



# The Meadowlark

Quarterly Newsletter



Crook County Historical Society  
246 North Main Street  
Prineville, Oregon 97754

February 26, 2010  
E-mail [bowmuse@netscape.net](mailto:bowmuse@netscape.net)  
[www.bowmanmuseum.org](http://www.bowmanmuseum.org)

## Quarterly meeting

Sunday March 7, 2010

Bowman Museum Annex (South of Museum) 1:00 P.M.

The Winter quarterly meeting for the Crook County Historical Society will be held at the new building acquired by the Historical Society (The former William H. Simmons business) on Sunday March 7, 2010. The meeting will begin with a potluck dinner at 1:00 P.M. The building is located at 240 North Main Street in Prineville and is just south of the Bowman Museum. Please bring your own place setting. All members and the general public are welcome to attend. Members please bring a guest. Please note the location for the meeting. **The first Historical Society meeting of the year is traditionally dedicated to the Pioneer Queens, women who have made contributions to the history of our county.**

## FEATURED PROGRAM

### Pioneer Queen Luncheon and Prineville General Hospital DVD

The featured program for the meeting will be the viewing of a movie converted to DVD of the Prineville Hospital in 1951. The video has very entertaining documentary images of the old Prineville General Hospital (Currently a Boarding House on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street) and shows a very athletic Dr. Adkisson perched in precarious positions and ably assisted by a corps of nurses.

There is also some images of emergency ambulance transfers. The video was done to document the transition from the old hospital to the new Pioneer Memorial Hospital. It should be a fun review for those that remember the old hospital and the beginnings of the new.



Prineville General Hospital 1950

# Crook County Pioneer Queen 2009

## Elsie Fitzgerald Simmons

Elsie Fitzgerald Simmons was selected as the 2009 Crook County Pioneer Queen at the annual Pioneer Picnic in August 2009. Elsie's family has a long heritage in Crook County. Some members of her family were the Frier's who were among the hearty travelers with the Meek Wagon train that passed through our area in 1845. Her great grandfather John Frier married Mary Marks who was one of the daughters of pioneer settlers in the Ochoco country Bluford and Martha Moore Marks.

In 1885 Thomas Fitzgerald and his brother Mike came to West Branch near present Mitchell and became sheep ranchers. They became victims of the infamous Sheep and Cattle Wars when several of their sheep were killed. Tom married Amy Frier in 1893 and settled on Bear Creek a tributary to Bridge Creek. They had two children, Ruby and Willie Mark.

Her great grandparents on her mother's side were Fulgenzio and Catarina Rivera Vanina who had come to Central Oregon in 1884. They had one child, a daughter, Lena. In 1900 Lena married Dillard Lowrey, whose parents Russell and Mary Denton Lowrey were early settlers on the east end of Summit Prairie. Dillard and Lena had two children, Vada and Elvin. Vada met young Mark Fitzgerald when she was in her late teens and they were married in 1923 and lived at his homestead cabin on Bear Creek northwest of Mitchell. Elsie was born to Mark and Vada on May 9, 1927. Later a sister, Leona, was born and then five brothers, Ray, Joe, Russell, Fred and Thomas.

Elsie attended schools in Mitchell and graduated from Mitchell High School. She moved to Prineville in 1947 after attending Northwestern School of Commerce in Portland. She worked for Ed VanWinkle Insurance and Ochoco Lumber. On September 17, 1949 Elsie married William H. "Bill" Simmons. Bill opened a real estate and insurance office in Prineville in 1950. Elsie obtained her broker's license later that year and joined Bill in the business. In 1952 they partnered with Bill's parents and purchased a ranch near Redmond and moved to live on the ranch while still operating their business in Prineville. They had three sons while living on the ranch, Jordan, William Todd and Henry. Son Todd tragically drowned in Crooked River in 1966.

They moved back to Prineville in 1962 and continued operating their business. Bill passed away in 2000. Elsie continues to operate the family business with sons Jordan and Hank, not wanting to totally retire from her lifelong profession.



Elsie Fitzgerald Simmons  
2009 Crook County Pioneer Queen

# President's Message

We are beginning 2010, we hope to have a very productive year. We are gearing up for our expansion and are excited. The community has been very generous and supportive, and we hope we continue to get the support we need in the future. We are putting out a competitive bid for an architect, and are hoping to start building by early summer. We hope to finish by the end of 2010. We would not be this far along without all the hard work by the volunteers and staff at the Museum. Hats off to Gordon for guiding us.

We elected new officers in January. Jerry Brummer is the Vice President, Keith Snyder is the Treasurer, and Emily Hite is the Secretary. All of these people are very dedicated and great to work with. I am fortunate to have all of them as officers. I am Lucy Woodward and I was elected President this year, I feel honored to be in their company.

We will miss the outgoing board members Reita Evans and Terry Holtzaple. Terry was a hard working, involved President and Reita has spent many hours volunteering at the museum. We did re-elect Ron Johnson, and we have a new member Jan Anderson. We would also like to thank Bev Moltzau for running, we look forward to her continued support and involvement.

Our Quarterly meeting is March 7<sup>th</sup>, this will also be the Pioneer Queen's Luncheon. We are proud to honor our current and past Queens.

April 1st Joann Byrd, author of 'Calamity, the Heppner Flood' will give a presentation and slide show about that terrible event. This will be at the annex.

Our first field trip is going to be June 12, a driving tour to the Painted Hills on to Twickenham, Richmond, Service Creek, Spray and ending at the John Day Fossil Museum. Details about the tour will be in the next Quarterly Newsletter.

Thanks again for all the past, present, and future support our community has shown.

Thanks,

*Lucy*

Lucy Woodward

President Crook County Historical Society



## Memorials Since November 21, 2009

### **Richard Breese**

by Oran, Tom & Beverly Wolverton  
Hugo & Ann Kapelke  
A. James & Nadeane Reif Silbernagel

### **Don Yancey**

by Pat & Naida Miller  
Susan Bilyeu  
Snoden & Pat DeBoard

### **Michal Clauson**

by Susan Bilyeu

### **Mike Walker**

by CCHS class of 1965

### **Maxine Drewelow Gillespie**

by Peggy Kasberger

### **Martel Scroggin**

by Peggy Kasberger

### **Calvin Dunaway**

by Mary Wainright Nobel  
Wayne & Molly Kee

### **Roy A. Pearl**

by M. Beth Pearl-Gent & family

### **Lucille McKenzie**

by Jerry & Eloise Brummer

### **Bob Gerke**

Jim & Casey Dutchuk

### **Maurine Sinclair**

by Snoden & Pat DeBoard  
Shirley McCullough  
Colleen Ferguson  
Richard Rose

### **Monty Bales**

by Wayne & Sandy Demaris

## Welcome to New Members

Terry Thompson  
Ray & Mary Demaris  
Frances Bristow  
Kip & Ben Molnar  
Seth, Susan, Chloe Crawford  
Leslie Olson  
James Swanson  
Robert & Cheryl Smith  
Patricia A. Tennant  
Mike & Jacquie McCabe  
Shannon McCabe & Roger Merrill  
Max & Grace Merrill

# Pioneer Days in Central Oregon

## Reign of the Vigilantes

from *Central Oregonian* June 2, 1955

This chapter in the history of Prineville and Crook county might be called the "Day of the Vigilantes." Crook county was established in October 1882 during an ominous period when night raids, lynchings and murders were as common as automobile accidents are now.

The makings of trouble began in the winter of 1881-2 when a secret organization called the vigilantes was formed supposedly for the purpose of law and order and the detection and punishment of horse thieves.

It is not recorded that a horse thief was ever caught or punished by this organization, however a few accused of horse stealing were told to leave the county.

First news of the beginning of bloodshed came early in March, 1882 when a rider wheeled into Prineville and told of the killing of A.H. Crooks and Stephen Jory out on Willow creek toward present day Madras.

Garrett Maupin, passing by Lucius Langdon's place heard two shots come from behind a small knoll just to the rear of the house. He went to the spot immediately and found the two men dead and saw Langdon leaving the scene on a horse and Langdon was armed.

Later it was learned that Langdon had quarreled with Crooks and Jory over a piece of land which belonged to Langdon. It didn't make much difference to either which it belonged to, events proved.

A coroner's inquest found that Langdon had inflicted gunshot wounds causing death of the two men, so a posse was formed and Langdon was captured and brought, a short time later, along with a man named Harrison, who had been bragging about something to do with the shooting.

Langdon and Harrison were turned over to Deputy Sheriff J.L. Luckey. Luckey was guarding his prisoners at a hotel when he was taken by surprise during the night by masked men.

Here is how Luckey describes it: "At about five o'clock in the morning as I was sitting at the stove with my back to the front door, the door was suddenly opened and I was caught and thrown backwards on the floor and firmly held, while my eyes

were blinded and immediately a pistol was fired rapidly five or six times."

"I heard someone groan just about the time the firing ceased. Harrison was hurried from the room. I could tell it was him by his cries. I was allowed to get up. I went to Langdon and found him dead. I looked around and a masked man stood at each door, warning by signs for anyone not to undertake to leave the room. As Langdon was dead, they left."

"At daylight I took some men and began to search for Harrison, and found him hanging from a bannister on the Crooked river iron bridge."

This was the work of the vigilantes, according to an early historian and in addition to various acts of violence, he says, they secured the political control of the county.

Their second enterprise was the shooting of Al Swartz while he was playing cards in Burmeister's Saloon. It seems that Swartz had openly defied them and was in constant danger.

On the night of the killing, Swartz was seated at a card table facing the door so no one could take him by surprise, but about 10 p.m. someone came up behind him at a window and shot him in the back of the head, killing him instantly.

The same night, the Vigilantes went to the home of "Mossy" Barnes and hanged two men, Sidney Huston and Charley Lester. The word was Huston was killed because he was planning to steal a band of horses.

Lester was killed because he was a jockey, who had agreed to throw a race but had double crossed the gamblers and bet \$60 on his own horse, which he rode and won.

Two more shootings which seem to be unrelated but probably were tied in with these deaths were the killing of Mike Mogan and his brother Frank.

First Mike was shot in Burmeister's Saloon by "Mossy" Barnes. Barnes waled up to Mogan and demanded \$6, which he claimed Mogan owed him, stating at the same time that if Mogan didn't pay he would shoot him. It isn't recorded what Mogan said but what ever it was, it was the last thing he ever said. Barnes shot him through the lung and he died almost at once.

The last act in this series of killings was in December 1883, when Mike's brother Frank was killed by Colonel William T. Thompson, known as Bud Thompson. Mogan worked for Thompson and there was a disagreement between them in the settlement.

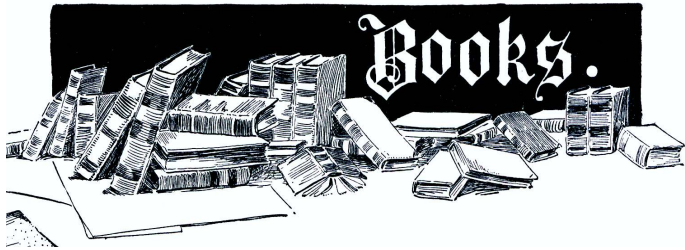
They quarreled in Kelley's Saloon and Thompson, moving about got behind Mogan and shot him in the back of the head.

Another organization "the Moonshiners" got started in th winter of 1883-4 for the purpose of putting a stop to the rather industrious work of the Vigilantes, and incidentally to gain political control of the county.

History records that some of the leading citizens were members of the Moonshiners and though politics played no part in the work of the Moonshiners, they did win an almost complete victory at the polls.

After this the Vigilantes faded away...thus ends the story of the two-year reign of death during the birth of Crook county...when it was separated from Wasco county.





## New Books at the Museum

### *Calamity: the Heppner Flood of 1903*

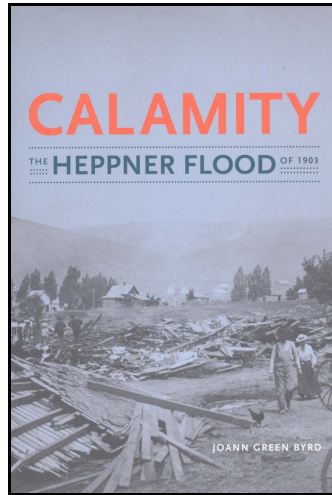
by Joann Green Byrd

Paper

\$22.50

202 Pages

This book chronicles the terrible and tragic flood that struck the northern Oregon town of Heppner on a fateful June 14, 1903. It was a hot Sunday and people went about their usual activities little realizing that soon a catastrophe would strike their small community. A late afternoon thunderstorm brought heavy rain and hail to the mountains south of the town. Soon a wall of water was headed for the town and by the time it passed through the town it had a head of over 20 feet. Within a short period of time one of every five people in town had lost their lives. This story is fast paced and riveting. Highly recommended.



### *A Heart for Any Fate: Westward to Oregon, 1845*

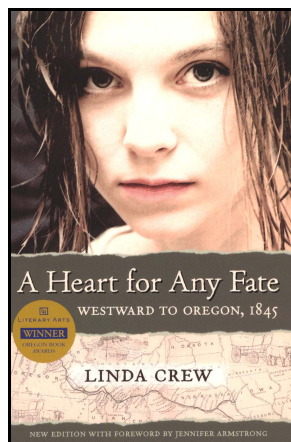
by Linda Crew

Paper

\$11.95

243 Pages

This is the story of seventeen year-old Louise King as she leaves Missouri with three generations of her family on a journey of adventure crossing the Plains by ox team in 1845. Although this is a novel it is based on historical events about the Lost Meek Wagon Train of 1845. The unforeseen dangers and difficulties of overland travel provides an exciting tale with a tearful ending. The book was a winner of the Oregon Books Award.



### *Bend: Images of America*

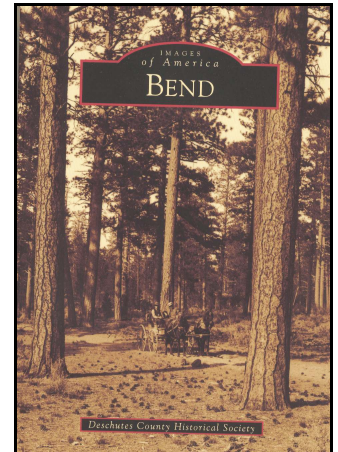
by Deschutes County Historical Society

Paper

\$21.99

128 Pages

This is a photographic history of the community of Bend produced by the Deschutes County Historical Society. It is part of the Arcadia Publishing series of photo books. Over 200 images and historical narrative provide a look back at our neighbor community that rose from a frontier town of only a few hundred people to a lumber capital and then to a recreational metropolis.



### *Mysteries and Legends of Oregon*

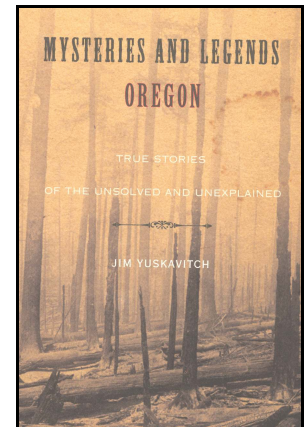
Jim Yuskavitch

Paper

\$14.95

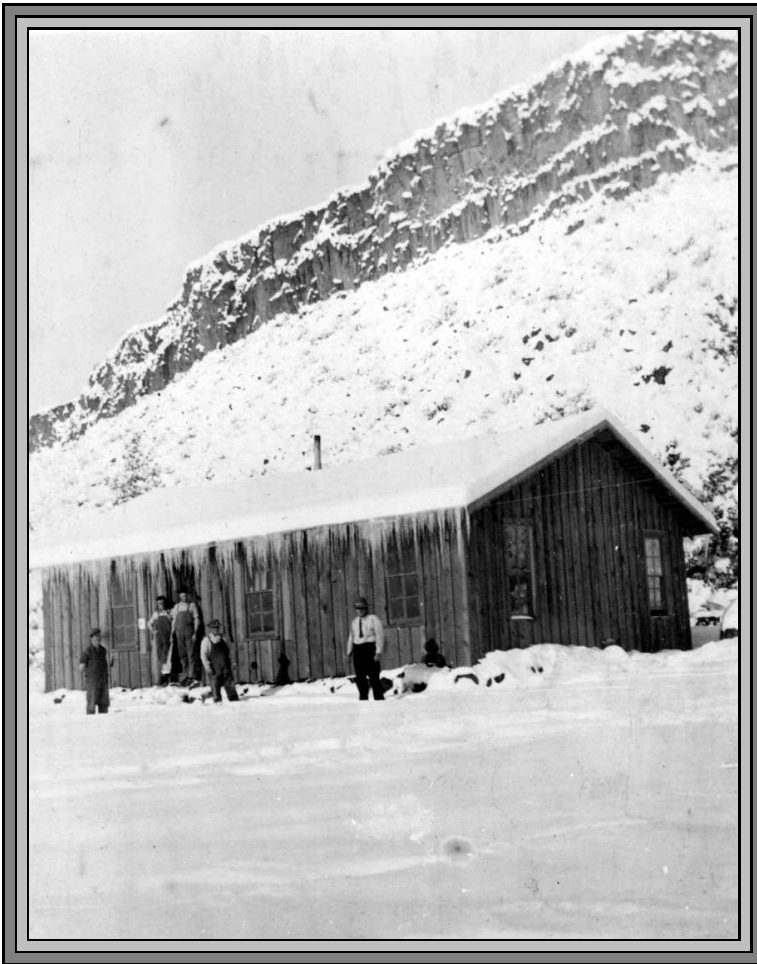
180 Pages

This book is written by Sisters author Jim Yuskavitch who has previously published *Oregon Outlaws*. It is a collection of true stories and the unexplained and includes the hijacking by D.B. Cooper, the allusive Port Orford Meteor, the Lost Blue Bucket Mine, the mysterious "Bigfoot" legend and other fascinating stories.



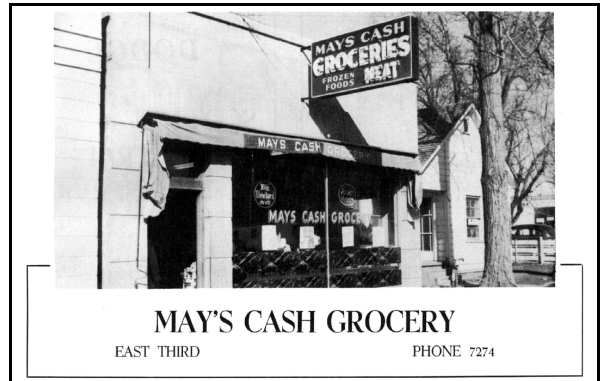
# SALE!!

Check Out Our Bargain Table  
Over 20 Items  
at 50% off Retail Price



## Mystery Photo

Can You Identify this Building and It's Location?  
If You Know Please Contact the Museum



1953 Advertisement for Mays Cash Grocery  
in Prineville



Advertisement in 1890 for  
Dew Drop Saloon in Prineville



## Frontier Fun!!!

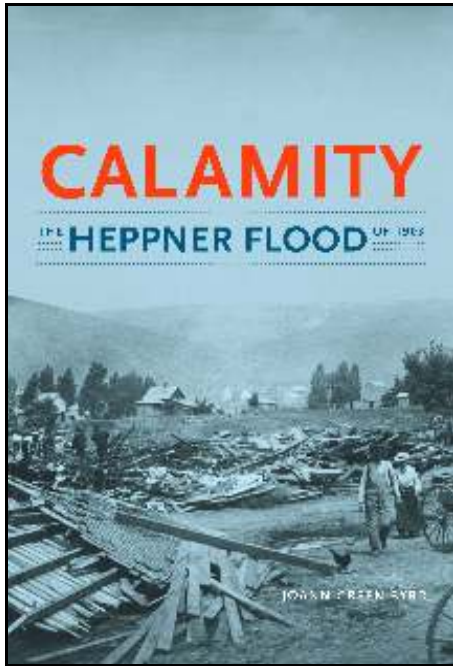
Meeks and Stauffer Children on Mule at Hampton ca. 1918

# Author Reading/Slide Show

## *Calamity: The Heppner Flood of 1903*

By Joann Green Byrd

April 1<sup>st</sup> , 6:30 p.m, Museum Annex



The Heppner Flood remains the most deadly disaster in Northwest history. But still, not many people know about the flash flood that claimed 245 lives on a hot Sunday afternoon in 1903. Most of the victims were families closed up inside their homes to escape the tumult of pounding rain and booming thunder and the racket created by thousands of tons of hail.

Joann Green Byrd, who grew up 60 miles away in Pendleton, spent many weekends and summer weeks in Heppner, where her father was born and reared, and where her grandparents and uncles and their families lived. Even so, she did not grasp the scale of the disaster until 2003, when the people of Heppner put together a 100th anniversary observance.

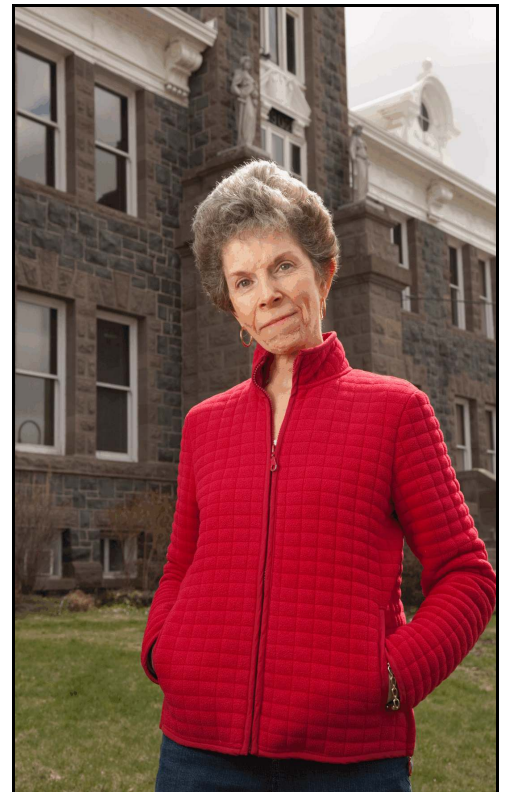
Byrd was captured by the need to know about the people who died on June 14, 1903, and why. The story that unfolded--largely in the rooms and files of the Morrow County Heritage Museum--is more compelling than she expected: why the mind set of Oregon settlers helped

them recover, how the people of Oregon, Washington and other states stopped what they were doing to help Heppner get back on her feet, the abundant evidence that the little things we do have consequences, for bad or good.

To tell this story, she was able to use a multitude of original sources, including maps, letters, memoirs, thousands of newspaper stories and a phenomenal collection of photographs.

Byrd's research called on her 47 years as a newspaper reporter and editor, starting with her first writing job at the East Oregonian in Pendleton at age 13. She also worked for the *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, *The Herald* in Everett, Wash., and the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. She was ombudsman at the *Washington Post* from 1992 to 1995.

*Calamity: The Heppner Flood of 1903* was published by the University of Washington Press in August 2009. Byrd will tell the story of the flood and her discoveries at **A.R. Bowman Museum Annex on April 1, 2010, at 6:30 p.m.** She also will autograph copies of "Calamity."



Author in front of  
Morrow County courthouse