

LOOKING FORWARD • DIRECTOR'S CORNER • EQUITY AND INCLUSION •
 MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD • EQUITY AND INCLUSION: METADATA • HISTORIC CORRECTIONS •
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THE ARTIFACT



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Historical Society Publications are available for purchase at the Museum.

THE ARTIFACT IS PRODUCED BY:

Editor: Nick Chase Design: Stephen O'Brien LCHM staff members, and guest contributors.

Front cover: ER172. Mrs. Murry stands behind baskets of flowers given to her at the Townsend Club's flower

shower. 1936

LOOKING FORWARD



The Museum is Closed during the Health Crisis.

Stay informed by joining our email list:

lchm.org/join-our-mailing-list/

Our website, facebook and instagram contain a wealth of information easily accessed during this time. View our online collections at

lchm.pastperfectonline.com to catch a glimpse or dive deep into local history.

UPCOMING EXHIBIT



Upstream Movements: Counterculture in Lane County

APRIL - JUNE



All April - June events have been canceled for health concerns. Stay Healthy!

JULY



Lane County Fair

If safe to do so, we will need volunteers for the Lane County Fair. The museum provides free admission to attendees and sees the highest attendance of any week of the year.

Director's Corner

Bob Hart, Executive Director



KE627: A group of Eugene Hospital nurses in uniform pose in front of unidentified building, possibly Eugene Hospital and Clinic, 1162 Willamette Street, Eugene. February 13, 1928

The past few weeks have certainly challenged us all! Perhaps the closest historical analog in US history is the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918-20. The statistics on "flattening the curve" apparently owe their origins to the analysis of the results of preparation versus lack of preparation in the cities of Philadelphia, PA (unprepared) and St. Louis, MO (prepared). And so by taking precautions like social distancing and hand washing often, we can assist in preventing the disease's spread.

Lane County Historical Society operates the Museum under contract to Lane County government, paid from transient room tax—tax collected from tourism, hotels, and restaurant business—promised by statute. This constitutes no less than three quarters of our operating budget. Museum staff are not county employees, and our wages and benefits are properly described as lean to minimal. This subsidy is obviously taking a huge hit from the travel bans, event cancellations, restaurant closings, and mandated social isolation.

As I write this column, the museum is closed (as are all our sister museums statewide) and, as hotel occupancy rates have reportedly tanked, the museum has reluctantly begun staff layoffs. Remaining staff are working from home inasmuch as it is possible. This works better for some museum positions than for others (like archives, collections, and bill payments), until mid-April when the

museum will release all but management until further notice. Our events have been canceled through at least mid-April and the Olympic Trials and even the Olympics themselves are recognized as imperiled.

It is unclear whether any of the governmental financial rescue packages being discussed will include nonprofits. I ask our members and readers to please consider these facts when our pandemic fears subside and we all attempt to slip back into normalcy. Lane County Historical Society will not conduct a spring fundraising campaign this year due to the unique conditions we find our organization and membership to be in, but we hope to have your generous support again when the light at the end of the tunnel becomes clear.

Sincerely,

Bob Hart

The Museum Represents Diversity: LCHM's Equity and **Inclusion Statement**

Nick Chase, Digital Archivist & Creative Assets Manager

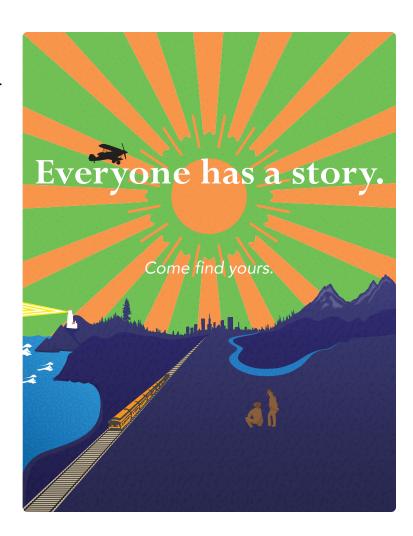
Circulating around the Museum is the Non-Profit Association of Oregon Equity and Inclusion Lens Guide (https://nonprofitoregon.org/equity-inclusion-lens-guidemessage). It states that equity ensures "everyone has access to equal results and benefits," and inclusion means asking for the participation of all community members in assessing and delivering information. The intended result is for the work to have equal impact and benefit for all.

The drive to include all voices in museums is happening worldwide. I heard Tonya Nelson speak at the Museum Computer Network conference last November. Nelson is a US expat who holds the position of Director of Arts, Technology and Innovation for the Arts Council in the UK. She stated, "...culture is self-expression..." (emphasis mine). In her keynote Nelson addressed today's audiences, but asked who the audience of the future may be. The practicality of inclusivity fills the gaps in an otherwise white-dominated media space, and creates a fuller picture of our community in that space. Nelson called it a "messy edge," and posited that edge offers more truthful representation of the populations museums seek to present.

Unlike the past 100 years, collective work in museums today is not done with an air of exoticism or othering. Rather, these institutions are giving a voice to people of color, women, differing socioeconomic levels, gender panoramas, and displaced ethnic communities just to name a few by collaborating directly with those communities in the creation of exhibits, accessibility, and even museum metadata, the descriptive writing about the items in our collection.

LCHM's internal culture is diverse, in our attitudes as well as our origins. As a staff, we are working on a statement that reflects the living culture of the museum and what we are doing to unlock histories in Lane County that may not be immediately visible. When you see this statement, we would like you to know that it's not merely an idea to us but is something we pursue on the job every day.

The collections and archives of the Lane County History Museum do not accurately reflect the objective historical diversity of Lane County. Recognizing this, LCHM is actively working to uncover local history through open, inclusive dialogue, confronting internal biases, readdressing the language of our records and record keeping, and opening the intellectual space of the Museum and its undertakings to include what is absent. Our goal is to draw those histories into the Museum in order to present a better, and equitable understanding of Lane County's history.



A Statement from the Board

Bart Aikens, President

A burgeoning pandemic makes this an inauspicious time for me to become president of the board of directors of the Lane County Historical Society. My best-laid plans turned on a dime due to "events, dear boy, events," words attributed to British prime minister Harold Macmillan.

Rhapsodizing about LCHM's future rings hollow to me while temporary circumstances keep most of our staff—outstanding, one and all—from continuing their mission and collecting their pay. So instead I'll begin this inaugural address by welcoming my fellow new board members Bill Barrett, Rose Sleanbeck, and Steve Williamson.

Bill, a popular local radio personality, has a medium for promoting LCHM's events, but we don't have any to promote just now. Here's something he can plug on

May 12, courtesy of Mike Wolfe's article in the Summer 2019 edition of the Lane County Historian. That date marks the 70th anniversary of the first pro baseball game in Eugene. If you surmise that one of the two teams playing was the Emeralds, you'd be off the mark by five years. The Ems' predecessors, the Eugene Larks, beat the Marysville Peaches 10-9 in ten innings at Bethel Park.

Rose is serving a one-year board term owing to her special status as a UO graduate student. But she is also special because she chairs our Strategic Planning Committee. As Rose well knows, natural disaster preparation is a component of any sound strategic plan. Her presence among us is timely indeed.

Steve may be Opal Whiteley's biggest booster. The pandemic prompted postponement of Steve's Cottage Grove-area bus tour of sites associated with our local girl wonder. At a later date I look forward to his master class on all things Opal.

My deepest thanks to the veteran board members on whom I lean for guidance—my fellow executives Steve Eccles and Randy Mafit, along with John Barnum, Casey Barrett, and Karen Olsen. And Bob Hart, you're always there when I need you, which is often.

When I first walked through LCHM's doors in the 1970s with my Dunn School classmates, I never imagined serving on this board, much less executing a successful power grab to secure the titles of both president and secretary. As to the latter office, I may have misunderstood that business about the one who wields the pen gets to write the history. As if meeting minutes have such gravity.

GN11408. Donald Greiner working with radio equipment at the Eugene Vocational School in 1950.



THE ARTIFACT

Bringing Equity and Inclusion to Our Databases

Nick Chase, Digital Archivist & Creative Assets Manager and Allison Fischer-Olson, Archivist & Research Librarian

It's easy to think that any museum, especially a history museum, is limited by our collections in the ways we can actively pursue a mission of Equity and Inclusion. In fact, museums around the world are aggressively refocusing the lens through which they see their collections and LCHM is no exception.

One way to open up our local history is to audit and update metadata—the information that describes artifacts, archives and photo images. That information shapes how we look at the collection, how we research it, and how we present the collection to you. Updated metadata helps us discover the people tacitly present in the collection—and likewise, absent.

At the Museum Computer Network conference, Digital Platform Administrator at the Aga Khan Museum (Toronto) Erin Canning explained that metadata easily makes objects invisible in a museum database. Contemporary search-terms may not match the terminology used at the time of accessioning an artifact.

Canning also noted that information systems both create meaning and reflect power structures. Testament to this point, Obama signed a bill in 2016 prohibiting the use of "Oriental" in any Federal document. The power of words is important to understand for a museum working to equitably represent the fullest spectrum of community. Dividing terms—terms that imply someone is "other" such as Oriental, Indian, Handicapped, Diabetic etc., do not represent the values of a diverse and inclusive society. Today, these terms have been reoriented to emphasize individual personhood, rather than objectify individuals. A good illustration of the difference in terminology would be, terming a person with diabetes (current inclusive language) as "a diabetic." The latter objectifies and limits the identity of the individual to their disease, and narrows the potential scope of our understanding of that person.

The question becomes how to create metadata that is inclusive, accurate, and ultimately searchable, without need for creating an additional lexicon of search terms in order to search collections databases effectively. The method for creating such metadata that (hopefully) retains usability over time, is to involve communities in decision making about terminology. That means inviting community interaction at many levels and actively including—not merely reporting—their input in their own collective voice.

Museums actively revising metadata include the Smithsonian Museum of African Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and Aga Khan Museum in Toronto. These museums, and many more are actively working to make databases more searchable by making database terminology (metadata) culturally inclusive and reflective of Museum culture today.

However, while including community input in collection databases is a good start, the knowledge coming from these community conversations most often ends up relegated to a "notes" section of the database. This happens because databases aren't designed to accommodate broader forms of knowledge. Though information appears where it was not present before, it is still treated as extra. When information that should be vital to collection items and clearly searchable in a designated field is becomes a "note," that information is effectively invisible.

The databases museums use are inherently flawed, and so in addition to extending search lexicons, structural changes in the databases themselves are also necessary. Sometimes the only way to make collections truly visible in ways that are equitable to communities is to restructure and reprioritize the way information is prompted, using the design of the database itself to recognize what is true or important.

For example, there is a system called TK (Traditional Knowledge) Labels created to reflect indigenous ways of knowing about museum and archive collections. In TK, source communities designate what labels are appropriate for material. The labels are meant to provide information to the public, but also to prompt how material should be handled or cared for. The Library of Congress has been working to add a field in their database for these TK labels, as one would see a field for Catalog Number or Creator or Provenance.

While the first place to start is community dialog and collaboration, it's important to acknowledge that it's a first step on a long road of making structural changes. We acknowledge that we are limited in what we can do with our resources at LCHM, we are not Library of Congress, nor are we even close to the caliber of any museums mentioned above. However, it's important not to understate that the metadata structure itself is often just as exclusive as the terminology.

Historical Corrections in the Public Arena

Faith Kreskey, Exhibits Curator

In October 2019, I attended a public forum about the upcoming Chamber of Commerce Community Narrative Project, a marketing push they are implementing to build public goodwill ahead of the 2021 World Athletics Championships. Having heard the project involved local history as a way to build community, I attended to provide feedback on the project. I have attempted in the months since to have the project issue my recommended corrections to the presentation themselves and was met with very few results. Instead, they removed all historical content from the presentation and went silent on the matter. I am now publishing my corrections in our newsletter, as it is part of my role as a public historian to disseminate accurate information.

The presentation contained mostly inaccurate information about and interpretation of our local history, some of which showed extreme bias that verged on racism. The intent was to paint Eugene residents as special because of their pioneer heritage, and this claim was based on very poorly researched information.

The interpretation of history is constantly evolving. While some facts stand steadfast, we are constantly discovering new resources and information that change how we view the past. Our local history is no different, and the interpretation of the Westward Migration in particular has been reevaluated over the last decade. Narrativized interpretations of facts that were once common are being challenged. This means the history many were taught and are comfortable with is becoming something that is no longer disseminated in current public history education. While the facts and dates have not changed, outmoded or inaccurate interpretation of historical events are something we work to actively unteach.

Claim: Native American Culture is Dead

The story that Native Americans were a dying people was used by the United States government to justify their mistreatment and perpetuate a vision of white supremacy. It was easier to justify the donation land claim system if the public was told that Native Americans no longer existed. It also went a long way to ease white settler guilt. Despite a 97% population decline, the United States army deputized a local national guard, known as the Oregon Guard, to continue fighting Native American groups across Oregon until the 1890s. Native Americans living in Oregon were also moved onto reservations to control their ability to organize during the mid-19th century. Native children were

sent to boarding schools for reeducation until the 1950s. White families were encouraged to adopt Native American children, and there were higher rates of child removal from Native mothers from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Oregon has one of the largest populations of Native Americans in the country, and they are active members of our local community. Theirs is a story of true resilience. While it is important to acknowledge tragedy, historical narratives that end with the presentation on the population decline statistics implicitly supports a colonialist narrative.

Claim: Oregon was more Difficult to Get to Than California

The Oregon and California Trails were matched for difficulty for most of their route. Each had its own challenges, but the California Trail had the added difficulty of crossing the Great Salt Lake and the Sierra Nevada mountain range. It is worth noting that the Donner Party Incident took place on the California Trail, along with several other similarly horrible accidents caused by mistimed crossings of the Sierra Nevadas.

The journey west was difficult, and the Oregon Trail has been referred to as the longest graveyard in America. The entire journey was arduous, but Eugene was no more or less difficult to get to than other places in the Willamette Valley. What eventually became Eugene was merely at the end of the trail south from Oregon city. Only a very small percentage of the residents of Eugene in the 19th century came here along the Trail. The transcontinental railroad was built in 1869 and became the main mode of transport to the west coast, with stagecoach lines connecting California, Oregon, and Washington until 1887. This means that wagon trains were the main mode of transportation to Eugene only for about twenty years from its founding in 1846, and fewer than seven years from its formal incorporation in 1862.

Claim: Everyone in Eugene is of Pioneer Descent

While we often talk about the Oregon Trail as if it was a large migration, in reality the approximate 350,000 who left for Oregon from 1840-1870 represent a small fraction of the US population. During those 30 years the United States saw the immigration of approximately 6 million people. In 1840 the U.S. population had reached 17 million and by 1870 it topped 38 million. For comparison the recorded population of Oregon in 1870 was approximately 90,000.

[Continued on next page]

THE ARTIFACT

Historical Corrections [Continued]

Claim: People went to California for Financial Gain, and to Oregon for Idealistic Reasons

Most of the emigrants who traveled to Oregon and California did so for financial reasons. A large number of emigrants traveled West to escape debt, largely caused by the Panic of 1837. Others sought plentiful farmland, something hard to find in the increasingly crowded east. Others took opportunities for new businesses along the trail and in small rural communities. Gold mining, logging, and agriculture were all capitalistic endeavors in the 19th century. Most importantly, there were gold mines right here in Lane County, including the well-known Bohemia Mine near Cottage Grove. Eugene Skinner, our town founder, left Oregon to spend time in California prospecting.

Claim: Columbia College Showcases Eugene's Liberal Roots

Eugene's first institution of higher education was Columbia College, founded in 1856 by members of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The school burned down twice, first in 1856 and again in 1858 for reasons that are not entirely clear. Like the rest of the country, the board of the college was at odds over the issue of abolition. Supporters of both sides fought to control the school, and eventually proslavery officials won and instated their own principal M.I. Ryan in 1859. Ryan fled Eugene in 1860 after attempting to shoot local newspaper editor Byron J. Pengra, who he took issue with over his pro-Union views. Ryan sued the school for payment of his past wages, forcing Columbia College to declare bankruptcy and permanently close later that year.

Lane County voting records from the 1860s are sparse, but other evidence in local newspapers and publications of the period show that many of its citizens were pro-Confederacy Democrats. Joseph Lane, Oregon's first territorial governor and our county namesake, was a pro-slavery Democrat. John Whiteaker, namesake of The Whit and Oregon's first state governor, was also a Southern Democrat. Interpreting U.S. politics in the 19th century can be confusing since the parties have switched ends of the political spectrum.

Misinformation about local history often has a life of its own and will spread in unintended ways. It is our role as an institution to support accurate and fact-based public history so that we can grow and learn as a community. We must not forget the old stories, but instead look at them with new eyes and tell the story of who we were and who we really are today.

Digital Diaries

Lee Harrison, Receptionist

A week after disembarking from the steamer near Weston, Missouri, the McClure train was finally ferried over the Missouri River to Kansas soil. Andrew was disappointed by their pace and noted "it will take us about another week to get to Fort Kearney, a distance of about two hundred miles from Weston. At this rate it will take us about four hundred days . . . to conclude our journey."

The trek westward held many new experiences for their party. They saw a wagon train "which among other novelties had a buggy drawn by a single ox; had horse harness, bridle and complete rigging." An unanticipated experience was cooking with buffalo dung. Andrew wrote, "This evening we cooked some of our buffalo meat by means of "The Chips" and, although I cannot say it was possessed of any bad taste, the prejudice was sufficient. I would rather resort to the buffalo for food than for fuel."

Andrew had a flair for drama. "Had a small row today between two of the boys in which they drew their ponderous butcher knives from their heretofore quiet rest in their scabbords and the thunder rolled while fire flashed from the eyes of either, which bespoke anger and rage."

Nature challenged their passage with more than mountains. In one area, Andrew said, "The water is red and the ground white with alkalai. Some of the ponds look as if they contained lye." Further on they encountered more alkali, and Andrew dryly wrote, "Grass here is very good and alkali as plentiful." He got his first view of the Rocky Mountains in early July, "while trudging through sand ankle deep whipping an ox team dragging their weary limbs in the same stupid manner, I raised my head and looking forward, saw the snow covered Rocky Mountains for the first time. They represented white clouds intermingled with black – the black spots being timber."

For the 4th of July, the McClures "celebrated" with a dinner of "good Old Ned[cured pork], sweet butter, crackers and some warm river water soured with vinegar."

Early July also saw them entering South Pass in southwest Wyoming, often described as "a portion of the road which SPRING 2020

Andrew S. McClure, Part 3

has been looked upon with so much anxiety by us and much dread by many others. This is not as many suppose it to be, steep, craggy, and mountainous, but the ascent is so graduated that it can hardly be discovered with the naked eye." A week later, they faced another dreaded challenge. Andrew called it "that portion of the road so much dreaded by every emigrant. It is destitute of water for thirty miles or more and nearly fifty miles destitute of grass."

"At this rate it will take us about four hundred days... to conclude our journey."

Our roads today make the trip over the mountains between the Willamette Valley and eastern Wyoming much easier than the pioneers' experience. Some of their descriptions sound so matter-of-fact about the ascents and descents that they almost seemed to downplay the danger. "The road today is very rough and climbing steep hills; sliding down the stony side on the opposite side with crossing small branches with steep bank has been our principal business. The latter end of this day's drive was particularly rough." Further on, Andrew said, "At Pleasant Grove we commenced the ascent of a very long and high hill which we were ascending for the distance of a mile. After arriving at the summit, commenced the descent immediately which is about two miles long and many places very steep and rugged, dangerous for heavy loaded wagons. Our loads do not consist of more than one thousand pounds and with this load upon light wagons with both hind wheels locked, it required the exertion of heavy cattle to keep the wagon from running upon the teams."

Near northern Wyoming, Andrew commented on one effect of the emigration on the local Native American tribes. "The Indians... have been severely scourged heretofore by cholera and smallpox caught from the emigrants." Andrew also related an incident of attempted theft by Native Americans that "was restrained by a woman who drew a pistol. It is some times necessary that women should assume a degree of firmness wholly masculine." He described in detail the skills of Native

American hunters during a buffalo hunt and the skills of their young boys at archery practice.

On August 31st, near present day Vale, Oregon, the decision was made to join Elijah Elliot's wagon train, to save miles and provisions, but by mid-September supplies were getting dangerously low. An advance party consisting of Andrew McClure, Benjamin Owen and Job Denning from the McClure train, and five men from other trains, two of whom had been to Oregon, left Elliott's train, "promising to return in three days equipped for a trip to the valley".

Within a week, the rescue party's horses were failing from a lack of decent forage and water. Four days later, the men sighted Sisters, and turned their horses toward what they thought was Diamond Peak but was actually the South Sister. That mistake cost them in time and supplies.

A couple weeks later, one member decided to "try his fortune afoot" and was joined by two others. Describing the parting, Andrew said "Men, stout hearted men, were soon with overflowing eyes and the already pale countenances became deathlike."

On October 20th, Andrew and his group were found along the McKenzie River Valley, one week after Andrew's last journal entry.

While the free land offered by the Oregon Land Donation Act was the goal of many emigrants, it wasn't necessarily Andrew's motivation. When their train passed a small settlement four days from Shaker Prairie, Andrew commented that "the country through this part is desirable and I cannot see the farmer, if rich and beautiful land is what he wants, should think of going to the brink of the western ocean to find arable land." His cousins, Vincent and James, claimed land near the Eugene Airport area, but not Andrew.

Andrew fought in a cavalry unit during the Rogue Indian Wars before marrying Sarah Jane Dillard in 1859. He served as Lane County Treasurer and Secretary of the Eugene Board of Trade, passing away in May, 1893.

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ARTIFACT

EXHIBITS, EVENTS, AND HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

SPRING 2020 NO. 235

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