Volunteer Opportunities

- Serve on one of our Boards
- Catalogue and store donated artifacts
- Assist with Housekeeping
- Rotate & create new exhibits
- Complete minor interior repairs (paint, plaster, woodwork)
- Organize archives
- Computerized data entry
- Plan events
- Present your favorite topic

What’s new at the Museum?

Museum staff, interns, and volunteers have been working to ensure the Museum’s vast collection of photographs are captured in our PastPerfect database. Many of the photos had been accessioned and/or labeled but just as many were found to be missing from our database. If a photo is not in our database, it’s almost impossible to find it in the Museum; so we’re eternally grateful for everyone’s help to ensure ready access to these historical and invaluable keepsakes.

A lot of these photos are portraits of families or individuals. Spending so much time with them led us to determine this quarter’s theme: Prominent Families.

It’s been thrilling pouring through photos donated by members of our community. We hope you enjoy learning a bit about the families, and we certainly hope you enjoy the photos!

Community Assistance Request

Speaking of photos, we are in need of photos of the east side of Main Street between B and C Streets as well as some south of Monmouth Street. If you have any please give us a call at (503) 838-4989 or email us at the address listed at the top of this page. In the meantime, here’s one we got recently from Billie Kay Herrell.
The following narrative is taken largely from the History of Polk County Oregon, published by the Polk County Historical Society, 1987, and from some independent sources.

Thomas “Dole” Pomeroy was born on September 1, 1890 to Thomas and Abigail McCandless Pomeroy. Prior to moving to the Willamette Valley, Dole’s father worked as a steam engineer at the Seattle Power Plant. The family eventually settled on a farm about a mile north of Independence.

Dole was a football player and played through college and beyond, forming the Independence Football Team. But as a boy, Dole worked on the farm with his dad. Years later he went to work building roads for logging operations. This led him to Scappoose to build roads and bridges for the Portland Lumber Company.

He married Mildred Theresa Owen on September 11, 1911. Babe, as she was better known, was born in Toledo, Oregon. Her parents moved to Independence shortly after her birth. Babe was a tiny baby, weighing only 1 1/4 lbs at birth. After graduation, she became one of the first telephone operators in the city.

The couple later moved to Grey’s River in Washington where Dole assisted with bridge footings. In 1915, while working there, Dole was severely injured and another man was killed when a locomotive tipped over. Dole, while attempting to rescue his coworker, was burned over 60% of his body when a steam pipe burst. He spent 9 months in a hospital receiving special care.

He stayed in the logging business until 1927 when he moved back home and built Independence’s first service station on the corner of Monmouth and 2nd Streets. He later sold the station and started selling automobiles and fixing them too in a garage on Main Street.

His career didn’t stop there, he went on to work for the state forestry department as a Camp Superintendent at Triangle Lake CCC Camp. Later he worked at setting winches on Liberty ships until he was drafted to build the roads at Camp Adair.
Clares & Iris Powell – Monmouth

The following is based primarily on articles published in the Sun Enterprise on Feb 25, 1976 and May 24, 1989 and through independence research.

Clares Powell was born in 1896 and was a descendant of the pioneer Butler family. Except for the time he was in the service and away at college, he lived almost his entire life on Jackson Street in Monmouth.

After graduating from high school in 1916, Clares left Monmouth to attend Oregon Agricultural College to study electrical engineering.

He’s missed the draft by one day but enlisted to fight in WWI anyway. He was assigned to the aviation department and was stationed in Texas for a time. Times were lean then and in his later life he recounted how Monmouth’s Main Street Park was turned into a potato field to help increase food production.

During WWII, he was the local War Bond chairman selling hundreds of thousands of dollars in bonds. Often there were five or six volunteer stenographers in the bank where he worked writing the bonds up when nearby Camp Adair’s contractors turned in their payroll deductions for them.

Iris Lenore Winnard was not quite part of an Oregon pioneer family, but she was an early settler. She was born in Manchester, Iowa, in 1903 and came west with her mother and father in 1905 to Heppner, OR, where the family farmed. Later they moved to Hood River and then to Monmouth.

Clares and Iris met through Iris’ frequent banking transactions at the First National Bank on Main Street. Seems the story goes like this: When Iris left home to attend Oregon Normal School, her father gave her a check for her expenses. He told her to deposit the check and not to carry too much money on her at any one time; no more than $1-2 dollars would do he said. So for the next several weeks, Iris was in and out of the banking cashing small checks. She’d never paid much attention to the teller who helped her until she got her first bank statement. Attached to it was a note that said, ‘Hello, beautiful.’

Iris and Clares were married in 1924. The ceremony was conducted in Vancouver, Washington as her parents were living in Portland at the time. Her father, Frank Winnard, formerly of Hillsdale, was a retired wheat farmer and working in real estate in the Portland area at the time of the wedding. Her fiancé Clares was described in the wedding announcement as one of the most progressive and enterprising young men in Monmouth! And enterprising he was. Right after they married, he and Iris opened an insurance agency at the bank. Iris worked along side him in the insurance business for the next several years. Clares went on to serve on the Monmouth City Council and later in 1945-1946, as the city’s mayor.
The Pomeroy continued

Afterward, he and Babe moved to Mountain Home, Idaho to build runways for the Army airport there. He did then finally come home again and bid in the State Liquor store, running it until he retired.

Babe and Dole spent their last years working with the Presbyterian Church, Boy Scouts, Lions Club, and the Masons. Babe passed away September 1, 1978 and Dole passed away March 10, 1982. They had three children: Thomas Dole Pomeroy, Jr., Edgar Fulton Pomeroy, and Mildred Ann Pomeroy Worthington.
The Powells continued

Iris was quite the busy woman herself. She was a participant in an almost endless array of organizations and events. She formed the local American Legion Auxiliary and helped establish the Polk County Historical Society. She also helped preserve invaluable family history—stories, letters, and photographs for future generations to enjoy. In fact, she provided copies of Butler family letters to be compiled into a published collection: Covered Wagon Women 6: Diaries and Letters from the Western Trail 1853-1854.

The Heritage Museum has a vast array of photographs donated by Iris. One truly interesting one, seen below, captures the larger Butler/Powell family.

Past President’s of Monmouth’s Civic Club. Iris is second from the right.

Left to Right - Top Row: Elizabeth Lucas, Alice Butler, Mrs. Rufus Smith, Addie Shelton (dtr of Albert Lucas), Rufus Smith, Bud Cooper (husband of Ella Butler), Sarah Butler, Ira Powell, Lena Butler Powell, Rose Davidson, Grundy Davidson, Jane Grounds (wife of Luther Grounds), Luther Grounds, Hosea Davidson, Jay Lucas (son of Albert Lucas - his mother was a Murphy), Sarah Smith, Ira Smith (son of Isaac), Mrs. Palmer (no relation), Mrs. Hezekiah Whitman, Mrs. Hosea Davidson. Middle Row: Mrs. Otis Hutchinson, Isaac Smith, Mrs. Mason (no relation), Uncle Wm. Mason (his wife was a Davidson), woman, Ira F.M. Butler, Geo. Deweese, Rachael Deweese. Bottom Row: Maggie Butler, Lorna Deweese, Mrs. Jimmy Powell, Hulda Hyatt, baby is Clares Powell (son of Lena Butler Powell), other children not known but some are probably children of Otis Hutchinson.
Intern Profile: Celia Johnson

Celia Johnson was born in La Crosse, WI and moved to Oregon when she was 5 years old. She considers herself born and raised in Oregon because of the love she has for this state. She is currently a senior at Western Oregon University, majoring in Anthropology. She has always had an interest in museums and was excited to intern at the Heritage Museum as part of her degree program! Although unsure of her career path, she could see herself pursuing a museum career. Celia’s been helping us catalog our photo collection.

We think Celia bears a striking resemblance to Allie Catron Craig, a member of an old Monmouth family.

Interested in volunteering or interning at the Museum? Give us a call at (503) 838-4989 or drop us a line at orheritage@ci.independence.or.us. There’s always lots to do here—from serving on a Board to cataloguing donations. Don’t wait! Call today!

Volunteer Profile: Amy Christensen

Amy and her husband Nathan.

Amy Christensen is a lifelong resident of the Northwest but her family is new to Independence. She and her husband Nathan bought a home in the historic district a little more than a year ago and they couldn't be more happy with the town they've made a home for their family. Nathan and Amy both graduated from Oregon State University. She received her Bachelor's of Science in Anthropology ten years ago. Nathan studied Military Science and has had a career working full time for the Oregon National Guard.

Amy has spent the years since raising their four children and providing them with a home school education. Until recently, she’s also held a busy volunteer position in the National Guard since 2010. When she discovered the Heritage Museum, she was thrilled at the chance to step inside a museum environment, dust off her passion for culture and history, and help her community. She hopes to dive in and be involved in the museum’s future. Her hobbies include a love of travel, book stores, genealogy, and more recently, she and Nathan are enjoying planning projects for their new home here in Independence. She looks forward to getting to know more of her neighbors through helping at the museum!
When you visit the “War Comes to Independence” exhibit at the Heritage Museum, you will find the names James Locke (USN), Hugh Locke (USMC), and Austin H. Locke (USN) featured prominently on the American Legion Honor Roll of local men and women who served in the U.S. Military. These men are relatives of Independence resident Harold Locke.

During the summer of 2015, Harold and Barbara (Sahnow) Locke visited the Heritage Museum. It was during that visit that we began to learn about their deep roots with the Independence community and the Independence First Baptist Church. The Independence First Baptist Church was founded in 1889 and later, in 1976, became the home of the Independence Heritage Museum.

Harold Locke was the youngest of 10 children born to Nora and hop grower Austin Locke. He was born in Salem in 1934 but grew up in Independence. After graduating from Central High School he served in the U.S. Air Force.

Barbara was born in Portland in 1942. Her dad Vern worked as a Radio Technician/Announcer at KSLM in Salem. Her family - she was the oldest of 6 children - moved to Independence when she was a teenager. Shortly after relocating she was invited to join the Independence Baptist Church youth group and was later baptized and joined the fellowship there.

In 1959, like all Independence citizens, she and Harold looked forward to the Oregon Centennial Celebration Parade and the Independence First Baptist Church’s involvement. Harold and other youth group kids, along with Barbara’s father, represented a pioneer family in the parade and read the Bible on the church float. Barbara’s father even grew his beard to look more like a pioneer.

Soon after, both graduated from Central High School and went on to college. Barbara attended Oregon College of Education in pursuit of a teaching degree and Harold attended Oregon State College, where he ultimately majored in Industrial Arts Education. Prior to this, and after his discharge from the service, he attended the Oregon Technical Institute in Klamath Falls where he studied woodworking. In 1963 they were engaged and were married between their junior and senior years in college at the Independence First Baptist Church.

Five decades later they are known as the ‘Purple People’ wearing the royal color of purple as “King’s Kids” and rejoice in “serving the Lord”.

“The Independence Baptist Church played an important part in our lives and holds a special place in our hearts.” ~ Harold Locke

Harold and Barbara at their wedding in the Independence First Baptist Church, now the Heritage Museum.
Upcoming Events

Event Name: The House at 86 S. 3rd Street  
Day: Monday, April 24th  Time: 7:00 PM  
Place: Independence Event Center, 555 S. Main Street, lower level riverside entrance.  
Light refreshments will be available

Become a Member to Support Your Museum

Membership fees and monetary donations go to the non-profit Heritage Museum Society. Benefits of membership include, but are not limited to, newsletters, special events notices, and 10% off purchases.

Return this section and make checks payable to:

Heritage Museum Society  
P.O. Box 7  
Independence, OR  97351

Name: __________________________________________________________________________________________

Mailing Address: _________________________________________________________________________________

City: _______________________________

State: _____  Zip: ________

Best contact phone number: _________________________________

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Please circle the type of membership you would like:

Senior: $10.00  Individual: $25.00  Family: $50.00  Business: $50.00  Life Member: $500.00

Donations: As you know, we are a small non-profit organization. We couldn’t continue to operate without the generous contributions from our friends, members and volunteers. Please continue your support during the year with donations and purchases from our gift shop. Thanks to those of you who have contributed in the past. Remember, your donation is usually tax deductible and matching your donation to the Oregon Cultural Trust could yield a tax credit on your Oregon tax return. For more information visit www.culturaltrust.org/donate.