A FRESH LOOK AT THE MUSEUM

Which of the artifacts on display at the Klamath County Museum is your favorite? Ask that question of 10 different people and there is a good chance you will come up with 10 different answers. On this the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Klamath County Museum we thought it might be interesting to ask that question of a number of people and then write a description of the 50 most popular artifacts. On second thought however, that didn't seem to be such a good idea after all. Fifty is a large number and to write a meaningful description of that many items would involve a great deal more time, research and writing than your editor cared to do, to say nothing of the added expense of paper, copying and postage.

Instead we have attempted to describe fewer items but do it in more detail and in addition hopefully impart some bit of information that the reader might not otherwise have known. In so doing perhaps we will whet the appetite of those of you have not visited the museum lately and motivate them to come down and take a look. There is certainly no shortage in the museum of interesting objects to write about. If anything is in short supply it is information about the history of the various artifacts. We will begin with one of my own favorites, the little 1904 Oldsmobile Curve Dashed Runabout.

Come away with me Lucille,
In my Merry Oldsmobile,
Down the road of life we'll fly,
Automobiling you and I,
To the church we'll swiftly steal,
Then our wedding bells will peal,
You can go as far as you like with me,
In my merry Oldsmobile.
ONE OF THE MUSEUM'S FAVORITE ATTRACTIONS IS A 100 YEAR OLD OLDSMOBILE RUNABOUT. THIS BEAUTIFUL AUTOMOBILE WAS BUILT BY THE INFANT, OLDSMOBILE MOTOR CO. IN 1904, JUST FIVE YEARS AFTER THAT COMPANY WAS FORMED. IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CAR'S EARLY HISTORY BUT UNFORTUNATELY THAT INFORMATION HAS BEEN LOST. WHAT WE DO KNOW IS THAT IN THE EARLY 1930S IT WAS ACQUIRED BY DR. D. G. PATTERSON, A LOCAL PHYSICIAN, WHO PRACTICED IN KLAMATH COUNTY FOR MANY YEARS. ACCORDING TO HIS DAUGHTER, RUTH ANNE (PATTERSON) MCPHER, IT CAME INTO THE DOCTOR'S POSSESSION DURING THE HARD TIMES OF 1930S AS PAYMENT IN LIEU OF CASH PAYMENT FOR MEDICAL SERVICES RENDERED. IT WAS ALREADY AN OLD CAR BY THE TIME IT WAS ACQUIRED BY THE DOCTOR AND HE PARKED IT IN HIS COMBINATION WOODSHEDE-GARAGE WHERE IT REMAINED FOR MANY YEARS, GATHERING DUST AND DROPPINGS FROM THE CHICKENS THAT ROOSTED ON IT. RUTH ANNE SAID SHE COULD RECALL MANY HAPPY CHILDHOOD HOURS PLAYING IN THE OLD CAR WITH HER SIBLINGS.

SOMETIME DURING THE 1950S MILLER BROTHERS, THE LOCAL OLDSMOBILE DEALER BECAME INTERESTED IN THE OLD CAR AND PURCHASED IT FROM DR. PATTERSON FOR $250.00 FOR USE IN PARADES AND OTHER PROMOTIONAL ENDEAVORS. LATER, MILLER BROTHERS DONATED IT TO THE MUSEUM WHERE IT HAS BECOME A MAJOR ATTRACTION.
If you think that things have not changed that much since this little auto hit the market, consider this. Until the previous year no one had yet succeeded in driving an automobile across the continent from coast to coast. Not that the attempt had not been made, for it had. It was simply that the trip was too much of a challenge. For most of the trip there were as yet no roads, no service stations, no parts stores and no garages. Finally, in 1903, for the first time, not one, but three automobiles succeeded in crossing to the east coast; A 20 horsepower Winton touring car, a 12 horsepower Packard touring car and a 4½ horsepower Oldsmobile Runabout. What interests us at this point is that the little Oldsmobile Runabout in our museum is almost identical to the Olds that crossed the continent in 1903.

Before embarking on their long journey the drivers had to attempt to anticipate what spare parts they might need and where they would need them, but it was at best a guessing game and besides space was limited. By following the railroad through much of the arid west they had arranged to have gasoline, tires and extra parts shipped ahead but there was just no way to accurately predict what their needs might be. It was a long, hard trip with numerous long delays at lonely railroad stations waiting for parts to arrive.

In reality, the car that pulled into Portland, Maine on September 23, 1903 was not the same automobile that had departed San Francisco some 11 weeks earlier. During the long journey they found it necessary to replace more than 50 parts or sets of parts. While some of the replacement parts may have been minor, by no means were all of them. The list included several major components of the car such as the transmission which had to be replaced twice. Unfortunately that little Olds Runabout that first crossed the continent in 1903 has not been preserved. We are more fortunate. We may not have the original here in Klamath Falls, but we do have one just like it.Δ
HOME ON THE RANGE

The sheep herder's camp wagon or "Ark," may not have been very fancy but it was home to many of the herders who tended the large flocks of sheep grazing on the rangelands of our western states. Indeed, it was often the only home many of them would know for several months at a stretch as they moved with the sheep as they grazed over vast stretches of our western rangeland. It was his kitchen, dining room, bedroom and a great deal more. Once a familiar sight on the open ranges of our western states, they have all but vanished from the scene. They were not built for beauty, but rather for utility and in that respect they served very well.

According to Williams these versatile wagons were first manufactured by Stevens Implement Company, of Ogden Utah. They could be purchased in kit form for assembly at home or fully assembled at the factory and they ranged in price from $550.00 to $650.00 depending on how many optional accessories the purchaser wished to have included.

Wagons that survived until later years were often fitted out with such modern amenities as pneumatic tires and gas cook stoves. Δ

We are fortunate to have one of these wagons on display at the Klamath County Museum. It is probably the largest artifact inside the museum building. Indeed, it is so large that it had to be partially disassembled in order to get it through the doors. It was donated to the museum in 1993 by Bryant Williams.

The "Ark" in the Klamath County Museum.
CABOOSE #702.

The little yellow caboose sitting a short distance west of the museum's main entrance is a graphic reminder of the time when Klamath Falls was known as the lumber and wooden box capitol of the nation. Some of the largest sawmills and box factories in the world were located right here in the Klamath Basin and nearly all brought their logs out of the woods on privately owned logging railroads.

Unlike the sheepherder's wagon that could be partially disassembled in order to be taken in through the doors, we must be content to let this old artifact remain outside in the weather.

![Weyerhaeuser Timber Co. caboose.](image)

This, and other more or less similar cabooses were once a familiar sight in the county as they brought up the rear end of Weyerhaeuser Timber Co. log trains moving to and from between the woods and the mill.

Weyerhaeuser used a number of cabooses during the more than 70 years it operated railroads in the area and happily, a number of them have been preserved. Although we do not know just when the museum caboose was built, it is unquestionably much older than any of the others. Its all wood construction, and archbar trucks are just two of the features that point to an early construction date. The inscription, "Griffin Tacoma AAR 1909," on one set of wheels lends support to this supposition, although this evidence is not conclusive.

When Weyerhaeuser began operating its first railroad in Klamath County in 1928, the company brought most of the original locomotives and rolling stock with it from its Washington State operations. This little caboose probably came to Klamath Falls at that time. How long it had been around before that, we can only guess.

Weyerhaeuser obtained most of its cabooses as hand me downs from common carrier railroads such as the Great Northern and Southern Pacific, but this little car appears to be homemade either by Weyerhaeuser or a previous owner.

Other unique features of the museum caboose include its extra long end platforms, and pull change uncoupling apparatus. The caboose is 28 feet in length and operated on standard gauge track.Δ

If the plural of goose is geese does that mean that the plural of caboose is Cabeeese?
KLAMATH BASIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD WAR II

Tom Brokaw has called it the Greatest Generation, referring to the men and women who survived the Great Depression just in time to enter military service and be whisked away to the far corners of the earth to fight for the things they believed in. Perhaps William Manchester says it best, "To fight in World War II you had to have been tempered in the 1930s Depression by the fight for survival."

Half a century has now passed and each day's newspaper lists new names of veterans of that war who have passed on. They are going fast now, and those who have not already crossed over, soon will. We owe this generation far more than we can ever repay. We can only show our thanks in small ways. One such way is the wonderful World War II exhibit at the museum in which Judith has attempted to post a photograph of each and every man or woman from the Klamath Basin who served in the military during that war. When Judith asked people of the community to bring in their cherished photographs and information for use in this project she had no idea the response would be so overwhelming. The project has grown much larger than she could ever have envisioned. At last count there were nearly 750 people pictured in the display and the number continues to grow.

This display also circulates and has been shown at a number of different locations around the state. Everywhere it has gone the response has been overwhelming.Δ

KLAMATH FALLS FIRST POSTOFFICE

George Nurse who is generally acknowledged to be the founder of the first post office. Nurse, and his wife Mary came to what was then known as Linkville in 1864, where they established a hotel near the present location of the Link River Bridge. Later, in 1872 a post office was opened within the hotel with Nurse being appointed as postmaster. The post office remained in service until 1881. It was from this box-like cupboard with its 25 pigeonholes, that incoming mail was separated to be dispensed to the residents of the area.Δ
THE ANCIENT MAZAMA TREE

Although we have probably all heard of Mt. Mazama, none of us has ever seen it. That is because it vanished nearly 7,000 years ago when the mountain literally blew its top spewing pumice dust over thousands of square miles of terrain throughout the Pacific Northwest. Scientists estimate the elevation of this ancient mountain prior to the eruption to have been somewhere between 10,000 and 12,000 feet. The layer of pumice deposited on the surrounding countryside varied from a fraction of an inch to several feet depending on the location. It is very evident in many of the highway cuts throughout the area.

While excavating for a solid waste land-fill project near Chemult in 1991, a county crew under the direction of Keith Read made an astonishing discovery. Buried in the soft pumice soil, 30 feet beneath the surface they found four tree wells, vertical, hollow shafts two or three feet in diameter where trees had been growing at the time of the eruption. This in itself was not surprising, for many such wells have been found in the past. What was surprising was to find a tree well with a real tree still in it. Not fossilized nor carbonized, but real wood, the kind one might burn in a fireplace. About eight feet in length and perhaps 18 inches in diameter it looks very much like a piece of driftwood one might find washed up on the sea shore. Later studies revealed that the tree was cedar and that it was 300 years old at the time of the eruption.

Realizing the significance of the find, the tree was reburied to conceal its location. It was later removed and placed in a deepfreeze for preservation. It has since been brought to the museum and placed on display for all to see.
Klamath County Historical Society

Meetings are held the 4th Thursday of the month — with some exceptions. See schedule or call 883-4208. We meet at the Klamath County Museum meeting room, 1451 Main St., Klamath Falls, Spring Street entrance. For further information call the museum. Our next regular meeting will be September 30 at 7 pm. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE.

2004 Officers
President: John Fortune
Vice-President: Judith Hassen
Secretary: Susan Rambo
Treasurer: Avis Kielsmeier
Board Members:
Doris Peters
Bob Baker

Dues

Dues will be due at the end of the year. If you look on your mailing label you will see an entry above your name. A date entered indicates you are paid through that year. Initials indicate you are receiving a complimentary issue or are a Life Member. If there is no entry, you either haven’t paid for a while or we are sending you a complimentary issue, hoping you will become a member.

Membership information

Individual Member $5.00
Supporting Member $25.00
Life Member $100.00

Make your dues payable to:

KLAMATH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

and mail to or drop off at:

Klamath County Museum, 1451 Main Street, Klamath Falls, OR 97601

2004-05 Meetings

Sept 30 - 7 pm
Oct 28 - 7 pm
November date to be determined
Jan 27 - 2 pm
Feb 24 - 2 pm
Mar 24 - 2 pm
Apr 28 - 7 pm
May 26 - 7 pm
Attention All Historical Society Members

It's All Because Of You

Klamath County Museum's 50th Anniversary

The Klamath County Museum's first 50 years have been possible because of your involvement.

We extend our thanks and invite you to join us in a golden anniversary celebration to be held at the museum on September 29, 2004 at 2 PM.

Refreshments will be served.


Don't miss this exciting event!
Klamath County Museum

SPAGHETTI WESTERN DINER THEATER

Klamath Museum Fund Raiser
Sunday September 26th
5PM Spaghetti Dinner and Theater
Tickets $25 a Plate

Have Dinner And Some Fun Learning About Klamath History During The Show. Tickets On Sale At The Klamath Main St. Museum. Limited To 100 tickets!

Klamath County Museums, Celebrating 50 Years
Who are these lovely ladies who are giving a concert for the Klamath County Museum?

Ladies Barbershop Concert
In 4-Part Harmony
Offered by
The Basin Blend
as a
Fund-Raising Activity
to celebrate
our 50th Anniversary and
to help fund
The Klamath County Museum.
Telephone: 541 883-4208

The Basin Blend
October 3, 2004 $5.00 General Admission
3:00 p.m. $4.00 Students & Seniors
1451 Main Street, Klamath Falls, OR