



the ARTIFACT

LANE
COUNTY
HISTORY
MUSEUM

SPRING 2021
NO. 239

LOOKING FORWARD • DIRECTORS CORNER •
• COVID-19 COLLECTION • THANK YOU •
• DRIFT BOATS, MCKENZIE RIVER GUIDES, AND PARADES •

LANE COUNTY HISTORY MUSEUM

740 West 13th Avenue, Eugene, OR

MAILING

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P.O. Box 5407
Eugene OR 97405-3819

CALL US

Office (541) 682-4242

LCHM.ORG

We are continuing to offer services digitally while the building is closed.

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- Free admission to the museum
- Invitations to members-only events
- Subscription to *The Artifact* & *Lane County Historian*

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MUSEUM PRESS:

Historical Society Publications are available for purchase at the Museum.

THE ARTIFACT IS PRODUCED BY:

Design: Stephen O'Brien
LCHM staff members and
guest contributors.

Front cover: CS178. Close up view of 2 men in fishing boat on McKenzie River. One man nets a fish, the other one is using the oars, c. 1930

LOOKING FORWARD



The museum remains closed to the public through the ongoing health crisis. Remote and online services continue.

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.

APRIL

12

History Pub Talk

Dr. Jeff Sanders, WSU

Bulldozer in the Playground

Zoom, 7-8:30pm

Co-Sponsored by the UO Department of History and Viking Braggot

MAY

10

History Pub Talk

William G. Robbins, Emeritus OSU

Oregon and the American West: The Age of Megafires

Zoom, 7-8:30pm

Co-Sponsored by the UO Department of History and Viking Braggot

JUNE

14

History Pub Talk

TBA

Zoom, 7-8:30pm

Co-Sponsored by the UO Department of History and Viking Braggot

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

by Bob Hart, Executive Director

Spring has sprung and our long pandemic travail seems to be mitigating. Recent advances in medical science have allowed the development of RNA-specific vaccines in record time. The Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson injection rollout has been nothing if not a prime example of the law of supply and demand. Until the supply of vaccine is greater than the demand, there will be long lines of waiting arms.

Among the waiting arms are the museum staff, representing a wide range of ages, and so our immunization process will not be as rapid as we might otherwise wish. We anticipate reopening the museum in late spring and an exact date has yet to be determined. June 1st was the date used in planning this year's budget.

The Museum currently has several overlapping labor-intensive projects and most museum staff have now returned to their pre-pandemic working hours. This, however, still requires a mix of onsite and remote work. But our first priority has been the selection of a new Curator of Exhibits from a field of over 50 candidates. The selection process is quite democratic, with all unfurloughed staff members participating in the process. Leading candidates are being interviewed and we hope to welcome this new employee on board in May.

Visitors to the website will notice a new story map for the logging town of Wendling. This particular story map was developed by Archivist and Research Librarian Allison Fischer-Olson with the invaluable assistance of Wendling historian Jay Swofford. His cooperation and assistance greatly expanded the number of photographs and information available through this online resource.

Allison and Membership and Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Yeh have received grant funds from the Lane County Cultural Coalition and Three River's Foundation to catalog existing monuments throughout the county. This is an important part of any serious reevaluation of who or what has formerly been publicly celebrated over time. Any serious consideration of systemic racism needs a determination of whom or what has been left unrecognized and uncelebrated.

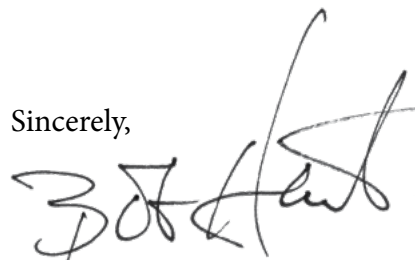
Grant funding from the Kinsman Foundation was made available to the Museum to produce a historic preservation plan for the 1853 Clerk's Building outside our walls. This tiny structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is the oldest building in the county. Preservation specialist Liz Carter is the consultant producing this long-needed report.

A long desired goal for LCHS has been establishment of a student scholarship. This is now a reality with the proceeds of the Newman Memorial Fund approved to source the first \$2,000 tuition scholarship award. The fund was designated for former LCHS President Ethan Newman, also the longest-served Eugene postmaster. This award will go to a college-bound Lane County high school graduate selected by the scholarship committee. Selection will be on the basis of a 500 word written essay on one of several stipulated historical topics and the recommendation of at least one of the student's teachers. Contributions to the LCHS Scholarship Fund can now be designated with a checkoff block on the donation form at the end of the newsletter.

The Museum staff looks forward expectantly to the unwrapping of the Larsen drift boat which is near the end of its quarantine period and is soon to be mounted on a display cradle and the focus of a brand new exhibit for the Museum's reopening.

Lastly, the proverbial clock is ticking on our facility lease expiration in June 2025. Serious discussion relating to the lease has just begun with county officials. LCHS members should rest assured that LCHM staff and the LCHS board of directors, as well as the new advisory board, are all continuing to promptly and thoroughly investigate relocation possibilities as they arise.

Sincerely,



Bob Hart

COVID-19 HISTORY COLLECTION UPDATE

by Allison Fischer-Olson, Archivist & Research Librarian

The Lane County History Museum began taking donation proposals for contributions to the Covid-19 History Collection in November of 2020. With the help of the Register Guard and KLCC in publicizing the collection campaign, the museum had an exciting initial influx of proposals representing a mix of people and groups within our community.

After a mid-way assessment, we have been delighted by humorous poetry, heartwarming stories of love and family bonding, and artistic scenes of our quiet streets. We have learned how some of our community organizations have pivoted to keep us together and how a local business has responded to its call for civic responsibility in their unique capacity. Please enjoy a small sample of proposals that we have received so far!

Though we are happy with our start, we know that there are so many more stories out there. Please consider proposing your own donation that represents your unique experience with COVID-19 over the last year, which can reflect yourself, your organization, your business, or your family. If you have already made a proposal, thank you and please consider encouraging someone else to contribute or making another proposal from a different aspect of your experience. We are particularly seeking out proposals from communities and individuals that have been previously underrepresented in our collections, and all are welcome.

For more details, forms, and questions to consider when choosing your physical or digital donations, visit <https://www.lchm.org/covid-collection/>



I'm donating a photo of the cow inside the Dairy Mart in South Eugene at the juncture of Hilliard and W. Amazon. First of all, it was ingenious of the staff at the store to put a mask on the cow! Second, this Dairy Mart became a regular destination for our family in the summer when there weren't many places to go for a little treat after a bike ride. I was very thankful for the staff and clientele there consistently taking restrictions seriously. Staff always had a friendly word and smiling eyes for my 5-year old son on those rare occasions when we let him come in and pick out his own ice cream flavor. We lovingly refer to this local site as 'the cow store' and are happy to support local business when we go out.
Submitted by Britt Johnson.



Signs, handouts, newsletters and publications connected with decisions to close Saturday Market for the first 10 weeks of the 2020 season and operate at 50% capacity for the rest of the season. Holiday Market on the Park Blocks was revived after holding it indoors at the Fairgrounds since 1986.

Submitted by Diane McWhorter.

We had planned to get married in June of this year. However, COVID threw a monkey wrench in our plans. However, we still wanted to get married in 2020- we've been together for five years and it seemed like easy math. So on Tuesday August 4th, 2020, we got married in our backyard with three friends in attendance- two as witnesses and one as officiant. We want to contribute a copy of our wedding photo because we believe it captures a piece of the times we're living in- a country in distress from a pandemic, civil unrest, and a contentious election. Yet overall, love wins.

Submitted by Chandra Williams-Lamp.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS!

Donations recorded June 30, 2020 - December 31, 2020

*The financial support from our donors is essential to providing services and programs our community needs.
Thank you for your generous gifts!*

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(7/2020 - 12/2020)

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Welcome New 2020 Members!

LCHM greatly values the important role our members play as financial supporters and as promoters of the Museum and our programs within our community. Thank you for all you do! Memberships are great gifts to friends and family. Now you can pay membership dues online at lchm.org/membership

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DRIFT BOATS, MCKENZIE RIVER GUIDES, AND PARADES

by Bob Hart, Executive Director

In the last issue of *The Artifact* readers were introduced to the Museum's recent acquisition of the Larsen drift boat. This boat will soon be on display, surrounded by gear and interpretive materials as the Museum reopens from its Covid sleep in late spring. But how did such distinctive local fly-fishing craft develop? And how to interpret the jargon used to describe their differing designs?

It seems that some of the earliest European-derived Oregon river craft of the late nineteenth century accompanied ferries as a backup watercraft, presumably to rescue or retrieve anyone or anything which went overboard from the ferry. These craft were well more than 20 feet long, of board and batten construction (overlapping milled planks), rowed with oars, and had low freeboard (sitting low to the surface of the water). The correct term for such a boat is a skiff. The corresponding derogatory term for such a craft is a scow.

Some of our area's earliest water tourism efforts began with the Carey Thomson family of Vida. Towards the end of the twentieth century's first decade, Carey Thomson discovered that his occasional fishing guide jobs could become his main source of income. By 1912 Carey and his four sons operated the Thomson Lodge with amenities like running water and private rooms to offer to the fishermen



GN2500, McKenzie River Boat Parade. Vince Mataga, Jack Nasholm (partially visible) and Miner Hamlin empty water from their drift boat after a trip down the river. American flag is attached to the prow, c.1958

who came to the McKenzie. This in turn led other sharp observers to offer similar fishing experiences, and local accommodations including the Blue River Hotel, and the Nimrod and Log Cabin Inns all followed. By the 1920's, local Springfield boosters of the Women's Civic League even raised an imposing arch over the beginning of the McKenzie River Highway!

GN4422. Two men in driftboat fish in McKenzie River rapids at unidentified site. One man holds pole and dips net in the river while the other handles the oars, c.1920





CS200. Fisherman in boat on McKenzie River. View of man standing in fishing boat, facing camera, while casting his line. Trees, brush and hillside in background, c.1930

It was not long before boat design began to be experimented with in order to make the boats more maneuverable, which then allowed improved boats to navigate the river more easily, as well as reach areas to fish that earlier, clumsier boats could not reach. The creative adaptations that first appeared had to do with less freeboard and what was termed rake, or the upward curve of the bottom of the boat.

Also during the 1920s a legendary duo joined forces that would have a significant effect on drift boat development. Friends Leroy Pruitt and Prince Helfrich began experimenting with lighter boats, eventually abandoning board and batten boats for plywood in the 1930s. Master cabinetmaker Tom Kaarhus and his shop were responsible for newer plywood, square-ended boats.

John and Roy West are credited with building a shorter type of boat of less than 16 feet which others derisively labeled a “bathtub with oarlocks.” But shorter boats with higher and wider sides were becoming the norm. The ‘square ender’ was developed so that the guide could sit up by the bow and the fisherman more amidships, but the bow was pointed upstream and the stern downstream. This would normally be considered backwards, but this arrangement allowed the river guide to always look downstream while the fisherman faced in the same direction.

Post World War II drift boat development continued with the introduction of the double ender, with raked bow and stern, and is credited to Woodie Hindman. With the addition of either a transom or a Kaarhus-engineered removable plate for a motor mount, the same boat could easily work both lake or river. Other adaptations steadied the fly fisherman’s stance and a rope seat aided in keeping the oarsmen’s seat of his pants drier.

The McKenzie River Guide Association traces its origins to the year 1931 and you have already heard the names of some of the nine founding members. The organization continues operation today (mckenzieguides.org), promoting safe and productive fly-fishing, boating courtesy, and conservation-minded catch and release rules. Of the noted anglers coming early to savor the McKenzie experience, the most noted was President Herbert Hoover, who had spent part of his boyhood in Oregon and explained in print that he came to Oregon to “refresh his soul.” He also labeled other fly-fishing earlier presidents as Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt.

<Continued on next page>

During the late Thirties an early season river safety run by the River Guides to check the river's latest twists and turns evolved into guide families going on an outing and picnic and grew like Topsy. Within a few years neighbors joined in followed by the general public. This entourage swelled to become the McKenzie Whitewater Parade. Officially sponsored by the McKenzie River Guides, this celebratory event continued until 1968, when the decision was made to cease sponsorship because of the legal liabilities that the guides bore as parade sponsor. The Sixties, of course, were not an era emphasizing individual responsibility. The "If it feels good, do it" mantra predominated. Beer-drinking, reckless college students without life jackets got the blame for ruining a good thing. This popular event, without WRG sponsorship, lasted only two additional years. Sadly, several drownings marked the end of the parade era.

Drift boats, like covered bridges, are distinctive Lane County icons. What type of drift boat is the Larsen boat? It is a splendid example of a Prince Helfrich-built square ender. You will soon be able to see it, appreciate its lines, and imagine its maneuverability in some of the more challenging stretches of the McKenzie.

GN2364. Sixteen drift boats float down the McKenzie River between forested slopes. McKenzie River Highway can be seen along the river in the background, c.1940





So much easier than grabbing the fish!

Remote research services are available!

The Museum is glad to continue offering research possibilities to the public throughout building closure.

While the doors are closed, Lane County History Museum has not gone dark. Museum staff are safely at work continuing our commitment to collect, preserve, research, publish and exhibit Our Stories. As things continue to change for our community, we are making Museum resources available to you in new ways that will serve you now, and into the future.

Help support the telling of

Our Stories

with a donation!

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Or tell a friend to become a member!

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the ARTIFACT

EXHIBITS, EVENTS, AND HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

SPRING 2021 NO. 239

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