

GREETINGS FROM THE WALLOWA COUNTY MUSEUM!!!

The Friends of the Wallowa County Museum and the members of the Wallowa County Museum Board join all of you in welcoming a new year. We would like to share with you some of the "History" that has taken place in our museum over the last twenty years, and also share the news of our new publication "Wallowa County History - A Continuation", a collection of stories and biographies of the people who settled Wallowa County.

"History is what time leaves in an old man's eyes and the spirit that keeps him young at heart. It is also the ship that carries living memories to the future...Yours, mine, our children and our children's children!"

Author Unknown

Although the Museum building is owned by Wallowa County, since opening its doors in 1976, the operation and maintenance has been largely funded through a small admission fee, private grants and donations as well as the tireless efforts of dedicated volunteers such as the members of The Friends of the Museum. Volunteers manage the gift counter, the proceeds of which are used to help fund the museum, clean and maintain the building, pay for municipal services, provide staff during the season to greet and inform visitors and organize events to showcase local history.

Since 1999, the Wallowa County Museum Board and The Friends of the Wallowa County Museum worked with several other groups that shared an interest in the history of Wallowa County and its people. Working together they presented small productions to the public about various historic topics. Among the locations highlighted were: Alder Slope; the Prairie Creek Divide; Imnaha and Hells Canyon; the North End including Troy, Flora, and Promise; and the Zumwalt Prairie. Also included were programs celebrating native wildflowers, historic barns and the diverse landscapes of our area. The programs were presented at various locations throughout the County. Many "community partnerships" were formed to present these productions. Most of these programs included a panel of speakers made up of local residents with considerable first-hand knowledge of the history of the area and its people. These programs were enjoyed by many, young and old alike. Our history does matter to all of us. It helps to explain who we are, how we got here and what happened along the way.

Expansion Project- "The Annex"

2009 - 2011

The Wallowa County Museum Expansion Project began in earnest in early 2009 when plans were "put on paper" and the project focused on a remodel of the old Joseph Fire Hall building adjacent to the Museum.

To begin the expansion, the fire hall roof supports and cement block walls were reinforced and a new roof membrane was installed. Pinnacle Architecture was hired to complete the preliminary design and develop cost estimates. The new facility plans included research and work space, archival quality storage and additional display areas, as well as a new emergency exit and an additional restroom (required by code).

With more than 30% of the funding in the hands of the Friends of the Museum from donations and fund-raising efforts, the Wallowa County Museum Board of Directors and the Friends of the Wallowa County Museum formed a committee to raise the remaining \$160,000 needed for construction, equipment and furnishings.

The total cost of the project was \$236,098 (including contingency and inflation). An integral part of this successful fund-raising effort was the commitment and tireless efforts of the grant-writing author Sara Miller. Foundation grants were essential to our project, but contributions from individuals were integral to provide the matching funds often required by grantors and as a commitment of local support.

In 2010, The "Friends" received grants from The Wildhorse Foundation and an Oregon Preservation Grant from Oregon State Parks & Recreation to replace the leaking roof on the main Museum building.

In 2011 the Friends of the Wallowa County Museum was awarded grants by the Meyer Memorial Trust, the Collins Foundation, the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, the Wallowa County Cultural Trust Coalition, and the Soroptimist Club of Wallowa County.

With the generosity of many Wallowa County residents and businesses as well as many people with roots in Wallowa County, now living outside of the county, we were able to secure funding for this project.

Synopsis of Restoration of the Museum

2013 – 2016

In the spring of 2013, the Board recognized the need to assess the extent of repairs and maintenance needed for the museum building. Board member Denny Kehl served as project manager to oversee the preliminary evaluation.

Tom vanBelle (contractor) donated his time and a man lift to perform an in-depth evaluation of the damages to the exterior of the building. Based upon Tom's analysis, Denny Kehl prepared a work order.

Stauffer's Refinishing restored the front doors and latch, and installed new weather stripping.

Chris Borgerding Contracting repaired the door frame and installed a temporary wall to seal entrance while doors were removed for restoration.

In 2014, the Friends of the Wallowa County Museum hired Lyn Craig, LLC to obtain grants to fund the restoration. Lyn was successful in obtaining grants from the following:

Wildhorse Foundation

The Oregon Community Foundation

Kinsman Foundation

The Museum also received generous donations from several private individuals who recognized the value of restoring the historic Museum building.

After soliciting bids from local contractors, the contract was awarded to Tom vanBelle Construction. Work began on the exterior in May 2015, and was completed in October 2015, under budget and slightly ahead of schedule.

As part of the restoration, the contractor repaired plaster, re-attached loose trim, caulked windows, replaced missing window glass moldings and broken glass, scraped and painted the exterior, rebuilt turrets at roof line, replaced the leaking roof material over the front doors, installed missing rosettes and trim pieces, and restored the doors on the south side. *The building exterior now looks the best that it has looked in 50 years.*

In the spring of 2016, Chris Borgerding Contracting replaced the leaking roof over the exterior back staircase.

During the winter of 2016, Tom vanBelle Construction repaired, scraped and painted the inside of all the windows and sills and installed new sun filtering film on the inside of the glass which blocks out 97% of the harmful UV radiation (protecting the exhibits from sun damage). It also blocks out much of the heat from the sun in the summer keeping the building cooler.

Tom vanBelle found a cabinet shop in Eugene, Oregon that could reproduce the window molding material that holds the glass in place. These were used to replace the damaged and missing moldings on the exterior windows.

Martin Doud of Parks Bronze made molds of all the various rosettes and medallions on the outside of the building, and cast replacements. These rosettes and medallions were used to replace missing or damaged original ones on the building.

Steve Arment recreated a complicated long piece of missing wooden Victorian molding above the front window where the sidewalk roof and the Museum building join.

Denny Kehl re-created some new wooden moldings to replace rotten ones on the belt line above the front doors, and also duplicated damaged wooden trim pieces for the side doors.

In 2015 the Wallowa County Museum received a generous bequest from the estate of Clyde and Helen Stonebrink, long time county residents, to help support our museum.

Clyde was born in Wallowa County the sixth of fourteen children of George W. and Grace Stonebrink. As a child he moved with his family to northeastern New Mexico. In 1934 he joined his older brother Clarence in Colorado where he met and married Helen Stuart May. In 1961 he followed his older brother back to Wallowa County where he lived until his death in 2000. Clyde and Helen farmed here for many years. Well-known and respected, they were deeply dedicated to their country and their community. They were active in a number of local projects. Helen was a member of the group that created the original *Wallowa County History* book published for the Museum in 1983. Wallowa County, as a whole, and the Museum Board members in particular are very appreciative of the Stonebrink's generosity.

Winds of Change

In 2019, Ann Hayes, our curator for over 20 years announced her retirement. Ann worked as a dedicated volunteer, tirelessly managing the Museum at all levels. She spent countless hours making sure that all the needs of the facility were met. We soon found out that this kind of dedication is impossible to replace.

In 2020 we were fortunate to hire Jude Graham as our new curator. Jude came to us with prior museum experience and has many great ideas to improve and promote our facility. Jude jumped in with both feet and started cleaning and reorganizing storage spaces and exhibits from top to bottom. Our primary project now is to digitally catalog the museum assets in such a way that they are searchable, making it more useful for research projects and for managing the displays. With financial support from The Friends of the Museum as well as generous donations from local businesses and individuals we were able to purchase new computer hardware and software to enable us to reach this goal. We are all really excited about the future potential of this facility.

2020, has been a difficult year for us. As a result of the COVID – 19 pandemic and the many resulting restrictions imposed on our state by Governor Brown we have had fewer visitors

and we have been unable to promote our usual programs and fundraisers. Our revenue stream is dwindling, like many other businesses in our county and state.

Our newly published book, **Wallowa County History - A Continuation**, is available at The Bookloft, at the Wallowa County Museum(during the season) or by calling 541 432-0101 or 541 432-4741. The price is \$45 for soft cover and \$75 for hard cover, plus shipping and handling if applicable.

This is a fascinating, informal history of the County and its people over time, as told by their descendants. It was compiled as a major fund raising project for the Museum. We sincerely hope that many of you will appreciate and support this project.

The Museum is primarily operated by dedicated volunteers and funded through the donations of many generous people who believe in the importance of preserving our history.

If you are interested in preserving the history of Wallowa County, we invite you to become a member of the Friends of the Wallowa County Museum. This is an all-volunteer, 501 (c) (3) private non-profit organizations created in 1995 advocate for the publicly-owned Wallowa County Museum, to help raise funds for its maintenance, operation and future expansion and to promote public awareness and enjoyment of the Museum and its collection of historic artifacts, documents and photographs. We always welcome new faces and new ideas.

If you would like to become a supporter of the Wallowa County Museum please fill out and return the following form. Any contribution beyond membership is greatly appreciated.

Memorial donations are encouraged and greatly appreciated. Please consider sending a tax deductible donation to the address below.

Please return this section to:

Friends of the Wallowa County Museum, P.O. Box 430, Joseph, OR 97846

Membership dues are \$15 per year for individuals and \$25 per year for family membership.

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail Address: _____ Phone: _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible check for \$ _____.

Please enroll me as an individual member _____ Family membership _____

This is my donation to support the Wallowa County Museum _____

Please accept this donation of \$ _____ in memory of _____

Friends of Wallowa County Museum tax ID# 93-1228128