Meet the New Museum Manager!

We’d like to welcome our new Museum Manager, Carly Annable to the Independence Heritage Museum!

Carly began working for the Heritage Museum in December, and came to us from Baker City, Oregon. Originally from Marietta, New York, Carly received a Bachelor of the Arts in Anthropology from State University of New York College at Geneseo, and her Master of Business Administration from Quinnipiac University. Currently, she is pursuing a Museum’s Studies graduate certificate from the Harvard Extension School.

Excited to be a new member of the Independence community, Carly is looking forward to building upon what staff and volunteers have accomplished. Her goal is for every community member who visits the museum to be able to see themselves reflected in the history on display. A lifelong learner, Carly is always working to expanding her knowledge on what makes a successful museum and public history organization.

Prior to joining the Heritage Museum, Carly was the Director of the Baker Heritage and Adler House Museums in Baker City, Oregon. In this role she managed two historic sites, their collections, and their volunteer programs among with normal day-to-day operations. The Independence Heritage Museum is excited to benefit from her knowledge and experience with museums and to continue to improve what the museum has to offer both locals and visitors alike.

Have you checked out the museum recently?

Come visit and meet Carly!

Carly is at the museum 1pm to 5pm Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday and by appointment at (503) 838-4989 or orheritage@ci.independence.or.us
This lovely, well-cared for home across from Farnstrom Mortuary has a long and interesting history. Since the Museum has some great pictures of it in the snow we thought we’d do an article about the family that built it.

It was built in 1890-91 by Otis D. Butler and his wife, Ardella. Otis was a prominent physician and civic leader in Independence, serving as mayor in 1902-1903.

He was born in Monmouth in 1862 to parents Orville and Nancy. His grandfather, J.V.B Butler came to Oregon on the Oregon Trail in 1849.

After graduating from Willamette Medical College in Portland he started his medical practice in 1887 with Dr. T.J. Lee in Independence. Three years later he furthered his education by traveling to New York, London and Paris to study surgery. His first office was on the second floor of the First National Bank building in downtown Independence.

Dr. Butler married Ardella Nelson in March 1880. She grew up on a farm north of Independence. They had one child, Maurice Jay, who was born in 1891 and grew up to become a dentist.

They built the house on a large lot in 1890-91. He had an office inside in addition to the one downtown. Much of the lot was used to grow fruit trees as Dr. Butler had a penchant for grafting. Varieties included cherries, apples, pears, plums, walnuts, filberts, and a grape arbor. In the History of Polk County Oregon his grandson recalls climbing the cherry tree and eating three different kinds!

In An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon published in 1893, author Rev. HK Hines said this about the Butlers:

“He and his wife are highly esteemed in the county in which they were born, raised, educated, married and settled, and are excellent representatives of the native sons and daughters of Oregon, a credit to their county and State, of which they are just proud, and which their parents helped to found.”

The railroad hired Dr. Butler to care for ill passengers and thus set him up with the first telegraph in town at his home that was connected right to the railroad station.
Originally Dr. Butler would take his horse and buggy where he needed to go. He told folks it was always nice, after a late night call, to sleep while the horse took him home.

When the automobile came along, however, he was an early adopter and bought the first one in town, a single cylinder 1907 Reo. Only after they became more reliable, however, did he use them for his medical calls.

Dr. Butler died in 1926 of an infection after lancing a patient’s infected finger and getting a slight cut on his own in the process. Mrs. Butler lived 28 more years. The house was sold in 1954 and turned into The Elliot Apartments. At some point in the late 1960s Lovell Hewitt bought the house. His father Lorin Hewitt was a doctor in Independence as well. (see History of Polk County Oregon; current owners purchased it from Constance Hewitt as per county property records)

Thank you to Andrea Pittman for her work on this article!

Thank You to Peggy and Shannon!

Peggy Smith began work at the Museum in 1999. Over the last 19 years she has heard and told dozens of stories and been a smiling face always ready to greet visitors to the Museum. She wrote many grants, most of which were awarded, and all of which benefitted the museum in ways ranging from infrastructure improvements like brick repair, new wiring and security cameras, to exhibits, both in the museum and in the community, to archival and artifact preservation. Thank you Peggy for all you contributed to the preservation of Independence history!

Shannon Cockayne began work at the Museum in 2016. During her time with the museum, Shannon made her mark in the form of proactive organization abilities. She spearheaded organization of many parts of the museum, both upstairs and down. She brought the Newsletter into the 21st Century by adding hyperlinks and videos, which also reduced costs of mailing it out. She also set up many speakers, events and special exhibits that enriched the community members that attended. Thank you for what you’ve done and best wishes, Shannon, in your future ventures!
Upcoming Event

Event Name: Independence Birthday Celebration  
Day: Saturday, February 23rd  
Time: 2:00 pm  
Place: Independence Heritage Museum

It’s going to be a party—February 15th-23rd!

Join the Heritage Museum and downtown merchants in celebrating the birthday of Independence. This February 26th marks 133 years since the city was first incorporated and 60 years since the Oregon Cavalcade.

Take part in the scavenger hunt and learn about the Oregon Cavalcade and Indy History as you participate in the downtown search for clues. Pick up your clue sheet at the library beginning February 15th and walk through downtown seeking answers to the questions about early Independence history/Oregon Cavalcade. Your completed form will be your ticket to a prize drawing to be held during the birthday party at the Heritage Museum, 112 S. 3rd St. on Saturday, February 23rd. Bring completed forms to the museum Wednesday, the 20th—Friday, the 22nd—1-5pm and Saturday by 2:00pm.

The party and prize drawings will begin at 2:15pm with a brief presentation at 2:30. Join in the celebration for cake and prizes and see a new display of the Oregon Cavalcade and the early days of Independence. If you have questions, please contact indybday@gmail.com. Admission to the museum is now free.
The new tagline of the Heritage Museum is “Connect to the Past, Create the Future”. Connecting to the past is a clear enough concept for a heritage museum because inside its walls you are surrounded by items that have been passed down from the earliest founders of the community. The stories and items found in our museum tell you a little bit of our shared heritage.

Creating the future involves active cooperation among community members. Some wonderful examples of this process happened during the summer and fall of 2017 during the remodel of the Military Exhibit. Museum volunteers developed valuable partnerships with several community members that had a profoundly positive impact on the redesign of the exhibit. These relationships will also benefit the museum and the community into the future.

One of these partnerships began with a simple request on a local social media group. Our inquiry for community research assistance was passed on to local author, documentary film contributor, and photojournalist, John Bruning. John is a wealth of knowledge about the historical ties of Monmouth and Independence to Camp Adair. It was through him that we became intimately acquainted with a local son of Independence, Taylor Marks. Taylor was a Soldier with the Oregon Army National Guard and was killed in action in Iraq in 2009. His story is now memorialized in the museum for all our visitors to view. John also contributed his words of wisdom in a lecture at the opening of the new exhibit. He spoke on how military operations have a substantial impact on small communities like ours.

During research for the exhibit we discovered a significant gap in information and items about the Vietnam War but we knew our community had been impacted. Eventually, a connection was made with another local author, Billy Whisenant. As a Vietnam War veteran, Billy contributed valuable insights and items to the exhibit. He also assisted our staff in identifying a portion of a sign from an American Legion war memorial no longer on display in Independence. The names from that sign, and many more we learned during our research, inspired us to create the digital slideshow presentation of veterans that is now part of the exhibit. (If readers have photos of additional community veterans, please bring them in to the museum!)

Many other people partnered with us on the Military Exhibit in valuable ways, including Bill Nix, whose encyclopedic knowledge of military history was invaluable in helping us to accurately interpret items that are on display. He even contributed some new items for the exhibit from his personal collection.

The partnerships we developed with these wonderful community members helped create a balanced interpretation of stories and context in the exhibit. We also uncovered new stories and built new friendships that will pave the way for future projects. As your Heritage Museum we will continue to passionately pursue our goal of connecting to the past and creating the future.

Amy Christensen
Heritage Museum Society Board Member
Museum Advisory Board Update

The former Heritage Museum Commission has transitioned from an operations based commission to a policy focused advisory board. The change was discussed during the strategic planning meeting held last summer, where it was decided that the group could better serve the museum in an advisory capacity. This change allows the city museum staff to more directly manage the day-to-day operations of the museum. The City approved an ordinance this past fall, which outlined the responsibilities of the newly revised board. A new mission statement and by-laws have been adopted by the newly reorganized board. The next item for consideration will be a collections policy to assist staff in determining which items will be most appropriate for the museum collection.

Board members have participated in several clean up and organizational days at the museum. We are currently undergoing a massive reorganization and inventory of our collection, focusing on the museum’s basement. Beyond physically reorganizing our space, this project will involve research and data entry related to items located during this process. If you are interested in helping us in this effort, contact the museum at orheritage@ci.independence.or.us, or (503) 838-4989 for details and dates for the next workday.

Vickie McCubbin
Chair, Museum Advisory Board

Heritage Society Update

The Independence Heritage Museum Society board members are excited about the ideas and plans being generated that will move the museum to a new level of importance for residents of the area as well as visitors. We are working closely with Carly, the Museum Manager who began working full-time in December, to implement the goals and objectives that came out of the June workshop.

One change that is underway is the opening of a small gift shop in the area formerly occupied by the kitchen display. Kitchen artifacts have been carefully stored, and items that the Heritage Society has had available for sale have been put together where they can be easily viewed. We are making a list of possible new merchandise that we hope will encourage visitors to take away memories of their visit, as well as contribute financially to the Society for support of museum activities. Suggestions for items and books are welcome!

We continue to solicit memberships from community members and visitors. Each membership strengthens the museum, not only with the financial donation but with the expression of interest that encourages continued commitment by staff and volunteers.

Lois Martin
President, Heritage Museum Society
Board Vacancies

We have vacancies on both of our boards!

Heritage Museum Society Board:
This board is for the non-profit that supports the Heritage Museum. Volunteer board members meet the second Wednesday of each month.

Members currently include:
Lois Martin, President
Vickie McCubbin, Vice-President
Vacant, Secretary
Amy Christensen, Treasurer

Heritage Museum Advisory Board:
This board is the city-appointed board that advises on all aspects of the museum. This includes but is not limited to ways the museum could be a resource to the community, gift acceptance policy, and overall museum operations. The board meets the second Wednesday of every month at 5:30pm in the civic center.

Members currently include:
Vickie McCubbin, Chair
John Young
Anita Cantu
Jasper Smith
Amy Christensen
Vacant Position
Vacant Position
Marilyn Morton (City Council liaison).

Interested in local history and want to get involved?
Contact Museum Manager, Carly Annable at (503) 838-4989 or via email at cannabis@ci.independence.or.us

1989.017.056 First Baptist Church, presently the Heritage Museum, taken before the north addition was built. Enterprise, Independence newspaper. 1914
The mission of the Society is to support the Heritage Museum through donation and service.

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: _________________________________

E-mail: _________________________________________________________________

Allowing us to email notices reduces use of natural resources and mailing expenses. We respect your privacy and will not use your email for any other purpose.

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: 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.

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter via the mail, please let us know. Call us at (503) 838-4989 or send an e-mail to: orheritage@ci.independence.or.us. Sending it digitally (via e-mail or by posting on the web) helps us save money!