12 days to make that part of the journey, as opposed to the 3 ½ hours that it would take today by car.

Two days out from Shaker Prairie, Andrew wrote “Our cattle today have been very gay and heedless which was occasioned by the weather. The weather has been blustery wind from the west and about thirty miles per hour.” Andrew was very observant and detail-conscious. Throughout his journals Andrew meticulously shares details of the weather, soil conditions, mileage, and other minutiae of his days.

En route to St. Louis, the emigrants often spent the night with local residents, and often the price of lodging and forage for the cattle was steep. After one encounter Andrew said, “Grain is very high and the people seem disposed to Rope it on to us as they expect never to see us again.” Andrew described some of the one-night landlords as “the right kind of a man,” “very friendly and ready to accommodate,” and “plain free spoken old man,” and wrote of the married couple who shared their home with the McClures for a week as, “The Gentleman where we have stopped is a German but he and his lady are very neat and genteel and treat us with much affability.”

Andrew’s wry sense of humor shows itself in an entry written on the way to St. Louis: “Today I got a second introduction to the Oregon fun. I was driving my team into a creek when those in the lead got contrary and having more ambition than sense [I] plunged into the water after them.”
Of the McClure and Bond womenfolk originally not eager to leave their comfortable homes, Andrew noted “Women in our train who when they left home dare not wet their feet seem to stand the hardships of camp without having health injured; on the contrary seem to be gaining better health every day. The exposure of this trip would be sufficient to kill half the people of Shaker prairie . . .”

Another admiring entry stated: “It is a strange truth which scientific men have vainly endeavored demonstrate. (sic) Gr. We often see, and the present case is an instance which goes to prove it, that women when surrounded by the comforts and conveniences of home shrink from the thought of even frivolous danger, and brace up their nerves and withstand hardships and dangers which can only be expected from those whose past has been that of danger and whose luxuries are those of sterner stuff . . .”

They arrived in St. Louis on March 31st and hired the steamer Kansas to take them to Council Bluffs at a cost of “eight dollars for each ox and four dollars for each person.” Traveling by water on hired steamer was meant to save time. However, it would be another four days before they were allowed to board the steamer with their cattle, horses, supplies and possessions for the 660-mile trip, and in their first 50 hours on the river, they had traveled less than 150 miles.

Conditions aboard the steamer were horribly cramped and unsanitary due to overcrowding of passengers and livestock. “Crowded on deck with 75 or 80 head of cattle and horses and the boats crew have not, and the boys do not, see fit to clean the deck.” After a few days on the river he wrote, “Of all the positions that the traveler can be placed, the crowded deck of a steamboat is the most abominable. The man who places himself or his family in that position must for a time realize themselves with these abominable foreigners whose society is even more detestable than the brutes that are shipped and with which they live. The crew of our boat is composed almost wholly of Irish and when they can get spirits such is their noisy carousing and disagreeable disposition that men must either be trodden underfoot by them or use them very roughly.”

One day Andrew had an escalated moment with a crew member over condition of the deck: “This morning I had a few words with the mate. . . . my temper became unmanageable and I spoke rather short requesting him to stand aside; . . . we both grew more presumptuous than reasonable. I may be too independent to address the dignity of a steamboat officer as I would a common man, but such is my putness that I would sauce one man as quick as another if he infringes upon my rights.”

On April 15 the Kansas put to shore and the crew refused to take their passengers any further. Andrew doesn’t mention the reason for the unexpected decision, but the McClure party wasn’t overly unhappy to leave the steamer, even with Council Bluffs still about 150 miles away.

While crossing a creek Andrew lost his watch. He says, “It was dropped in the road near the water and was passed over by two teams but was uninjured and when I found it nothing was wrong, and although almost covered with mud it was still running.” Was it a Timex? The company wasn’t officially founded until 1854, but Andrew’s watch certainly “took a licking and kept on ticking.”

Andrew was a sober young man who didn’t regard the cross-country trek as a lark: “Going to Oregon is no child’s nor should it be heated in childish manner. He who undertakes it must make up his mind to stand many hardships and if he cannot thus make up his mind he had better remain at home.” Crossing the Missouri River felt to Andrew as if they had crossed “beyond the limits of civil law. The powder ball and steel constitute the principles of honor, duty, and justice. We are now within the bounds which men allotted to those Indians who are so wild in their habits & so degenerate that they cannot be reclaimed or civilized . . .”

The digitization of Andrew’s journal continues, and Andrew’s saga will continue in the Spring.
The paperwork sounds like it was a clerk's nightmare. A Justice Department investigator in 1903 stated, “I find the naturalization records in many cases in a chaotic condition, many lost and destroyed, and some sold for old paper. Most records consist of merely the name and nativity of the alien with no means of identifying aliens of the same name....In numerous cases I find aliens naturalized under initials instead of Christian names, surnames misspelled or changed entirely, and names of witnesses inserted in place of the alien naturalized.”

The US passed its first immigration law in 1790, opening naturalization to anyone who was free—and white. Five years later, Congress introduced the Declaration of Intention as the first step in the naturalization process. In that same act, Congress required courts to record the entry of all aliens. Clerks recorded each immigrant’s name, birthdate, birthplace, US residence, most recent foreign residence, port of emigration, name of vessel, date of arrival, and port of arrival. Some versions of the forms also required the occupation, height, weight, complexion, and hair and eye color.

In 1870, naturalization became available to aliens of African nativity or descent. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, prohibited entry of “undesirables,” and 1891 saw the passage of an act that restricted those described as “mentally disturbed persons, persons suffering from a ‘loathsome or contagious’ disease, paupers, persons convicted of a felony or infamous crime or misdemeanor of moral turpitude and polygamists.” In 1903, the law further prohibited anarchists, people with epilepsy, beggars, and importers of prostitutes from entry. English became a requirement for naturalization in 1903, although fluency wasn’t required. Immigrants who served in the armed forces of their adopted country during WWI were exempted from filing a Declaration of Intention.

On a fall morning in September of 1912, Esy Rubenstein filed a Declaration of Intention with the Multnomah Circuit Court clerk, renouncing his allegiance to Russia’s emperor, and attesting his intention to remain in the US. Esy gave “fruit vendor” as his occupation, but ten years later he would open his first furniture store in Lane County. Among other familiar Lane County names, Frederick Cuthbert attended his petition hearing in April 1938, and Jens and Else Jeppesen attended Jen’s hearing in May 1957. These steps in the naturalization process, momentous to the immigrants, were recorded by Lane County Circuit Court clerks, who were required by Congress to document the arrival of all aliens.

Documentation from the naturalization process can be a genealogical resource, but because naturalization is not law, not all immigrants file, or filed, leaving gaps where naturalization was not pursued. It has been noted that of the foreign-born persons listed on the 1890-1930 censuses, 25% had not become naturalized or filed their “first papers.”

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The Expatriation Act of 1907 mandated that women of the US marrying immigrants would forfeit their US citizenship and assume the nationality of their husbands. It wasn’t until 1922 that the Cable Act let American women retain their American citizenship if they married non-citizens after the act went into effect. Sadly, wives who had been expatriated were required to apply for naturalization if they wished to regain their citizenship. LCHM’s Archives Immigration Records collection has about 25 records of wives filing for repatriation. As an aside, the most recent immigration legislation in the US was passed in 2005, and among other provisions, it cleared the way for the building of border barriers.

Lane County naturalization records ranging from 1834 through 1958 were transferred from Lane County to the Archive at Lane County History Museum in 2005. The collection of county records consists of Declarations of Intention, Certificates of Citizenship, lists of petitioners’ names, and the inevitable inter-office correspondence. To date, the earliest record in this collection is a handwritten Declaration of Intention filed by Charles Wintzingerod in September 1839. Of the 284 cataloged documents that include a birth country, the UK accounts for 31.7%, with Canada adding 3.2%, Germany is next, with almost 30%. The remaining 35% included immigrants from Switzerland, Holland, Scandinavia, Poland, Russia, other European countries, and one immigrant from the Philippine Islands.

Pictured here are examples of documents filed by Lane County clerks over time. One is a Declaration of Intention from Lane County’s very own Fred Krueger, who emigrated from Russia to Lane County in 1895.

We’re continuing to catalogue these papers, and in the process discovering many tidbits of history hiding in the paperwork.