

# THE PLOW

WINTER 2018

SHERMAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## History of the Columbia Gorge Air Mail Beacons

On Sunday, December 9th, the Sherman County Historical Museum opened its doors for a day this winter inviting Susan Buce to give a presentation on the History of the Columbia Gorge Air Mail Beacons. Susan has a family connection to the beacons of the gorge and a few years ago was asked to give a presentation regarding the Mail Beacons located in the Columbia



Gorge, and Susan began her research. The beacons stretch across the United States and along with the towers being built large concrete arrows were also positioned on the ground to give a visual indicator for navigation airplane pilots flying overhead

along specified airway corridors. Being able to deliver mail from coast to coast in a reliable manner is an interesting story and the building and maintenance of the beacon towers around the gorge is what brought Susan's family to this area. An airway beacon was a rotating light assembly mounted atop a tower. These were once used extensively in the United States until the mid 1940's for visual navigation by airplane pilots along specified airway corridors. Approximately 1,500 airway beacons were constructed to guide pilots from city to city, covering 18,000 miles and today most of the beacons are gone. Thank you Susan for sharing such an interesting story and great local history!



## *John Day Lock & Dam 50 Years*

The 50th Anniversary for the John Day Lock and Dam was celebrated on September 20, 2018. Construction of the John Day Dam began in 1958, a dedication of the dam was celebrated in 1968. The John Day Lock has a lift 110 feet and the dam project was completed in 1971. The John Day Dam is at the head of Lake Celilo, the reservoir behind The Dalles Dam, located 25 miles downstream. The reservoir behind the John Day Dam is known as Lake Umatilla. The John Day Dam consists of a navigation lock, spillway, powerhouse and fish-passage facilities on both shores. The dam underwent a major repair to the upper lock gate in 2010, as documented in the National Geographic Channel program "World's Toughest Fixes". Part of the museum's 2018 SC Fair display was on the years of construction of the dam and locks. Thank you to John Shafer, and Kevin Moynahan, Operations Project Manager for being at our display and answering questions and talking about our local dam!

## *Wasco Electric Cooperative Economic & Community Development Grant*



Thank you Wasco Electric Cooperative for the \$1000 grant awarded to the Sherman County Historical Museum in 2018. This upcoming spring we will be using these funds to do maintenance and upgrades along with repainting our red foot bridge. The covered bridge gives access from the Moro City Park and parking area to the Sherman County Historical Museum and Senior Center. This bridge is used by visitors to the museum and the community year around. We would also like to collect additional funds to have a new *Welcome* sign to promote the entrance to the museum and add a new and friendly eye catching way to encourage people to cross the bridge to the Sherman County Visitors Center and Museum. We are required to have this project completed by July of 2019. Thanks again Wasco Electric Cooperative for your support!



## **2018 Featured Local Sherman County Artists**

**Thank you to all artist that shared their talents  
and were on display at the SCHM**

### MAY

Sherman Elementary Students

### JUNE

Sherman County Photo Club

### JULY

Linda Krafsic, Baby Quilts

### AUGUST

Abbey Phelps, Knitting & Fiber Arts

### SEPTEMBER

50th Anniversary of  
The John Day Lock & Dam

### OCTOBER

Lowell Smith, Photography



Saturday, December 1st, was the Annual Museum Store Christmas Sale and Open House. It was a great day of shopping and holiday cheer with people buying for special ones on their list or maybe for themselves! At the store you can get the Melissa & Doug classic toys and puzzles, beautiful kitchen flower sack towels and popular goat's milk lotions that everyone loves! There is also the Sherman County picture books for sale, SCHM history calendars and local authors books and much more! Thank you to everyone that shopped at the Museum Store this year we appreciate your support!

## Look for us in The Dalles Downtown Store Front Exhibit “old JCPenney Building”



Our Museum Team, Lowell Smith, Sheri Carlson, Nancy Fields & Sharon Spencer put together a great exhibit in the store front windows in downtown The Dalles in what use to be the J.C.Penney Store on 2nd Street. It was hot and it was work but like always they made it fun and a great way to allow people passing by to get a small glimpse of what our historical museum has to offer! Thank you volunteers for your efforts and your time to promote our SCHM in a new place and a new way!

## Marketing the Museum

The Sherman County Historical Museum continues to reach out to old and new visitors to stop and take a walk on the rural side at our local museum. Look for us in the 2019 Eastern Oregon Visitors Guide, on Veteran'sView.com, Journey Through Time Trail and see our brochures at all Welcome Centers in Oregon, all along the gorge plus many places in between. Thank you to everyone that visited us this 2018 season! We had just over 2,000 visitors and about 100 visitors from all around the world. 2019 will be another exciting year with a new exhibit and even more groups coming to the museum for tours. We can use more volunteers for school and other groups along with hosts to greet visitors throughout the 2019 season! Watch for meetings in the spring or call us at 541-565-3232. Thank you to all our members and your continued support to bring in people to share your Sherman County heritage at your museum! As always we are proud to share our SC history.



## Who was visiting the Sherman County Historical Museum?



2018 was a great year to visit the museum! Besides having a record number of school group visits, we also had other groups tour the museum. The local chapter of PEO from The Dalles toured the museum and we were happy to show them our *From this Day Forward: A Wedding Exhibit!* We also had family members come see the Wedding Exhibit and items they had donated to the museum. Thank you again for sharing such special family treasures with us! In October the group, Museums of the Gorge came to the museum and Director Patti Fields hosted the quarterly meeting. It is always fun to show the museum to those that come in for the first time and tell them about Sherman County. We also had groups from other museum visit the museum, Morrow County Historical Society and the Carousel Museum from Bickleton, WA. Like us they enjoy the behind the scenes tour and to talk shop about what is going on in the museum world. The Sherman County Photo Club also came to the museum to do a photo shoot taking portrait photos with some local community members. If your group, family or club needs a place to visit I hope you will consider coming and visiting us! We take off-season appointments for visitors.

## Oregon Museums Association Conference

Director Patti Fields and volunteers Lowell Smith and Nancy Fields attended the Oregon Museum Association Conference on September 9th-11th in Hood River, Oregon. The Hood River History Museum was the host for this event and like every year, this event was a great opportunity for the people of the museum community to get together to learn and share. This year having multiple people from the SCHM attend the conference we were able to have someone present at almost all of the sessions being offered. It is always such an inspiration to meet people from around the Northwest while attending this conference and one we never miss. Every year we bring back new ideas and a zest to try something new! Next year the OMA Conference will be in John Day, Oregon.

### SAVE THE DATE!

The Second Annual Sherman County Cemetery Get Together will be on February 6, 2019, at the Sherman County Historical Museum in Moro. Save the date and information will be sent soon!

## Party to Celebrate Volunteers

Hooray for all of the wonderful volunteers that keep the doors to our Sherman County Historical Museum open! Wednesday, November 7th was a day to celebrate YOU, the volunteer, with a soup luncheon and short program to say thank you for such a great year of keeping our museum open. You have shared our SC story with our visitors, hosted many hours, contributed to our exhibits, done genealogy work, cleaned, sold merchandise, worked on the computer, & cared for our collections! A special thank you to the exceptional effort of Gladys Wesley and her volunteer time given to the museum this 2018 season.

If you do not host at the museum please consider trying it and seeing if you like it! We are very short on volunteers for a number of important positions for the Sherman County Historical Society. We need additional Board of Trustees positions filled, we continue to ask for editors for publications, an event coordinator, person to help with school group visits and other positions. Please call us if you have an interest in volunteering. Thank you so very much!



## 2019 Exhibit: Hats • Handkerchiefs • Handbags

In 2018, the volunteer team took on a challenge of making a temporary exhibit at the museum with items from archives in storage. Some items were newly donated, some had been in the museum and some were from community members and on display with an agreement of a fixed time period. *From this Day Forward: A Wedding Exhibit* was so well received that we are creating another new exhibit in 2019. Most of the Sherman County Historical Museum's collection is on already on display in the museum but of course treasures still remain in storage since it is impossible to have everything on display at once! After doing some work in the textiles room at the museum, our group decided the hats and handkerchiefs would be great items to share with visitors and be the theme of the new exhibit. These are somewhat common items of the past but today women's hats and handkerchiefs are not nearly as common. If you have any stories that relate directly to Sherman County and hats, handkerchiefs or handbags please share them with us as we create this exhibit for 2019! The museum will also be bringing some other types of displays to the museum to have on display and share with our community in the future. Watch for information for the preview event and opening of this exhibit on Sunday, April 28th before the May 1st museum opening for the 2019 season.

## Thank you Sherman County

*We want to thank all the Emergency Services, Volunteers, Farmers, Ranchers, & everyone that traveled here to fight fire and keep our community safe!*



2018 is a year we shall not soon forget. Approximately 53,000 acres burned in SC and many alerts and evacuations were issued across the county. With extremely dry conditions, tremendous winds and the fuel from grass and record wheat crops, a formula for disaster was created. From June until October of 2018, Sherman County was on high alert with fire danger from border to border and also in neighboring counties.

Here at the Museum we have policies and protocols for emergencies and disasters but as the town and community was issued a Level 3 Evacuation via the Everbridge Notification System (I recommend signing

up if you are not already) it became clear that this situation was unique and different. I am happy to say the Sherman County Historical Museum was never in direct harms way and with a metal roof and stucco walls and well managed grounds around the building, we were in good shape concerning those types of preventative measures. But when you are potentially in the line of fire you leave when they tell you. Just like when you must leave your home in a fire storm situation you become forced to be selective as to what will be taken and it is no different at museums. After the fires all passed our neighbor, Maryhill Museum, from across the Columbia River in Washington State, shared how they dealt with the danger of wildfires and were a good resource for us as we review and update wildfire protocol for our local museum. In case you were wondering here at the SCHM we currently have off site computer backups, a large portion of our photo collection digitized and saved offsite, we have a Knox-Box to be mounted on our building and access for our emergency services for starters. Our Emergency/Disaster Plan is being reviewed and updated and I strongly urge everyone to do the same for their home and business. No one ever regrets being prepared! One of the concerns here at the museum was regarding our Sherman County newspapers. We currently have some issues of newspapers on microfilm and copies offsite. Unfortunately, there are still many issues of newspapers that are not duplicated and no copy is offsite. This makes those papers and all their content vulnerable for a loss but the museum has a plan. The museum is actively gathering digitization information and seeking grants on getting ALL issues of the local newspapers digitized and online for everyone to access and be able to word search for information! We will keep you posted on this project!

Once again thank you Sherman County for stepping forward and showing your grit and what keeps us strong. Well done SC. This is a quote dated October 13, 1904, on page 7 of *THE PACIFIC HOMESTEAD*, Salem, Oregon, and though 114 years old these words about Sherman County and the quality of this community and all of the men [and women] that call SC home can be applied across this entire county:

*“...It has been stated, Sherman County is one of the finest sections of country in Eastern Oregon. It is not always the soil conditions that make the country, but rather the men---men that understand farming thoroughly, and men who get the most out of Mother Earth by hard work and careful management. Such men as these are a credit to any country, and worthy of the praise of all men.”*



[J.W. Messinger]  
C.A. Buckley, @ Grass Valley

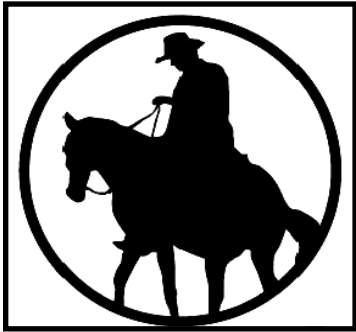
## 2017-2018 Donations for the Sherman County Historical Society & Museum

### Donors/In-Kind Gifts:

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Eilene Eslinger	Meinrad & Jeanne Kuettel	Steven & Patricia Ruettgens	<b><u>Grants 2017-2018</u></b> Sherman County Court Sherman Development League

# Acquisition Donors

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**Photo Collection Coordinator:**

Lowell Smith/Sheri Carlson

**Registrar:**

Nancy Fields

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 Lowell Smith / Barbara Bish / Linda Thompson

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Cris Welk

**Buildings & Grounds Coordinator:**

Dale Frey

**2018 SC:FTR Editors:**

Interim, Gladys Wesley

**2018 Security:**

Jim Payne  
 Gladys Wesley  
 Laurie Perisho



### Wish List @ the Museum

- *Shark Vacuum Cleaner*
- *Collect & recycle used ink cartridges*
- *Fire proof file box for newspaper microfilms*
- *Staples Brand Store-It-All Storage Totes*



Thank you to all the schools, teachers and students that visited the Sherman County Historical Museum in 2018! It was such a treat to have our local schools here at the museum but we also enjoyed hosting students from around the Mid-Columbia and Gresham area too. The SCHM is always excited to share our Sherman County history with students of all ages and look forward to seeing everyone again in 2019!



## Become a Member of Sherman County Historical Society

It is time to renew your Sherman County Historical Society Membership for 2019! Now you can even sign up online at our new webpage [www.shermanmuseum.org/membership](http://www.shermanmuseum.org/membership) An annual membership is \$30 per household for the 2019 calendar year. Membership benefits include free admission to the Museum, 10% discount in the Museum Store, newsletter, *The Plow*, and our historical anthology, *Sherman County: For The Record*. Memberships are a great gift and every membership counts!. We appreciate your support of the Sherman County Historical Society. Our mission is to gather, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit and publish materials related to the history of Sherman County. Mailing address: Sherman County Historical Society, PO Box 173, Moro, OR 97039.

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P.O. Box 173  
Moro, Oregon 97039  
[www.shermanmuseum.org](http://www.shermanmuseum.org)  
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