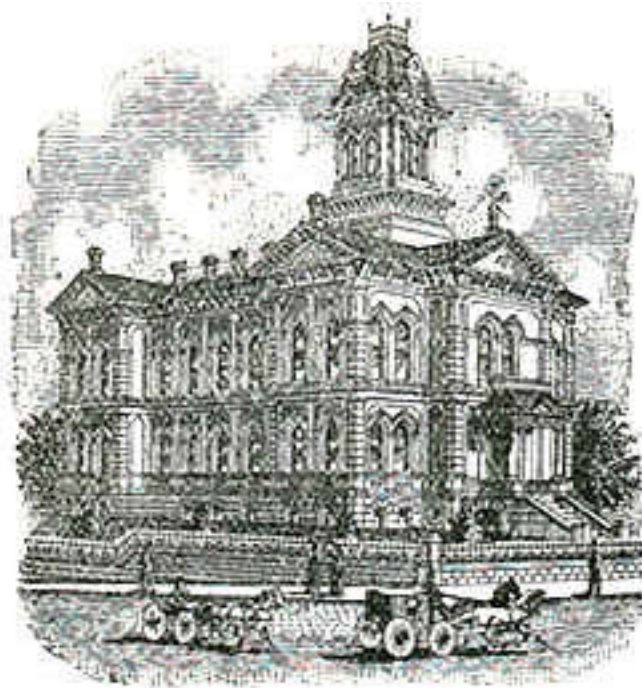


Clackamas County Heritage Council

2004

Heritage Resources SURVEY REPORT



1884 Clackamas County Courthouse

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November 2004

Funded by a generous grant from the Kinsman Foundation

MISSION STATEMENT: The Clackamas County Heritage Council's mission is to cooperatively work together to preserve, enrich and share Clackamas County's heritage. To that end, the council strives: to provide a forum for communication and collaboration among heritage groups; to promote recognition, use and support of heritage organizations and resources in Clackamas County; to increase awareness and understanding of heritage issues.

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2004 Heritage Resources Survey

FINAL REPORT

by Peggy Sigler, Consultant - November 2004

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Full Report and [Heritage Resource Directory](http://www.co.clackamas.or.us/artsaction/) available at www.co.clackamas.or.us/artsaction/

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BACKGROUND

In 1996, representatives from nineteen historical organizations met and formed the Clackamas County Heritage Council (CCHC). They inventoried heritage organizations, wrote a charter, and have been meeting regularly for 8½ years, providing support, networking and inspiration to often-isolated volunteers engaged in pursuit of a local heritage vision. Together they collaborated on local Smithsonian exhibits in 2000 and 2004; assisted the Tourism Development Council with a heritage tourism brochure; hosted grant writing, planned giving, conservation and archival workshops; and, in 2003, created a long-range plan. Intercommunication has been strengthened with a regular newsletter and more recently, an e-mail listserv.

In 2004, CCHC received \$10,000 in grant funds from the Kinsman Foundation to conduct a countywide heritage survey, create a *Heritage Resource Directory*, and evaluate and propose viable options for strengthening the future of heritage organizations in Clackamas County. CCHC hired consultant Peggy Sigler to undertake this project.

SUMMARY

Since 1996, some organizations have disbanded, while others have been formed. Oregon Trail Pageant, Canby Heritage League, Barlow Road Coalition and Friends of the Field House no longer exist; Clackamas Heritage Partners, Damascus Historical Society, Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation, Wings of Freedom Showcase and Mt Hood Cultural Center & Museum have been created. The “granddaddies” of the county are still around: McLoughlin Memorial Association (1909), Sandy (1926), Baker Cabin (1937), Milwaukie (1936) and Clackamas County (1952) Historical Societies, ranging from 95 to 52 years old!

In 2004 in Clackamas County, there are:

- ✍ 22 museums with collections
- ✍ 10 historical societies or heritage organizations without museums or sites
- ✍ 11 identified privately or publicly owned heritage sites open to the public as businesses
- ✍ 8 government agencies who own non-museum heritage sites
- ✍ 4 historic landmark review or advisory boards
- ✍ 21 identified professionals who provide heritage-related services

All of these entities are listed in the roster in the beginning of the *Resource Directory*, and many submitted information to be included in the *Directory*.

CHANGES SINCE THE INVENTORY OF 1996

Total Heritage Organizations:

- ✍ **1996:** 19
- ✍ **2004:** 40

Number of Members:

- ✍ **1996:** 19 organizations reported a total of 2430 members, each having 18 ? 495 members, with CCHisSoc having 495; average: 221 per organization.
- ✍ **2004:** 8 organizations do not have members. 14 organizations reported a total of 3966 members, each having 12 ? 2000 members, with Friends of Timberline having 2000 and Oswego Heritage Council having 750; average: 283 per organization.

Number of Volunteers:

- ✍ **1996:** 19 organizations reported a total of 532 volunteers, each having 10 ? 200 volunteers, with Oregon Trail Pageant having 200; average 48 per organization.
- ✍ **2004:** 26 organizations reported having a total of 272 regular volunteers, each having 1 ? 35 regular volunteers, with Sandy HisSoc having 35, Timberline having 30 and Willamette Shore Trolley having 25; average: 10.5 volunteers per organization.

Number of Board of Directors/Trustees:

- ✍ **1996:** 19 organizations reported Boards ranging 6 ? 21 Trustees, with McLoughlin Memorial Assoc having 21; average: 10 Trustees.
- ✍ **2004:** 4 organizations do not have Boards. 25 organizations reported Boards ranging from 5 ? 25 Trustees, with Friends of Timberline having 25; average: 9.5 Trustees per organization.

Number of Employees:

- ✍ **1996:** 14 organizations did not have employees; only 5 organizations had employees, ranging from 1 part-time ? 14 employees.
- ✍ **2004:** 14 organizations reported not having employees; 14 organizations reported having a total of 59 employees, equaling an estimated 31 Full Time Equivalents. 6 organizations have 1 ? 7 full-time employees; 12 organizations have 1 ? 10 part-time employees, with End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center having 10 part-time and 7 full-time employees.

Other 2004 Tidbits:

- ✍ **Admission fees:** 10 organizations reported *free*, 10 reported \$2 ? \$10; average: \$4.25
- ✍ **Facilities:** 12 organizations own their property; 11 use government-owned space; 4 use spaced owned by another or parent organization; 1 is building a new museum now; 3 hope for museum space someday; 18 organizations have historic structures.
- ✍ **Budget:** 24 organizations reported budgets ranging from \$500 to \$752,000, for a total of \$1,778,500!! 2 organizations have budgets over \$200,000 and 9 have budgets under \$5000. Budgets for the 13 organizations in the middle total \$730,000 and average \$56,000. (These figures often do not include all costs involved with the facility.)

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2004

It was delightful to visit each heritage site in Clackamas County and meet their dedicated volunteers and staff. Witnessing their passion and dedication for their organization was definitely the highlight of this survey project! Each organization is doing one or two things really well, and most were eager to share their accomplishments and challenges, successes and dreams, ask questions and receive validation for their efforts. There are historical gems, creative events and programming, well-done exhibits, savvy partnerships, rich photo collections, strong Trustee Boards, professional newsletters and lots of talented, dedicated and passionate volunteers! The more resources an organization has available, the wider variety of accomplishments they can perfect.

Only one organization in the county chose not to participate and a couple did not respond, while the vast majority see value in the collaborative, countywide efforts of CCHC and feel they already have or hope to reap benefits for their own organization through the efforts of and their involvement in CCHC.

SOME STAND-OUT SNAP-SHOTS

(not exhaustive list)

DEPTH OF TRUSTEE BOARD

Willamette Shore Trolley
Oswego Heritage Council
Philip Foster Farm
Friends of Timberline
Clackamas Heritage Partners
Molalla Historical Society

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

Oswego Heritage Council
Clackamas County Historical Soc
Friends of Timberline
Sandy Historical Society

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Oregon Military Museum
Canby Historical Society
Mt Hood Cultural Ctr & Museum
Clackamas County Historical Soc

PRESERVING PROVENENCE

Stevens-Crawford House
Rose Farm
McLoughlin Memorial Association

MUSEUM STORE

Philip Foster Farm
End of the Oregon Trail Interp Ctr
Carnegie Center
Clackamas County Historical Soc

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Sandy Historical Society
Molalla Historical Society
Mt Hood Cultural Ctr & Museum
Clackamas County Historical Soc

CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Wings of Freedom Showcase
Estacada Historical Society
Timberline
Wilsonville-Boones Ferry His Soc
Mt Hood Cultural Ctr & Museum
Willamette Falls Heritage Foun
Molalla Historical Society
McLoughlin Memorial Assoc

FUNDRAISING

Sandy Historical Society
End of the Oregon Trail Interp Ctr
Philip Foster Farm
Oswego Heritage Council
Clackamas County Historical Soc
Willamette Shore Trolley
McLean House

CREATIVE EVENTS

Ermatinger House
Philip Foster Farm
Oswego Heritage Council
Molalla Historical Society
Wings of Freedom Showcase
Damascus Historical Society
Stevens Crawford House

PUBLICATIONS

Milwaukie Historical Society
Clackamas County Family His Soc

LIVING HISTORY

Ermatinger House
Philip Foster Farm

EXHIBITS

End of the Oregon Trail Interp Ctr
Clackamas County Historical Soc
Oregon Military Museum
Timberline

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

Clackamas County Family His Soc
Canby Historical Society
Milwaukie Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

Mt Hood Cultural Ctr & Museum
Oswego Heritage Council
Friends of Timberline

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT

Willamette Shore Trolley
Stevens Crawford House
Sandy Historical Society

PHOTO COLLECTIONS

Canby Historical Society
Clackamas County Historical Soc

MULTI-MEDIA

End of the Oregon Trail Interp Ctr

SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

Philip Foster Farm
End of the Oregon Trail Interp Ctr

CHALLENGES

Stable, sustainable funding is *beyond a doubt* the *greatest challenge* for the majority of the heritage organizations in Clackamas County. All heritage organizations in the county are achieving phenomenal feats with insufficient funding, stretched resources and limited manpower. Overall, the lion's share of time and energy is spent raising money, leaving little time to follow their mission and take care of the county's heritage. Devising a creative way to do both is the key to sustainability.

Understanding that with limited finances and manpower, there is often minimal energy and resources left to deal with other than priority issues, the following widespread challenges and needs were noted for many organizations:

- ✍ recruit and retain sufficient numbers of talented and committed volunteers (note that in 8 years, the average number of volunteers has dropped by 80% while paid employees has markedly increased, a trend seen in non-profits nationwide)
- ✍ depth and needed 'professional skill sets' on Boards of Directors (most organizations have Board vacancies and over-loaded working Board members)
- ✍ Board-approved, visionary, strategic plans for sustainable operations and growth
- ✍ sophisticated, profitable fundraising plans, and partnerships to stretch dollars
- ✍ professional collection management and conservation expertise, and understanding of the legal responsibilities of holding collections in trust for the public (less than 1/4 have an updated, Board-approved Collections Policy and some have no collections management program in place)
- ✍ effective branding, marketing and community outreach programs (only 10 organizations have wide distribution of professional, engaging promotional materials)
- ✍ strong, developed educational programs and school partnerships (only 2 sites have really developed school-focused programs.)
- ✍ financial and collaborative support from their local community and governmental jurisdictions

Most disturbing is the overall lack of support from Clackamas County itself. References are made to the importance of the regional heritage and 'End of the Oregon Trail' significance; credit is taken for the quality of life that this distinctive 'sense of place' creates, for which we must in truth acknowledge the dedication of thousands of insightful volunteers through the years. Oregon ranks 53rd in the nation in cultural spending (yes, behind the territories) and Clackamas County probably has the most museums, yet the most poorly funded museums in the state. Rather than showcase the rich, local heritage, the County website features only a link to the State Archives' 'Clackamas County' page. The County Planner assigned to historic resources has only minutes a week to devote to landmark properties, and the *Cultural Resources Inventory* is 13 years old.

In contrast, the attention given to heritage sites by the County's Tourism Development Council and Arts Action Alliance are shining beacons of hope. Both feature comprehensive listings of heritage sites and showcase the value of the county's past. Working together in partnership with the County, there is great potential to build upon the region's heritage to fuel economic development through tourism, job creation, cultural enrichment, educational partnerships and an enhanced quality of life. Museums and historical sites are rarely profitable, but rather, as significant contributions to our society, warrant fiscal support from local citizens, patrons and governments.

C.C.H.C. ADMINISTRATIVE OPTIONS

As a collaborative, volunteer networking group, Clackamas County Heritage Council provides valuable support opportunities for member organizations but depends upon limited volunteers to provide leadership, communication, coordination and expertise; it does not provide fiscal support, training, or marketing opportunities.

As an outgrowth of 2003's strategic planning, it was determined that the next step for a healthy, strong heritage community in Clackamas County is to create a countywide Heritage Coordinator or 'field rep' position.

CCHC is not at this time a designated 501(c)3 organization and does not have the capacity to employ a Coordinator. Other potential "homes" for such an employee position which have been researched include the Clackamas County Historical Society, Clackamas Heritage Partners, End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, Clackamas County Library, CC Parks & Recreation Department, CC Transportation & Development Department, CC Arts Action Alliance, CC Tourism Development Council, CC Cultural Coalition or the formation of a new county agency dedicated to heritage.

While all the aforementioned are heritage partners in some way and have valuable contributions to make, my evaluation has determined that the Clackamas County Historical Society, under their new agreement with Clackamas Heritage Partners, provides the most logical, efficient and least cumbersome avenue to provide countywide heritage coordination, administration, assistance and support. I recommend CC Heritage Council remain intact in an advisory capacity and retain the current monthly meeting format as a valuable support and networking avenue. Regular training opportunities in professional museum and non-profit practices should be incorporated into the format.

It is also my determination that the county government should accept some responsibility for strengthening the entire region's heritage resources to fuel economic development through improved "visitor destinations of national significance," job creation, cultural enrichment, educational partnerships and an enhanced quality of life. It is important that the Heritage Coordinator is able to devote time to countywide heritage needs and not have to search for funding to cover this position. Permanent funding may eventually be provided through Clackamas Heritage Partners as developing "county heritage services" is one of their three priorities. Grants may be available to cover employee and overhead expenses, and as a last funding resort, determine if sliding participation rates can be charged to organizations to cover costs. This option could be potentially counter-productive as the organizations most needing assistance will also be those least able to pay for services.

PROPOSED SUGGESTIONS:

- ✍ Create CC Heritage Coordinator position at Clackamas County Historical Society and under the Clackamas Heritage Partners umbrella.
- ✍ Retain CCHC in advisory capacity and for networking and training opportunities
- ✍ Petition Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners to provide funding for one (1) FTE (Full Time Equivalent) at competitive administrative pay rate
- ✍ Submit grant requests to cover overhead expenses and specific project costs
- ✍ Evaluate CCHC member organization dues and adjust to a participation fee as needed
- ✍ Finalize Heritage Coordinator job description, conduct search and hire