

WATERWAYS

COOS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY • SPRING 2022 • WWW.COOSHISTORY.ORG

Healing Hands Exhibit Engages Visitors

By Heather Christenbury

The *Healing Hands* exhibit, which opened February of 2022 on the mezzanine, features a look into the medical history of Coos County. As the subject itself is far too large to cover in one exhibit, the focus of the exhibit committee was to provide a selection of objects, photographs, and interpretive perspectives that had not been previously brought together in a museum setting.

Visitors to the exhibit can expect to find a variety of information on different doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, and historic medical equipment. They will also find profiles on lesser known medical professionals from the area that have not been previously featured in the museum or through other avenues. In addition, visitors will be able to learn more about the continuing traditional medicinal practices of Native Americans.



Dr. Horsfall was beloved by the community. A large selection of his personal and medical items are on display in the Healing Hands exhibit.



Come to see the different medicines, tonics, and potions used by doctors, healers, and pharmacists through the early 1900s.

Many of the objects and photographs on display have not been displayed previously in the museum. In addition, the research put together by the very dedicated volunteer research team has created the most complete known record of how the medical field evolved in Coos County through the 1970s.

Interactives for the whole family allow for deeper conversations about the history of medicine, popular culture references to illness, and a chance to learn how to pronounce different words related to indigenous medicinal practices in their native languages.

The *Healing Hands* exhibit will be on display at the Coos History Museum through the end of the year.

This is the Coos History Museum's first large scale exhibit change since January 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic had brought many challenges, but this exhibit is a sign that things are starting to return to a new sense of normal.

Under the leadership of the new curator, Heather Christenbury, the exhibit team began the task of creating a new exhibit in the fall of 2021. The tight time frame for



Dentistry in Coos County: Cast Iron Dental Chair, ca. 1900.

completion meant that decisions and changes had to be squared away much more quickly than in previous exhibit planning sessions.

Returning visitors will be delighted to see that the exhibit features two new exhibit cases and a new railing display system. These innovations will allow the museum to offer more content to visitors going forward. Many new changes and additions are planned for the coming months so stay tuned for more exciting news coming soon.



Explore the stories of women in the field of early medicine in Coos County

Photos by PacWest Media and CHM

New Maritime Historical Website

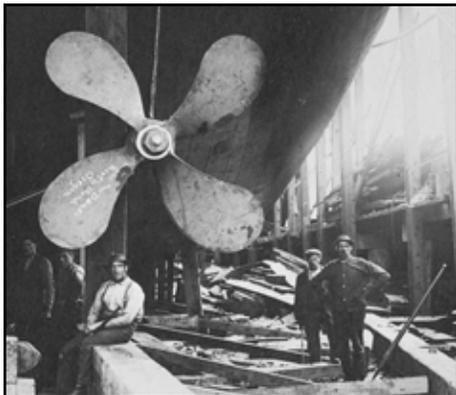
“You will find a visually stunning digital documentation of a company that created such a historical impact on the Coos Bay area,” says **John Granger**, the compiler of the text and photos featuring the Kruse & Banks Shipbuilding Company.

<https://kruseandbanksshipbuilding.org>

Quotes from the website:

The Kruse & Banks Shipbuilding Company operated for forty years on the bay in North Bend, Oregon. From sailing schooners to steam schooners, tug boats to war ships, the technology changed over the years but ships were always of the highest quality and always made of wood. These photos are from the collection of **Mary Banks Granger**, daughter of **Robert Banks**.

This website is a presentation of the collection of photos and ship history that were handed down from Robert Banks to his daughter. Her memories of the shipyard, her father and all of the ships and workers were her inspiration to preserve this history of their work and accomplishments. This site is dedicated to her and all of the hardworking shipbuilders.



Fifield, 1908



Shipyard, 1943

Inspiration for the development of the website from John Granger:

Growing up in North Bend, we always had a connection to the days of wooden shipbuilding. My mother, Mary Banks Granger, had a keen memory and as she got older loved to share the collection of photos and stories from her father’s yard, Kruse & Banks Shipyard. At the time of her passing, I finally sat down to sort and curate this collection with the intention of creating some digital copies for the family. Although I had seen these photos hundreds of times, when they were scanned and viewed on an iPad or phone, they suddenly came alive. I zoomed in on the photos and out jumped details previously static and distant. The excitement of spectators at the ship launchings, the size of the timbers, the faces of the shipwrights all came into view and I knew that this history had to be shared in a digital form. I began to organize the collection as a website and add information that my mother had left. Soon, while searching for more details, I discovered newspapers.com and was immersed in period reporting. The stories that I heard as a child suddenly came alive in print with long past events spoken of in the present tense and matching many of the photos that now jump



out of the pages on the website.

I invite all of you with an interest in the early days of North Bend and Coos Bay to visit the website. Explore the photos on your tablet. Zoom and pan. Relish the excitement of the crowds as a new ship slides down the ways into the bay. Marvel at the majestic curves and sheer size of these massive wooden ships. Contemplate the craftsmanship and hard work it took to create such strength and beauty with the tools of that time, Then, with these visions lodged in our memory, you will never be able to look at the Mill Casino waterfront the same way again.

Coos County Historical Society

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Museum Admission

Open Tuesday thru Saturday, 11-5
Adults = \$7, Children 5-17 = \$3
Family Maximum: \$17
AARP, AAA, and senior discounts
Free to members and active-duty service

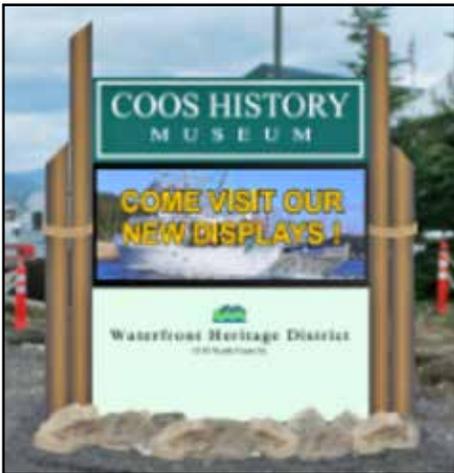
541.756.6320, www.cooshistory.org





Marcia Hart Executive Director's Note

Spring is my favorite time of year. It is a time of renewal and after the long, dark months of winter, we get to see our world come back to life. Two years ago, the Coos County Historical Society's Board of Trustees met to update the strategic direction of the museum and though the COVID pandemic may have slowed our progress, we have successfully sown "seeds" which we are now starting to see "sprout" early in 2022. I want to take a moment to give you an update on our progress.



Entrance, Waterfront and Plaza Development

The Trustees' strategic plan included the improvement of our exterior space to include a waterfront walkway, improved accessibility to our outdoor educational programs, and create a welcoming gathering place for events. Because of the size of the project, our Waterfront Development Committee decided to take a multi-phased approach. Phase I includes the addition of a new front entrance to our parking lot and waterfront improvements. With the assistance of our neighbors to the north, Coos Bay Village, and a generous grant from the Judith Ann Mogan Foundation, we will

soon have a new front entrance and reader board sign to welcome visitors to our museum. The contract with Art Signs was approved by our Board of Trustees in March, and we wait for the construction of the sign to be located near the New Carissa propeller. This new reader board will be visible from Hwy 101 north and south and will allow us to announce upcoming programs and events at the museum and throughout our community. Our hope is to attract more visitors to the museum and the Waterfront Heritage District along Front Street.

Additional improvements include the completed restriping of the front parking lot, expansion of the garden area around the Alonzo Tucker Memorial including seating near the memorial and waterfront areas, relocation and pruning of the trees along North Front St. and additional garbage/recycle receptacles near the front bicycle racks. Total cost of the project is planned at \$86,000 and is currently on budget.

Plans for Phase II-A waterfront walkway and pedestrian bridge are also underway. The museum's walkway/boardwalk will be an 8' concrete walkway along the eastern edge of our property, abutting the seawall. It will include a 216' guardrail, 42" high located along the edge to our rain garden/bioswale, to mirror the existing guardrails along the waterfront and the Coos Bay Village pier. We also envision a pedestrian bridge from the parking area just north of the handicapped parking spaces. Total cost of the project

is estimated at \$275,000. With the help of museum's Waterfront Development Committee, and through collaborations with Coos Bay Village and the City of Coos Bay, the museum will be applying for grants and seeking community support to help fund the project.

We are also proud to report support of our Front Street neighbors and the City of Coos Bay's Front Street Blueprint Plan. This plan has been years in the making and is looking to create a walkable space along Front St. that will truly "connect the boardwalks" along the Coos Bay waterfront.

Meanwhile, inside the museum, our staff and volunteers are working diligently to continue offering excellent experiences for our members and visitors. Our third new exhibit will be open at the end of April and we are looking forward to our Second Annual Juneteenth Celebration, June 14, 18 & 19. Check out our website for more information about these and future events. cooshistory.org

And finally, look for our new summer hours starting Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend. We will be open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday 12 noon to 4 p.m.

Springtime is a great time of the year to visit "your museum". We hope to see you soon.

Myrtlewood
On Exhibit through April 2023

A Treasure to Behold
Myrtlewood, a tree which grows along the Southern Oregon Coast, is adored by all. From its uses in art pieces, household items, souvenirs, and as a form of currency during the Great Depression, Myrtlewood is a treasure to behold.

On Display
April 26, 2022

History
-
Woodcarving Artistry
-
Unique Myrtlewood Coins

Visit the CHM Exhibits webpage for more information: cooshistory.org/exhibits

“The Visitor”: Disease and the Native People of Oregon

By Steven Greif,
Coos History Museum

“They possess their present lands from time immemorial [and] are never troubled with epidemic or contagious diseases, except the small-pox which, from time to time, has found its way across the Rocky Mountains.” These words in the journals of Robert Stuart, a fur trader helping establish Fort Astoria in 1811, referred to the Clatsop and Chinook Indians at the mouth of the Columbia River.

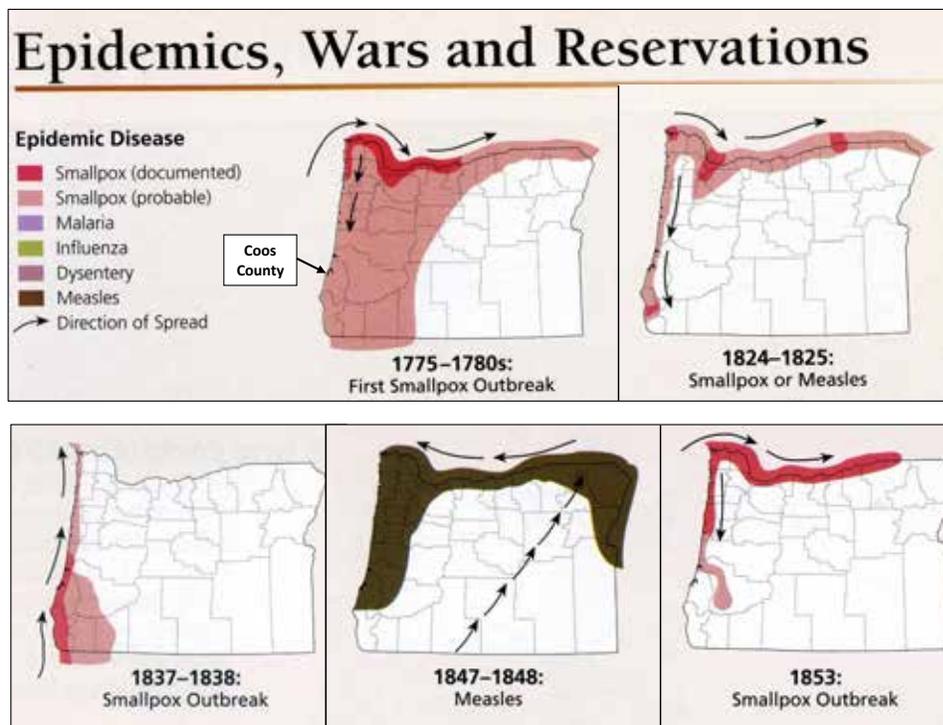
The isolation of indigenous peoples on the Oregon Coast was both a blessing and a curse. For thousands of years, they were not exposed to diseases from Europe – epidemics that were so large the period from the 6th to the 10th centuries in the “Old World” was known as the Dark Ages. Over time, Europeans generally developed natural antibodies to many of those diseases and often were able to recover after contracting them.

Native tribes, however, after exposures to smallpox, measles, and other diseases from European explorers after 1500, did not recover as easily.

Like today’s Covid-19 pandemic, the aged and young were the most susceptible. Contact with sick fur traders usually meant disaster for Indians. Tribal economies, culture, and government were thrown into total disarray. “The effect [of smallpox] are so calamitous as to carry off three-fourths of those who have the misfortune to be attacked,” Stuart also noted in his journals.

Some historians believe European germs reached Oregon tribes as early as 40 years after the voyages of Columbus to the Caribbean. Certainly, by the 18th century, smallpox had arrived on the Pacific coast, probably from a sick crew member associated with the Spanish expedition of Bruno Heceta. Those explorers stopped to trade at Trinidad Bay in northern California in June, 1775, and soon smallpox was in southwest Oregon. “Old timers said that the sickness came from the south – it just came by itself,” recalled a member of the Tolowa tribe of northern California.

A second wave of smallpox hit Oregon South Coast people in 1824-25. The Hanis Coos villages on Tenmile Lake were hardest hit, wiping out their entire population. A third epidemic struck again in 1837. This time it was measles. The population of indigenous peoples around Coos Bay dropped from a peak of about 2000 to only 800 by the time the first permanent Euro-Americans settled here in the 1850s. Coquille Thompson of the Coquille tribe said, “One little spot



Maps adapted from William Loy (ed), *Atlas of Oregon* (University of Oregon Press, 2001)

and a person would die. It was just like cutting brush... Men, women, and children—all go. No one could cure that kind of sickness.” Patty Whereat-Phillips, a Coos tribal linguist and historian, notes that Annie Miner Peterson, a Coos Indian woman, gave anthropologists in the 1930s an historic Hanis name for these diseases - *qenchiwiye*. The word was akin to “the visitor”, meaning that it came from afar to the tribe.

Early American explorers saw signs of these epidemics. Sea captain Robert Gray explored the Oregon Coast in 1788. When Natives approached his ship, the *Lady Washington*, in a canoe, they brandished iron knives (a sign that they had previously obtained trade goods) and Gray noted: “Two or three of our visitors were much pitted with the smallpox.” When the Corps of Discovery stayed the winter of 1805-06 at Fort Clatsop, William Clark recorded in his journal, “The smallpox has destroyed a great number of the natives in this quarter.” Meriwether Lewis thought several hundred Indians had died just a few years before the Corps’ arrival. “The late ravages of the small pox may well account for the number of remains of villages which we find deserted on the river and Sea coast,” he wrote.

Fur traders came next with their trade goods – as well as a disease referred to at the time as “fever and ague.” It was probably malaria. The devastation started at Hudson Bay’s Fort Vancouver in 1830, raged up the Willamette Valley, and killed thousands. Historian Robert Boyd in his book, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence* (1999), called it “the single most important

epidemiological event in the recorded history of what would eventually become the state of Oregon.” Boyd estimates that every tribe affected lost more than 80% of its population in a very short time. “Corpses, denied interment, piled up along the shores to fatten carrion eaters...Natives burned their villages attempting to destroy their contamination.” History books don’t describe armed conflict between Indians and Oregon Trail pioneers who arrived in the Willamette Valley after the Oregon Territory was created in 1848. That’s because the Kalapuya, Clackamas, and Molalla tribes of that region had effectively been decimated.

Lack of antibodies was the main reason these diseases killed so many. But another reason involved tribal customs. The concept of germs was unknown to both Natives and Euro-Americans. When a tribal person took ill, family members and a shaman (medicine man) would often gather around for comfort and support which only hastened the spread of viruses. If an ill person went to a sweat lodge and then plunged into a cold river or bay, a common medical practice in pre-contact days, these types of diseases only got worse. Pneumonia and death quickly ensued.

In the late 1850s, the federal government ordered a round-up of remaining Indians in southwestern Oregon. They were forced to relocate on a new Coastal Reservation between the Siuslaw River and Tillamook Bay. It was, by then, an unpopulated place. There were almost no Yaquina natives left after the succession of epidemic diseases that had previously swept through the central Oregon coast. Indian Superintendent Jason Palmer travelled through southwestern Oregon to arrange treaties. “On my route I visited several bands of Umpqua,” he reported. “I found many of them wretched, sickly, and almost starving... Once powerful, but now few and weak.” Sub-agent Josiah Parrish took a census in 1854 of Indians on the South Coast. “They show evident marks of smallpox...also the measles,” he wrote, and added, “Both [diseases] were very destructive to



Annie Miner Peterson, Coos Indian Woman, survived smallpox but later died of tuberculosis. (CHM 989.p201)

them...Many of their once populous villages are now left without a representative.”

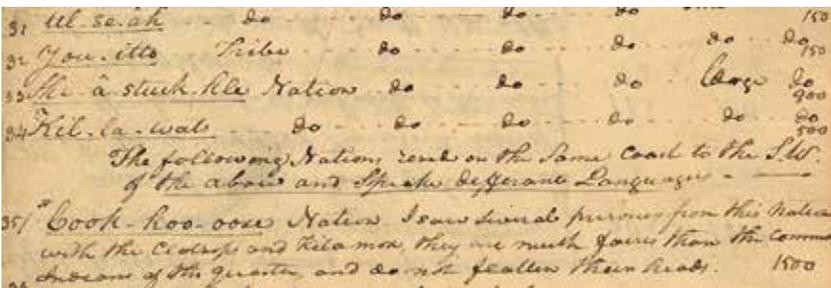
Even though the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw tribes had remained peaceful during this era, they were also forced to move to the reservation. They were marched first to the Umpqua Sub-Agency on the spit at the mouth of the Umpqua River. There, tuberculosis soon took its toll. “The death of an Indian with this disease throws the whole village into a state of excitement,” said the Army physician stationed at the site. “Between the disease and the means taken to prevent it, a large number have been buried.”

The remaining Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw were then moved north of Cape Perpetua but

health conditions there were also poor. Patty Whereat-Phillips found a Native witness in the historic record who said there were still corpses in the abandoned houses at the Alsea village of Yaxaik when the tired South Coast Indians arrived at what is called Yachats today. There had been no one left to bury the last ones to die. Government records show that almost half of the Coos, Siuslaw, Lower Umpqua, and Coquille people eventually passed away before the Coastal Reservation closed in 1875.

Annie Miner Peterson contracted smallpox on the reservation as a youth but survived and returned to Coos County after the reservation closed. Multi-lingual in English as well as her native languages of Hanis and Miluk Coos, Annie worked with anthropologists in the 1930s to preserve and record her tribal culture. But a later visit to Dr. Ennis Keizer in North Bend confirmed a dreaded diagnosis -- tuberculosis. Just as textbooks of her ethnological contributions were coming off the press, Annie died on May 9, 1939. Another of the last remaining Native speakers had succumbed to “the visitor.”

Steven Greif is a former NBHS history teacher/coach who volunteers with the Coos History Museum. He is indebted to the late Chief Don Ivy for inspiration and information for this article.



Coos Indians were listed as “Cook-koo-oose” in a census estimate in the journals of William Clark (1805).

Sources:

Lionel Youst, *She’s Tricky Like Coyote: Annie Miner Peterson* (1997)
 Charles Wilkinson, *The People Are Dancing Again* (2010)
 Stephen Dow Beckham (ed.), *Oregon Indians: Voices from Two Centuries* (2006)
 Stephen Dow Beckham, *The Indians of Western Oregon: This Land Was Theirs* (1977)
 Nathan Douthit, *Uncertain Encounters: Indians and Whites at Peace and War in Southern Oregon* (2002)

Invasive Species Out at the CHM

By Steven Greif

Coos Watershed Association staff members **Alexa Carleton, Dave Nelson, and Ed Cope**, in coordination with the Coos History Museum, organized a landscaping improvement project at the CHM on October 18th. Other volunteers, including those from the CHM, and 7 Devils Brewery, also participated. Altogether, 18 adults put in 48 man-hours of volunteer time to clear the parking lot islands and bioswales of weeds and invasive plants. The crew also removed several tall willow bushes on the bay side of the fencing to improve the view. Truckloads of vegetation were removed thanks to the dedicated volunteers!



*CHM members, **Jim and Cindy Hough** (foreground), **Jamie Fereday** and Coos County commissioner **John Sweet** (middle), and **Sierre Kerle'e** from 7 Devils Brewery (in the back), were among the volunteers who cleaned vegetation in the bioswale. Photo by Steven Greif*

Membership Roll Call

January-March 2022

Individual

Robinson, Martha
 Allen, Nancy
 Heap, Katie
 Walters, Gidget
 Topping, Gary
 Porter, Barbara
 Tinker, George
 Smith, Jeanne
 Noordhoff, Susanna
 Edmunds, Charles
 Pennington, Kristi
 Johnson, Evan
 Wilskey, Joanne
 Powrie, L.S.
 Warnock, Linda
 David Taylor
 Harpole, Joan/HD
 Cattle Company
 Kellogg, Spencer
 Olson, Doris
 Anderson, Jay
Household
 Drake, William
 Beckman & Barbara
 Morrison, Len & Diane

Hurn, Karen
 Solomon, Lola J.
 Walworth, Clark &
 Catherine
 Ellingsen, Myrle
 Mahaffy, Robert
 Beckett, Arthur & Janna
 Metzger, Barbara &
 Bernard
 Neill, Joe & Maria
 Corrigan, Randy
 Corrigan, Shawn &
 Darcy
 Wright, Redgie & Debbie
 McCann, Jim
 Mohr, Ralph & Claire
 Mast, JoAnn
 Howard, Chuck & Mary
 de Jong, Pamela
 Salcedo, John Michel Jr.
 & Gary
 Ruby, Leah
 Layport, James & Alice
 Messerle, Donald
 Roberts, Denise
 Ehrendreich & Steven

Lance, Clifford & Adrienne
 Silveria, Kim Bui & Steven
 Alice Carlson
Business
 Johnson, Larry & Cindy/
 Puppy Love
 White, Jay & Melody/J.W.
 White Painting Co.
 Pollard, Annie/7 Devils
 Coastal Paper & Supply,
 Inc.
Friend
 Major, Vonnie
 Tanac, Wesley & Dianne
 Slack, Joe & Claudia
 Cooper, Beverly
 Bloom, Melanie
 Mikowski, Judy
 Myers, Dan & Charlyn
 Collins, Judith
 Topits, Lyn/JMT
 Management Services
 Grant, Robert & Barilynn
 Jansen, Nick & Joyce
 Main, Mike & Sharon
 McKeown, Jeff & Caddy

Thompson, Ellen
 Anderson, Susan
 Verger, Jim & Diane
 Heron, Juliet
 Morrissey, Mike
 Soules, Doug & Cricket
 Morgan, Joseph
 Youst, Lionel
 Whitmer, Bill & Margery/
 Betty Kay Charters
 Williams, David
 Paczesniak, Mary
 Bechtold, Paula M.
 Rudder, Richard
 Tilton, Dave & Janet
Benefactor
 Strine, Linda
 Poole, Arthur &
 Antoinette
 Moffitt, Christine
 Verger, Joanne
 Backman, Sven & Pat
Historian
 Mast, William
 Pullen, Reg

Donations

1st Quarter 2022

Thank you to all on this list for your generous contributions.

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 Haavig, Steven & Paula
 Scavera
 Heap, Katie
 Mast, Joann
 Munro, Jr, Clark
 Network for Good
 Sprague Jr Foundation,
 Norman F
 Stephens, Chris
 Strine, Linda
 Thompson, Ellen
 Three Rivers Foundation
 Ventgen, Carol & Mike
 Perkins

Juneteenth Writing Competition

The Coos History Museum, together with the Juneteenth Committee, is hosting the 2nd Annual Juneteenth Celebration on June 18th and 19th, 2022. This year the museum is sponsoring a Juneteenth Writing Competition to commemorate the historical event, and inviting the youth in our community and throughout Oregon to participate.

The deadline to submit your writing is April 30, 2022 at 5:00 PM. Anyone between the ages of 12-22 may participate via the divisions of middle school, high school, and college. There are three categories for writing which include poetry, song, and essay. Cash prizes will be awarded to first (\$200), second (\$100), and third (\$50) place in each division and category.

Complete submission rules and information can be found on the CHM website cooshistory.org/events/juneteenth-writing-competition. Additional programming and events will be hosted surrounding the holiday so visit the CHM 2022 Celebrate Juneteenth webpage for more information: cooshistory.org/juneteenth-celebration.

Recognizing our 2022 Sponsors

First Tuesday Talks:

The Coquille Animal Hospital
The Mill Casino & Hotel

Bay Area Culture Fest & Juneteenth Celebration:

The Three Rivers Foundation
Oregon Folklife Network

Juneteenth Celebration:

CB-NB Visitor & Convention Center
KMTR-TV
The Coos County Cultural Coalition
Christine Moffitt

Waterfront Development Project:

Judith Ann Mogan Foundation

Coos History Summer Camp:

Eugene & Marlaina Johnston Foundation

Is it time to purchase or renew your annual membership? Make a donation?

Annual Fee:

- ___ Student (\$15)
- ___ Individual (\$35)
- ___ Household (\$50)
- ___ Friend (\$100)
- ___ Benefactor (\$250)
- ___ Historian (\$500)
- ___ Curator (\$1,000)
- ___ Business membership (\$100 or above)

Donation \$ _____

Membership has its rewards in shopping locally. Show your membership card when you shop at **Tru Furniture**, and **Katrina Kathleen's** to receive **10% OFF** regular prices.

At the Friend level and up, you can receive an additional benefit – membership in the North American Reciprocal Museums program with free admission to 1,000+ museums across the U.S. A link to the list of NARM members is posted on our website and available for review at our front desk.

Your annual membership becomes active from date of purchase.

Member/Business Name: _____

Address: _____

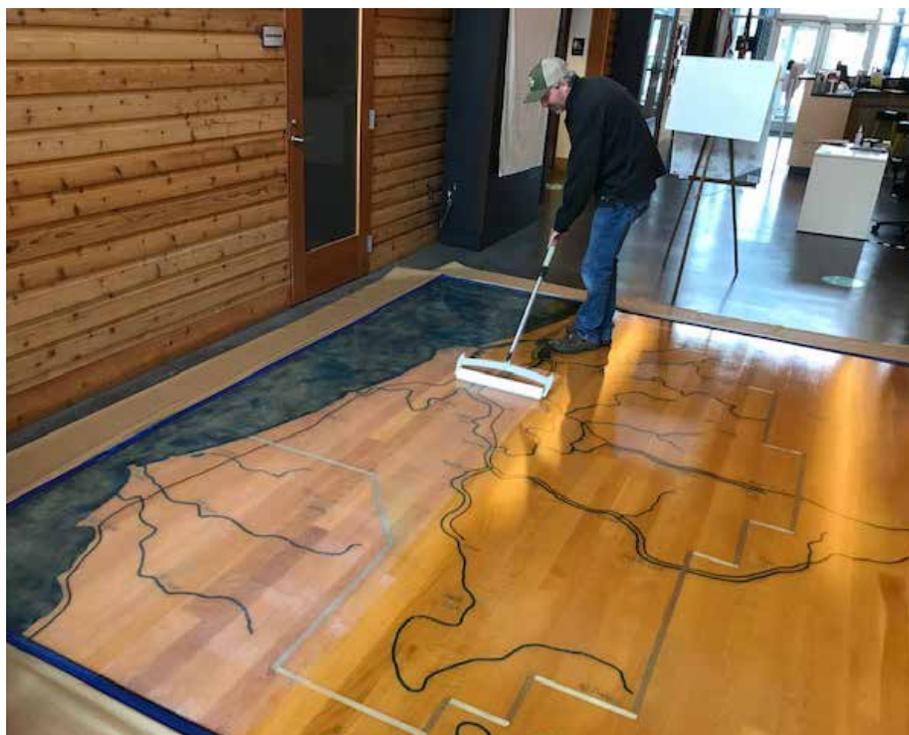
Phone #: _____ Email: _____

___ Yes, send information about events via email.

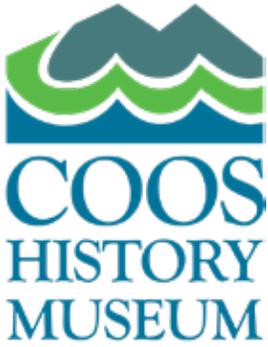
___ Send information about volunteering and gifting.

If your VISA/MasterCard/DiscoveryCard is by mail: Exp Date: _____

Card #: _____ 3-digit Security Code: _____



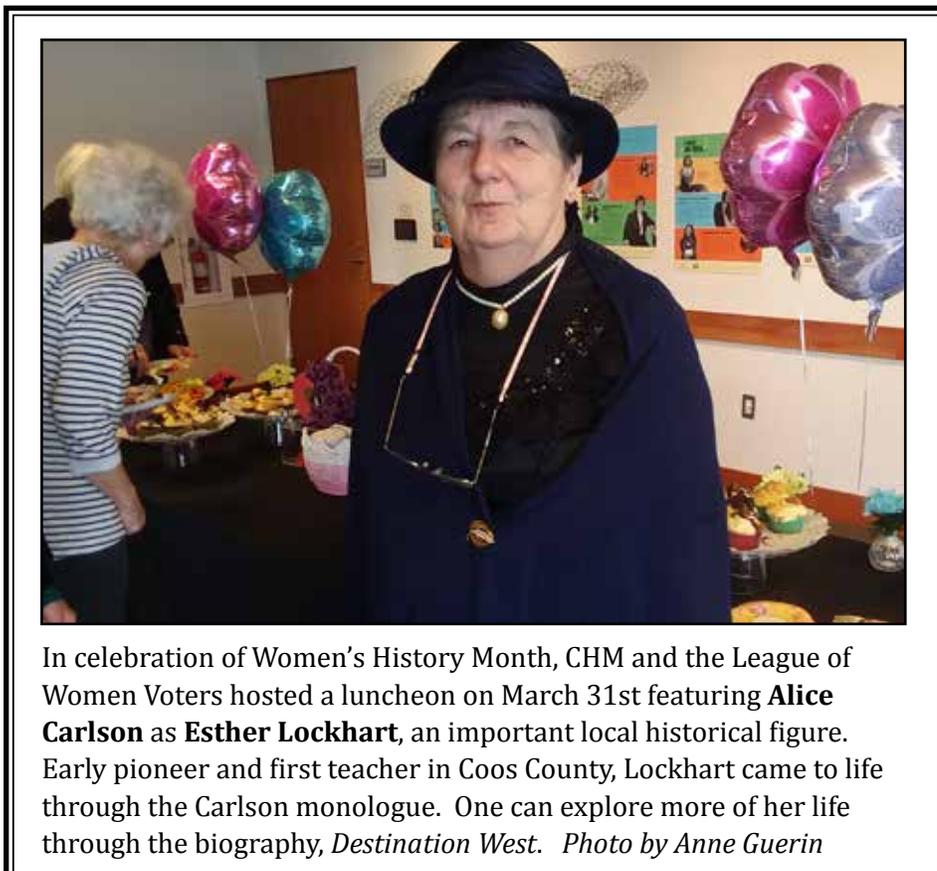
Trae Johnson of Bayshore Paints and **Steve Greif**, CHM volunteer, worked to take the scratches and dullness off the County floor map in the lobby. Trae sanded the map surface and then applied two coats of urethane to add protection. We thank Bayshore Paints for their weekend time on this project. Be sure to examine the map on your next visit to the museum.



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In celebration of Women's History Month, CHM and the League of Women Voters hosted a luncheon on March 31st featuring **Alice Carlson** as **Esther Lockhart**, an important local historical figure. Early pioneer and first teacher in Coos County, Lockhart came to life through the Carlson monologue. One can explore more of her life through the biography, *Destination West*. Photo by Anne Guerin

WATERWAYS

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