What’s Inside?

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Dear OHS Members & Supporters,

This April marks eight years that I have had the privilege to serve as Executive Director of the Oregon Historical Society. While I have taken great pride every day of those eight years in the work and mission of OHS, I have never been prouder than I was this past February 14 — Oregon’s 160th birthday — when we cut the ribbon and officially opened our new permanent exhibit, *Experience Oregon*. Thousands of members, visitors, and students have already seen this state-of-the-art exhibit and have shared overwhelmingly positive comments — the most frequent being that they will be back as it takes several visits to see, read, listen, and absorb the deep and complex stories presented in this 7,000 square foot exhibit.

We also continue to receive praise for the fact that *Experience Oregon* does not shy away from emphasizing issues such as historic discrimination against minority populations. While I appreciate that praise, I also know that in accurately documenting history, we are only doing our job.

If you haven’t seen *Experience Oregon* yet, then I urge you to do so soon. On your way out, stop by the Visitor Services desk and fill out a comment card. *Experience Oregon* would not have been possible without the financial support of you, our members, so your thoughts and comments are important.

I hope you will visit soon, and I am confident that you, like me, will be very proud of how the Oregon Historical Society continues to grow in our vision to foster a better tomorrow through an Oregon story that is meaningful to all Oregonians.

Best regards,

Kerry Tymchuk
Executive Director
Dear Oregon
Dispatches from Professional Time Travelers

A few short months ago, OHS launched a new digital space for sharing the admirable, the peculiar, and the sometimes challenging aspects of our state’s history. Through our new blog, Dear Oregon: Dispatches from Professional Time Travelers, OHS staff and guest authors can share their industry expertise, shed light on the many hidden treasures held in our collections, and provide a growing digital supplement to our ongoing work of preserving our state’s history. New posts appear on the blog every other Tuesday, and over a dozen posts are now ready to explore online! A few of our favorites include:

**THE TRIKE THAT (ALMOST) JOINED THE CIRCUS**
*By Silvie Andrews*
This two-minute video of museum cataloger Silvie Andrews highlights a Victorian-era tricycle that arrived in Portland in about 1876. It made its way around the city through the 1950s — and was very nearly gifted to a clown for use in the circus!

**NEW YEAR’S MAIL CALL**
*By Katie Mayer*
Collections management librarian Dana Miller had been working on a survey of materials to finalize the library’s master inventory when she stumbled across these delightful embroidered and leather New Year’s greeting cards in a collection of correspondence from the Duyck family.

**THE DETAILS ARE IN THE DIRT: SCENIC ELEMENTS IN EXPERIENCE OREGON**
*By Tara Cole*
From recreating Fort Rock Cave to building the road surrounding the Benson automobile, this post goes behind the scenes with the team that created the intricate scenic elements that bring history to life in Experience Oregon.
**Experience Oregon Like Never Before**

New permanent installation tells all sides of Oregon’s history

Whether you were born in Oregon, have chosen to make this place home, or are just passing through, it is undeniable that there is something special about this state. From its varied geography to its innovative legislation, Oregon is complex and distinctive, filled with people whose stories are the foundation of the state we see today.

On February 14, 2019, OHS unveiled *Experience Oregon*, a dynamic educational space where visitors can learn about the countless people, places, and events that have shaped this place. But — what makes this exhibit so unique? Here are a few reasons why *Experience Oregon* has transformed the Oregon Historical Society’s museum experience.

1) **It’s interactive — there is something for every visitor.**

*Experience Oregon* features over 20 interactive stations where you can play games, hear voices from the past, and engage in debates — there are even smelling stations where you can get a whiff of salmon, hazelnuts, and wheat!

One interactive element that has already become a favorite is the covered wagon that visitors can walk through. On the wagon floor are painted outlines of all of the supplies you may need on the Oregon Trail: food, clothes, tent. Notably absent? Room for passengers — a reminder that those who traveled on the Oregon Trail did so mostly by foot. These interactive experiences creatively immerse you in the past in fun ways, and because of this, the stories stick with you long after you leave.
2) The artifacts steal the show.

OHS collections staff scoured the Vault to display artifacts from across the state’s geography and history — some on exhibit for the first time. One beloved artifact is the Benson automobile, displayed for the first time at the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in 1905.

One of the most spectacular cases features a dress designed by May and Ann Shogren, who in the early twentieth century operated Oregon’s most significant fashion house. Because the dresses are so fragile, OHS staff will periodically rotate different Shogren gowns through this case to preserve these elegant textiles.

3) It tells Oregon’s history — the good and the bad.

While Oregon’s past is filled with triumphant achievements, it also has bleaker moments that have contributed to the state we see today. From racial exclusion laws to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, *Experience Oregon* does not shy away from the “ugly” parts of our past, knowing that in these moments, we are able to gain a better understanding of our present realities. It may not always be pretty, but it’s the truth. The exhibit poses tough questions to encourage visitors to pause and reflect on the past.

4) It drives home the point that history matters.

*Experience Oregon* was intentionally designed to not only be interactive and visually interesting, but to also constantly draw parallels between the past and the present. “Across Time” stations throughout the exhibit, such as the one shown above, use broad themes including home, water, movement, and land to draw connections to the important conversations of today.

Historian David McCullough aptly noted: “A nation that forgets its past can function no better than an individual with amnesia.” The Oregon Historical Society exists to remind us about our past, giving context to help us make decisions to improve our present and future — lest we all suffer from collective historical amnesia.
Special Issue on the “Beeswax Wreck” Wins Joel Palmer Award

Each year, the Oregon Historical Society’s scholarly journal, the Oregon Historical Quarterly, presents the Joel Palmer Award to the author of the best article published in the journal during the previous year. Omar C. “Slug” Palmer and William J. Lang established this award in honor of their ancestor Joel Palmer, an Oregon pioneer and political leader during the mid-nineteenth century. The Quarterly’s Editorial Advisory Board votes on the first-place prize, which carries with it $300, as well as recognizes two authors for honorable mention.

This year, for the first time, the OHQ Editorial Advisory Board voted to present the Palmer Award to the collective group of authors who produced the Summer 2018 Special Issue, “Oregon’s Manila Galleon.” This special issue, which has already sold out and been reprinted due to massive popularity, features articles from over a decade of research into uncovering the mystery of the “Beeswax Wreck.” The authors discuss topics including: galleon trade routes, the Spanish Empire, and Native oral tradition; archaeology and identifying the Beeswax Wreck; crew and passengers aboard the Santo Cristo de Burgos; cargo on board the Santo Cristo; and treasure hunting on Neahkahnie Mountain.

Lead author Cameron LaFollette discussed on the Oregon Historical Society blog, Dear Oregon, how her passion for writing epic poetry spurred her research into this centuries-old mystery.

“I began researching Spanish galleons, Spanish maritime culture, and the Manila trade. I wanted to know more about the crew, what Native people encountered, and the treasure hunting that resulted from the lore surrounding the wreck. That is when I contacted some of the other authors from the Summer 2018 special issue. I and my principal co-author, Douglas Deur, then hired researchers to look into archival documents about the ship identified as the Beeswax Wreck — the Santo Cristo de Burgos. After two years of researching, here in Oregon and in Spain, Mexico, and the Philippines, it became clear that this story was much more important than background research for an epic poem. It is a significant piece of Oregon history, and I reached out to OHQ to discuss the possibility of publishing my research.”

OHQ Editor Eliza Canty-Jones will present the Palmer Award at the Oregon Historical Society’s Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 4, at 1:30pm. Copies of this special issue are available for purchase in the Museum Store for $10, and a subscription to OHQ is a benefit of Oregon Historical Society membership.
OHS Receives “Friends of Oregon Black Pioneers Award”

On Saturday, March 2, the Oregon Black Pioneers celebrated over a quarter century of accomplishments at their annual gala. Oregon Historical Society staff were among the guests at this lively and joyous event, and were honored with the “Friends of Oregon Black Pioneers Award.” This award recognized the rich partnership with the Oregon Black Pioneers that has allowed OHS to host a series of compelling exhibits on African American history in our state. We are honored by this award, and look forward to many more years of storytelling!

Taking History on the Road

Oregon Historical Society Community Speakers Bureau

2018 was a banner year for a dedicated group of volunteers from the Oregon Historical Society Community Speakers Bureau (CSB). This group of seven volunteers, many of whom have gone through the docent program, give historical lectures at assisted living and memory care facilities across the state. In 2018 alone, these volunteers drove over 2,000 miles to reach over 2,200 individuals in 101 locations.

“As we give our presentations, each one of us is constantly reminded of how much people love to know more about the state where they live and how seldom presentations like this are part of facility activities,” said CSB leader Bob Setterberg. “Although I showed some slides representing Oregon history, the most fun was passing around all the hands-on items including a beaver pelt, woolly mammoth tooth, powder horn, thunder egg, badger pelt, Native American basket, and more. There was a great deal of conversation and lots of questions about these hands-on items. Even those that were very quiet seemed to respond and enjoy touching things, especially when I rubbed the beaver pelt across their skin because the pelt was so soft.”

OHS is very grateful to the Community Speakers Bureau and the over 170 OHS volunteers who support our mission of making Oregon’s history accessible to everyone in ways that advance knowledge and inspire curiosity about all the people, places and events that have shaped Oregon.
Gifts in Honor:

In honor of Rebecca Burrow and Anthony Rounis’s Wedding
Mr. Matthew Geldin

In honor of Rhett Carlile
Ms. Tammy Teske

In honor of Molly Cochran
Ms. Kay Bristow
Dr. and Mrs. Thomas and Alix Meier
Goodman

In honor of Laura Cray
Ms. Lisa Kislingbury Anderson

In honor of John and Nancy Dennis
Mr. Andrew Dennis

In honor of Mary Faulkner
Mr. Richard Solomon and Ms. Alyce
Filcraft
Ms. Suzanne Geary

In honor of the Fitts and Running Families
Ms. Gretchen Walsh

In honor of Mr. Jamieson Grabenhorst
Ellen and Charles Stearns

In honor of Antoinette Hatfield
Ms. Iaine Cohen
Ms. Sivia Kaye
Ms. Joyce L. Loeb
Millard and Mary Lou McClung
OnPoint Community Credit Union
Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Urman

In honor of Tania Hyatt-Evenson
Mr. and Mrs. Judson and Barbara Hyatt
Mr. and Mrs. Gregory and Sarah Shine

In honor of Senator Betsy Johnson
Pendleton Woolen Mills

In honor of Bill Lang
Mr. David Alan Johnson

In honor of Lewis McArthur’s Birthday
Scott and Barbara McArthur

In honor of Sue Metzler’s Retirement
Anonymous
Jean and Rey Auel
Arleen Norton Barnett
John and Susan Bates
Dr. and Mrs. Les and Barbara Bergeron
Mort and Mary Lang Bishop
Rhett and Tiffanie Carlile

Dr. Stephen Brown and Dr. Kimberly Crouch
Mr. and Mrs. Carl and Carolyn Christoferson
Molly Cochran and Sam Ellingson
John and Nancy Dennis
William and Karen Early
Gerry Frank
Mrs. Antoinette Hatfield
Mrs. Helen Herman
John Herman
Leslie Kolisch
Millard and Mary Lou McClung
Ms. Wendy Mitchell
Ernest and Anne Munch
Anne Naito-Campbell
John and Nancy Nickerson Family
NW Natural
OHS Staff
Jim and Cathy Parker
Charles and Ruth Poindexter
Marcia H. Randall
Bob and Marilyn Ridgley
Mr. Travis Rigby
Linda and Mike Roth
Samuel S. Johnson Foundation
Sheik Foundation
Susan Sokol Blosser
Mr. Henry T. Swigert
Dr. and Mrs. Duane and Janet Taylor
Ms. Sharon A. Thorne
Ronald E. and Ivy L. Timpe
Kerry and Becky Tymchuk
Mr. and Mrs. Bill and Julie Valach
Joe and Nancy Visenberg
John and Sally Warjone
Bill Westphal and Patricia Reser
Mrs. Elaine Whiteley

In honor of Bruce Olson
Mr. Kenneth Olson

In honor of Amy Platt
Mr. and Mrs. Gregory and Sarah Shine

In honor of Sarah Recken
Mr. Robert Sasanoff

In honor of Kat Riley
Mr. and Mrs. David C. Davies

In honor of Leslie Sammons Roth
Ms. Katharine Sammons

In honor of Governor Barbara Roberts
Mr. Robert L. Weil

In honor of Marie Shibley Andrews
Mr. Jeremy Shibley and Ms. Romalia Stickney-Shibley

In honor of John and Hazel Schroeder
David and Carolyn Specht

In honor of Kerry Tymchuk
Mrs. Antoinette Hatfield
Chris and Peter Nickerson Family
Mr. and Mrs. Bill and Dottie Schonely
Travel Southern Oregon
Mr. Jerry Walker and Ms. Mary Jaeger

Gifts in Memory:

In memory of Dr. Jean Anderson
Mr. Ugo Pezzi

In memory of Jim Ashford
Ms. Anne Ashford

In memory of Janet Banks
Dr. and Mrs. R. W. Bennetts
Mort and Mary Lang Bishop
Mr. Harvey N. Black Jr.
Anne and James Holtz
Mr. and Mrs. George E. Swindells
Mr. and Mrs. Hayden and Shannon Thomas
Joan and Tom Trippett

In memory of Mr. Brian Booth
The Wendy Foundation

In memory of Mary Paige Kennedy Boucher
Mr. Daniel Kennedy
Ms. Kathleen M. Murphy
Mrs. and Mr. Mary and David Noonan

In memory of Phyllis Brower
Ms. Elaine Stearns Cummings

In memory of Chandler P. Brown
William and Tina Brown

In memory of John Cahalan
Ms. Katherine A. Goeddel

In memory of Dr. Kent Christoferson
Mr. and Mrs. Carl and Carolyn Christoferson

In memory of Dr. Robert “Bob” Cook
Mr. John Robinson

In memory of Donald and Veda Cowgill
Mr. Michael Cowgill

In memory of Ms. Katharine Diack
Elisabeth W. Potter

Memorial & Tribute Gifts

Each year, the Oregon Historical Society receives gifts in honor of individuals. Whether in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special accomplishment, these tribute gifts keep Oregon’s history accessible to all. Gifts listed below are those received between January 1, 2018 and March 29, 2019.
The Jin & Julieann Park Plaza

“Life is about choice, love, and commitment,” Jin Park explained as he described his family’s decision to invest in the FORWARD! Campaign, making a generous $1 million gift to name The Jin and Julieann Park Plaza. Jin and Julieann chose to move to Oregon 22 years ago when their eldest son Chris was only six months old; their son Andrew and daughter Kelly were then born in Oregon. They built a family business here and are owners of The Reserve Vineyard and Golf Club in Aloha.

Jin served on the OHS Board of Trustees from 2010 to 2018, and he continues to serve on the Nominating Committee. He and Julieann attend many OHS events and programs. Jin’s father passed down a love of history to his son, and in a family book of names, they can trace their ancestors back to the 1400s.

Jin and Julieann included their children in this decision to make a commitment to the future of the Oregon Historical Society, and the family worked together to write the inspiring statement of welcome that now graces the Park Plaza.
Remembering Six Historic Oregonians

Lewis “Lew” L. McArthur, who passed away on August 29, 2018, at the age at 101, devoted much of his life and career to researching Oregon places and their histories. Like his father before him, McArthur compiled and edited editions of the beloved Oregon Geographic Names, a priceless reference guide to the Pacific Northwest. Lew was a regular presence at the Oregon Historical Society well into his 90s.

Judge Owen Panner passed away on December 19, 2018, at the age of 94. Panner began his legal career in private practice in Bend in 1950 and would represent the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs for 25 years. Following the nomination of President Carter, the U.S. Senate confirmed Panner to a seat on the U.S. District Court of Oregon in 1980, where he served as chief judge from 1984 to 1990 and took senior status in 1992. Panner was President of the OHS Board of Trustees from 1995 to 1997.

Eric Parsons passed away on January 9, 2019, at 70 years of age. Parsons dedicated more than forty years of his professional life to one of Oregon’s most iconic businesses, The Standard Insurance Company, rising to the role of Chairman, President, and CEO. A respected community leader and caring philanthropist, Parsons served on many nonprofit boards including OHS, the Oregon Community Foundation, and the OHSU Foundation.

Norma Paulus passed away on February 28, 2019, at 85 years of age, leaving behind a record of accomplishment as one of Oregon’s most respected and effective public servants. Her election as Secretary of State in 1976 made history, as she became the first Oregon woman to serve in a statewide elected office. She would also become the first woman to serve as Oregon Superintendent of Public Instruction. Paulus was a mentor and role model to countless women who were inspired by her courage and tenacity. OHS also greatly benefited from her leadership during her two years of service as Executive Director.

A legendary leader in the Oregon forest products industry, William “Bill” Swindells, Jr., served for many years as Chairman and CEO of Willamette Industries. A former OHS trustee, Swindells and his late wife Ann founded the Ann and Bill Swindells Charitable Trust in 2002, which has generously funded a wide number of Oregon nonprofits. He passed away on November 7, 2018, at the age of 88.

Brigadier General James B. Thayer received the Silver and Bronze Star for his service in the U.S. Army during World War II and was credited with liberating the Gunskirchen Nazi death camp. Thayer would go on to serve as a colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve and as brigadier general and commander of the Oregon State Defense Force. The Oregon Military Museum, currently under renovation at Camp Withycombe in Clackamas, is named for him. A passionate student of history, Thayer served as President of the OHS Board of Trustees from 1984 to 1986. He passed away on September 16, 2018, at the age of 96.

“I was privileged to know each of these remarkable individuals, and join with countless others in mourning their passing and in remembering the positive difference they made for the Oregon Historical Society and for our entire state.”

– Kerry Tymchuk
Lunar New Year Parade & Celebration

Snow couldn’t stop us from ushering in the Year of the Pig! The annual Lunar New Year celebration hosted by OHS and the Portland Chinatown Museum took place February 9. Following a parade in Chinatown, visitors braved the icy conditions to enjoy lion dances at OHS at this free family event. Even with the weather, OHS still welcomed over 700 community members, a testament to this beloved tradition.

Celebrating Experience Oregon

An exhibit three years in the making deserved proper fanfare for opening weekend! OHS hosted over 300 members for a preview celebration on February 13. Local dignitaries officially cut the ribbon to Experience Oregon at noon on February 14, and nearly 4,000 visitors flocked to OHS over opening weekend, where admission was free to all!
Digital Collections Spotlight

For more than one hundred years, Portland General Electric (PGE) has shaped both the physical landscape of Oregon and the city infrastructure of Portland. Originally founded in 1888 as the Willamette Falls Electric Company by Parker Morey and Edward Eastham, the company started with a hydroelectric plant at Willamette Falls in Oregon City. Providing the world’s first long-distance transmission of electricity, the plant illuminated street lamps in Portland, 14 miles away.

The Portland General Electric Photograph Collection, containing more than 7,000 images, provides a fascinating glimpse into a long history of electrifying the Portland area. Digital collections staff have been hard at work digitizing these images, which show large-scale infrastructure projects such as those at the Clackamas River, Timothy Lake, Bull Run, and Round Butte areas, as well as smaller, everyday work scenes. Linemen installing utility poles permeate the collection throughout the years, moving from horse-drawn pole trucks of the early 1900s to the newer electric utility trucks of the 1950s. Images of utility workers trudging through the snow during a winter storm seem timeless and relevant even to the present day.

While the original intent of the photographs was often for internal documentation of company activities, they also represent a time of intense change and development in Oregon. They have, over time, attained an additional dimension, unintentionally capturing far more than lights and wires: a Portland night street scene from 1916, a newly built home in a new neighborhood, a glimpse of a new Hawthorne Bridge.

Broadway at night during Portland Rose Festival. Portland General Electric Photograph Collection; Org Lot 151, Box 8; PGE 138-50

View this and other PGE collection photographs in our current exhibit, Harnessing the Power of Photography: Selections from the OHS Portland General Electric Collections, 1895–1979.