John Charles Fremont was born in Savannah, Georgia on January 21, 1813. He was one of only four Major Generals appointed by Abraham Lincoln. He was among the most celebrated, but not always in a positive way. He was the Republican Party's first presidential nominee in 1856, the youngest man at the time to seek that office. Because of his anti-slavery stance his election would almost certainly have precipitated the start of the Civil War four years earlier.

Fremont is remembered mostly for his exploration of the west. Although he was a Union general during the Civil War his contribution was more political than military. When he sought to bring about the emancipation of the slaves, he over stepped his bounds and Lincoln was not pleased. He differed with Lincoln's policies and resigned in a huff when Lincoln passed him over for promotion placing John Pope, a subordinate, over him.

It has never become clear just what part Fremont played in the Bear Flag revolt in California. When he left St. Louis in 1856, with a party of 55 men, it was ostensibly to explore the sources of the Arkansas River, but this was apparently only a pretence for once he actually got under way he made a bee line for California. Arriving there he promptly sought to stir up patriotic enthusiasm among American settlers. He promised them that if war broke out with Mexico, his military force would be on hand to protect them.

Fremont has left his mark on the landscape of our area, in both the numerous features to which he gave names and those that have been named by others in honor of him. A landmark of special interest is the Denny Creek memorial on Highway 140, between the summit of Doak Mountain and Odessa. This monument memorializes three men killed in the attack, a Delaware half breed named Denny, and two Delaware Indians1 killed by Modoc Indians May 10, 1846. Fremont was quick to retaliate, for this raid, attacking a village of Klamath Indians the following day, killing 14 of them, including a number of women and children. Unfortunately the Indians upon which Fremont wreaked vengeance were not the ones responsible for the attack on his camp.

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1 The three men killed in this surprise attack were a half breed named Denny and two Delaware Indians, named Basil and Crane.
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 18 at 7 pm.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008 Officers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President: John Fortune</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-President: vacant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary: Susan Rambo</td>
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<td>Treasurer: Avis Kielsmeier</td>
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<td>Board Members:</td>
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<td>Bob Baker</td>
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<td>Carol Mattos</td>
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<td>Paul Fitzhugh</td>
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**Dues**

Dues are due at the end of each 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.

**Notice:**

The **Picnic-Potluck will be held July 24 at 6 pm at Crest Street Park, corner of Crest & Hilyard. Bring your own table service & your favorite dish.**

**2008 Meetings**

- Sept 18 – 7 pm
- Oct 23 – 7 pm
- November date to be determined

**Membership information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting Member</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Member</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

If you would like to be notified of meetings & other happenings by email, please send your address to bocinco@yahoo.com.

If you would like to be on the the Klamath County Museum’s email list to receive the newsletter “The Midge” send your request to midge@co.klamath.or.us.
FREMONT IN SOUTHERN OREGON

John Charles Fremont
(January 21, 1813-July 13, 1890)

John Charles Fremont, or "The Pathfinder" as he came to be known made three trips of discovery to the far western section of the country, two of which brought him to what we now know as the Klamath Basin1. On his first trip, in the summer of 1841, Fremont ventured as far west as South Pass and the Wind River Mountains, in present day Wyoming, before turning back.

Two years later, in 1843, Fremont returned to the west, this time exploring the country as far west as the Columbia River where his overland survey connected

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1 Klamath County was not actually in existence yet.
with a naval survey being conducted by Lieut. Charles Wilkes of the United States Navy. This time he did not return to the states by the more direct South Pass choosing instead to travel south into California in search of Klamath Lake and the fabled Buenaventura River.

The party left The Dalles on November 25, 1843, Traveling by way of Tygh Valley, and the Deschutes River. The Fremont party passed about three miles west of the present city of Bend and then crossed to the east side of the river near Benham Falls, causing Fremont to comment that he had never before been in a country with so many water falls.

On December 10, 1843 he caught his first glimpse of what he took to be Upper Klamath Lake. He was wrong in this, however, for he was actually looking at Klamath Marsh which is located several miles north of Upper Klamath Lake.

About this time Fremont must have begun to doubt the wisdom of his decision to return by this route for his maps proved to be inaccurate and his Indian interpreters were unable to communicate with the local Indians. In addition to the normal difficulties of the trail his progress was severely hampered by the deep snow and extremely cold temperatures.

From this point the party turned eastward and with great difficulty crossed the treacherous, icy water of Klamath Marsh, passing a short distance south of Yamsay Mountain and crossing the headwaters of the Williamson, and Sycan rivers and Sycan Marsh to Winter Rim through snow was as deep as three feet in places.

There, amid the snow and ice, looking out over the snowless expanse of the Oregon desert he was struck by the contrast between the point where he stood and the vast expanse stretched out before him. Thus he named the rim where he stood Winter Rim and the lake a thousand feet below, Summer Lake.

Proceeding south from Summer Lake, Fremont crossed the Chewaucan River, past Lake Abert and crossed out of Oregon, into Nevada and eventually, after many hardships, crossing the Sierra Mountains made his way to the great Central Valley of California. In December 1845 Fremont and a force of 60 men entered into the Mexican province of Alta California. They were not welcomed there. Americans in the province outnumbered the Mexicans and the governor suspected that Fremont had come to encourage the people to engage in an an uprising.

In May of 1846 Fremont returned to Oregon, ostensibly to seek out a possible pass from Klamath Lake into the Willamette Valley, but more probably to be near at hand should his presence be needed in California.. He passed into

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1 The Buenaventura River was believed by many to run from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. Fremont’s explorations proved once and for all that no such river existed.
present day Oregon during the first week of May, 1846. While the party was encamped near the north end of Upper Klamath Lake he met up with Lieut. A. H. Gillespie who had been sent to intercept Fremont and deliver a verbal message from Secretary Buchanan directing him to return to California, there to watch and counteract any foreign scheme in California. Though Fremont was sympathetic with the American uprising, he remained in the background, not wishing to involve the United States altercations.

His presence seems to have been to conciliate the good will of the inhabitants to the United States. This marked the close of Fremont’s travels in Oregon, but he was not permitted to depart without a dramatic and tragic reminder.

Here, for only the second time in 20,000 miles of exploration Fremont failed to post a sentry to guard the camp while the other members slept. It was a tragic omission, for during the night the camp was attacked by a war party of 15 to 20 Modoc Indians. Three of Fremont’s men and one Indian were killed in the foray. The three members of Fremont’s party who lost their lives in the attack were Basil LaJeunesse, a French hunter who had accompanied Fremont on all of his far west expeditions, a Delaware Indian named Crane, and a half-breed Iroquois named Dennie.

Fremont promptly retaliated, by sending a group of men under Kit Carson to attack a Klamath Indian village named Dokdokwas near the confluence of the Williamson River and Agency Lake. The action completely destroyed the village, and involved the massacre of women and children. After burning the village Carson was nearly killed in the action by a Klamath warrior, but his life was saved by Fremont who ran the Indian down with his horse. The sad part of the whole affair was that the retaliation was carried out on a Klamath Indian village whereas the Indians that had attacked Fremont’s camp in the first place were Modoc.

Soon after the raid the party quickly departed for California thus ending the Pathfinder’s travels in Oregon.

Fremont has left his mark on the Southern Oregon landscape both in the numerous features that he gave names and those that have been named for him, Kit Carson and other members of his party. One particular such landmark is the Denny Creek memorial, located beside Highway 140, between Doak Mountain and Odessa, west of Klamath Falls which memorializes a member of the Fremont’s party killed by Indians nearby on May 10, 1846.
COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM AT A CROSSROADS

By Todd Kepple

After 54 years of operation, the Klamath County Museum system finds itself at a crossroads. Important choices lie ahead for those of us who believe that preservation and interpretation of local history is a vital element in the community's cultural infrastructure.

Klamath County has withdrawn most of its "general fund" support for the museum system it has operated for the past half-century, and there's virtually no hope that support will ever be restored, given the loss of federal forest receipts.

Fortunately, the museums can survive at a minimal level of service thanks to voter approval of an increase in the transient room tax in November 2006.

The room tax is expected to generate about $120,000 per year for the museums – a little over half the amount of revenue the museums had as recently as six years ago.

Museum supporters, then, are faced with the following alternatives – either accept the situation and learn to live with a smaller budget, or try to replace the lost county funding and perhaps even enhance museum operations.

An obvious possibility for replacing the county funding is to be more aggressive about seeking support directly from the community, probably in the form of a museum membership program or an annual fundraising campaign.

Another possibility is to conduct more fundraiser projects. Past fundraisers have included rummage sales, auctions, musical programs and murder mysteries, etc.

As we consider our prospects for fundraising in a community that already has many established charitable causes and ongoing special projects, it will be important to honestly evaluate how well positioned the museums are for fundraising. To put it more bluntly: Are we operating our museums in a way that is meaningful and relevant in today's society?

I'd like to suggest that some changes may be in order before we can expect to succeed in a long-term and ongoing fundraising program.

First of all, museum supporters should recognize that the community's demographics have changed considerably since the first county museum opened in 1954. While the museum's early focus was on preserving the memory of the community's pioneers, today's museum visitors expect a more comprehensive treatment of the region's overall history, culture and natural environment.

Secondly, a name change for our main museum may be in order. The name "Klamath County Museum" evokes an image of an outdated and provincial institution that is unlikely to hold much interest for tourists, new residents, and
**Museum Levy Success**

The Museum Levy passed with 63% of the voters supporting.

Thanks to all the volunteers and voters, our three museums will remain open to the public.

Todd Kepple and staff will continue to provide the outstanding programs that so capture our imagination.

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**June Events**

**June 7. Saturday. O. C. Applegate Monument Dedication**, by Todd Kepple. Linkville Cemetery. 11 a.m.

**June 21. Saturday. Native Plant Garden Tour.** At the Klamath County Museum. Presented by the Klamath County Museum and the Klamath Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon.

**June 28. Saturday. Butte Valley Bus Tour.** Meet bus at Fairgrounds. 9 a.m.

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**More Upcoming Events**

**July 10. Thursday.** "What if Heroes Were Not Welcome Home," Opening Exhibit, 7 p.m.

**July 11. Friday.** Merrill Cemetery Restoration Training, by Dirk Siedlecki. 9 a.m. Contact Polly Tickner at polly@tickners.net to reserve a spot.


**July 19. Saturday.** Wood River Valley Barns, A Bus Tour. 8:30 a.m. Contact the Museum to reserve your seat (541-883-4208).

**June 28. Saturday.** Butte Valley Bus Tour. Meet bus at Fairgrounds. 9 a.m.

**July 27. Sunday.** Summer Picnic: Malin and Klamath County historical societies. Malin Park. 2 p.m.

**August 10. Sunday.** Linkville Cemetery Tour, Carol Mattos. 6 p.m.

**September 25.** Route Wars: The Politics Behind Our Transportation Industry, by Ryan Bartholomew. Klamath County Historical Society, Museum Front Entrance. 7 p.m.

**October 2. Thursday.** Museum Anniversary Banquet. Kerry Tymchuk speaker. 6 p.m.

**October 10 & 11. Friday and Saturday.** Night at the Cemetery.

**October 23.** Catastrophic Weather Events in Klamath Basin, by Todd Kepple. Klamath County Historical Society, Museum front entrance. 7 p.m.

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For more upcoming events, go to www.klamathmuseum.org and sign up for the Museum’s weekly newsletter at midge@co.klamath.or.us.