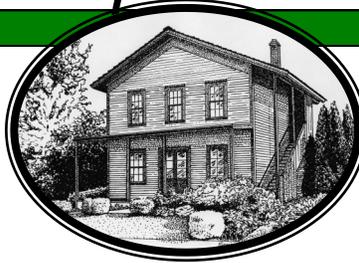


# Original Wasco County Courthouse Reporter

Volume 2016 Number 2



1859

## Step Back in Time

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
*President: Sandy Bisset*  
*Vice President: Karl Vercouteren*  
*Secretary: Juanita Neitling*  
*Treasurer: Judy Moore*  
*Members at Large: Jerry Davis,*  
*Rodger Nichols, Bob Haechrel*  
*Honorary Members: Jacob Kaser, Paul Tews*  
*Docent: Davien Lundin*

### Original Wasco County Courthouse

410 West 2nd Place

PO Box 839

The Dalles, Oregon

97058

541-296-8672

[OriginalCourthouse@gmail.com](mailto:OriginalCourthouse@gmail.com)

[www.OriginalWascoCountyCourthouse.org](http://www.OriginalWascoCountyCourthouse.org)

Located in Trevitt's Addition Historic District  
behind The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce  
and Visitors/ Center

National Register of Historic Places

State of Oregon Historic Landmark

The Original Wasco County  
Courthouse Preservation  
Corporation is a 501(c)3 non-profit  
organization.

MEMBER

Oregon Museum Association

The Dalles Area  
Chamber of Commerce

Partner organization  
Oregon Cultural Trust

Charm Trail Participant



Original Wasco County Courthouse

## 2017 February History Forums

Each Saturday in February the Original Wasco County Courthouse presents original area history programs. Our 2017 offerings cover new and interesting topics. Programs begin at 1:30 PM in the upstairs Courtroom of the Original Wasco County Courthouse. There is an audio/video feed on the main floor for those who are unable to, or prefer not to negotiate the stairs.

February 4

**Now Playing at the Vogt:**  
**The Dalles Forgotten Opera House**  
*Karl Vercouteren*

February 11

**Naomi Pike Schenk**  
**Survivor of the Ill-fated Donner Party**  
*Julie Reynolds*

February 18

**Art Deco Architecture: The Gorge**  
*Ellen Shapley*

February 25

**Thomas Condon as Paleontologist**  
*Professor William Orr*

*No admission charge*

## News from the front desk



A lot has happened at the Courthouse and in the neighborhood since our Spring Newsletter. The house to the west of us has been completely restored and has new owners. The Zimmerman cottage to the east of us has also been sold and the new owner has restored the inside, painted the outside and has fencing and landscaping plans for the spring. The Chamber of Commerce has recently set in motion plans to restore the façade of their building. of the building façade to its original look. See page 4 for an interesting photo of our neighborhood during the 1894 flood.

For our part, thanks to volunteers, we have had our landscape kept under control throughout the summer. In the spring we hired a contractor to remove the arborvitae shrubs that had overgrown the accessibility ramp. This move also lessened our fire vulnerability and eliminated a spot for transient campers. As it always seems, one solution leads to a further complication. We are working with the building codes staff, and have plans to build an ADA approved railing along the ramp. After the railing is in place we will re-landscape the area.

By the time February rolls around we should also have a leak in the porch fascia board repaired, some small inside repairs, and thanks to a contribution by Gary Denney Floor Covering, we will have new bathroom flooring in place.

The sign above our entranceway has an old look and a new paint job thanks to Joe Slusher at Sign Age. We have retained the original appearance created by Carl Kramer, with a new weatherproof finish. This, along with the bunting we added last year and our traditional pots of geraniums makes an impressive entryway. In addition, Karl Vercooteren has added our traditional electric candles to the windows and a wreath around our landmark sign for our holiday contribution to the area.

On a more serious note, those who attended our Annual Meeting in June voted to amend our by-laws to facilitate the receiving of funds previously held by the Original Wasco County Courthouse Foundation. That organization has terminated its function as our investment holder, and has ceased to exist. Our amended by-laws restrict our use of these monies in the same manner as the by-laws of the Foundation. Any members who have questions about this may contact me at [wildflowers@gorge.net](mailto:wildflowers@gorge.net) for further information.

Also at the Annual Meeting, Bob Haechrel stepped up to become a member of our Board of Directors. Welcome, Bob. In the meantime Board Member Trish Neal has resigned and moved back to Alaska. She has graciously agreed to continue to keep our website up to date. Thank you Trish.

While I am thanking people, I want you to know that Darcy Long-Curtiss is my personal choice for Volunteer of the Year. She crawled under the building to connect the heat tape so our pipes don't freeze. That is way beyond the call of duty in my book. Thanks, Darcy.

We have some exciting new programs on tap for February, including Board member Karl Vercooteren's delve into the history of Maximillian Vogt's Opera House. He asks that anyone who has "photos of the Vogt Opera House, AKA Vogt Grand Theater, that hosted traveling troupes and locally produced entertainment in The Dalles, Oregon, from 1890 to 1916" to contact him at [kjverc@gmail.com](mailto:kjverc@gmail.com) or 541-296-5785. See page 1 for complete program list.

Davien Lunden has agreed to return as docent for the 2017 season. She did a great job juggling her interpreting duties with the visitors, with housekeeping chores and special projects. A big thank you is in order. This is also a good place to put the word out for volunteers. On days we know we will have a large number of visitors, we attempt to have two docents on duty. This includes the American Empress visitors, and other pre-arranged tours. Our board has been great about these added duties but would really appreciate more assistance in these duties. If you like people, history, and have the gift of gab, this is a good gig for you.

We will again participate in the Hop On-Hop Off Tours for the American Empress tour boat in 2017. The season starts in March and runs through November. We are also open to the public on those days, in addition to our regular hours from May through September. We continue to open the Courthouse year round by request. Contact me at [wildflowers@gorge.net](mailto:wildflowers@gorge.net) or 541-298-1240 and I will arrange something.

After a lot of thought and discussion, the Original Wasco County Courthouse will begin charging admission this next season. See page 6 for the fee schedule. Please note that there is no admission charge for members. Individual memberships admit the person named on the membership card, a family membership admits members of the household and higher level memberships will receive some added "perks" yet to be determined.

We lost some special people this past year - long term board member Marilyn Ericksen passed away, as did member and tribal activist Chuck Williams, lifetime member Edwina Bailey, and Robert Hamm who had presented several programs for us, including the 2016 humorous view of how Oregon was seen in historical newspapers. Our condolences to their families.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Original Wasco County Courthouse I wish you our best for the Holiday Season and 2017.

*Sandy Bisset*

Board President  
Original Wasco County Courthouse



# Alfred Staehli, Restoration Architect (1929-2009)

It wasn't until recently that we realized just how **impressive** our restoration credentials are. Alfred Staehli is a household word at the Original Courthouse. When we have a question about the restoration we go to the "Staehli Book" which he left with us after the restoration was complete. He was the guiding force and the final word in the moving and restoration of the courthouse in 1975-1976.



Photo credit: <http://oregonstateparks.org>

When Portland architect, Alfred Staehli AIA, passed away in 2009 his obituary listed impressive credentials in saving and restoring historic buildings in the northwest. His own favorite is listed as the Kam Wah Chung building in John Day. This must have been closely followed by the Pittock Mansion, Crater Lake Lodge, and the restoration of the dome on the Oregon State Capital Building.

His most unusual project was the dismantling and moving of Oregon's only Frank Lloyd Wright structure in 2000. Thanks to Staehli it has been reconstructed and is open for tours at the Oregon Garden near Silverton.



Photo credit: <http://media@oregonlive.com>

For us, Alfred Staehli's most important project was the restoration of the Original Wasco County Courthouse. We have recently had the restoration plans duplicated for display. They show where all of the walls and windows were located in the building's boarding house days, and where the original locations were hidden in the walls. Stop by and learn a little more about the restoration of the courthouse to its 1859 configuration.



Alfred Staehli's architectural plans of the Original Wasco County Courthouse and photographs of the actual restoration process. Can be seen upstairs in the Courthouse. Photo credit:

## A Story about Stairs

Have you ever gone up or down the outside staircase at the Original Courthouse. It is very steep, has a roof but is otherwise open to the weather, and during the time the building served as Courthouse, and later City Hall, there was no other way to access the upstairs.

Judges, attorneys, juries, criminals, local citizens, and Sunday morning churchgoers all trudged up these steps, and then back down. It wasn't until after 1910 when the building was sold to Matthias Schoren to use as a residence and boarding house that the inside stairs were installed. At the time of the 1970's building restoration it was decided, with the blessings of the landmarks decision makers, that the indoor staircase could stay - lucky for all of us.

We are often asked why the building didn't originally have

an inside stairway. If you look at many public buildings in the "Old West" communities you will regularly see stairs on the outside. There are several thoughts on this. First of all, the stairwell takes up a lot of square footage that could be used for other purposes. Secondly, having an outside means of escape in case of fire was critical in old time frame (stick built) buildings. These buildings went up in flames very quickly.

Another thought has to do with the architecture of the building itself. The Original Courthouse was constructed with a technique called *Balloon Construction*, which means that among other features, there are no interior load bearing walls. The building is essentially a big box. In many instances these "boxes" were moved from place to place, as this old structure can attest to.

Do you have some knowledge or a theory about old buildings and outside staircases? Let us know.



## THE STREET WHERE WE LIVE

This photograph of the aftermath of the June 1894 flood shows what was then called Second Street, and now goes by Second Place, totally under water. The depth of water in the houses is unknown, but there is a high water line on St. Mary's Catholic School, to the left, on Third Street. Recognizable in the foreground is the Zimmerman Cottage. To the right and on the back of the lot where the Original Courthouse is now located, sits the Zimmerman House. The house to the west was replaced in about 1923 with the craftsman style bungalow which has recently been restored. The neighborhood is becoming a great addition to the Trevitt's Historic District.

Photo credit: Wasco County Pioneer Association, #WCPA 188A-25



### Memorial Donations

Carolyn Wood in memory of Marilyn Ericksen  
Barbara Telfer in memory of George Telfer  
Cal McDermid in memory of Patrick Ellis



### Charm Trail

Don't forget we have charms for your Charm Trail bracelet. Get an authentic pewter Sheriff's Badge and Jail Key for \$1.50 each. Available in our Museum Store and at Klindt's Booksellers when we aren't open.



### Congratulations

This year, instead of offering the February Forum attendees an opportunity to win one door prize basket, we solicited donations of four different items. People were given one ticket at each Forum they attended. The drawings were done at the end of the last program—and the winners were.

- Rilan tePoel—Electric ice cream maker
- Bob Haechrel—Stetson Aftershave
- Joyce Fargher—Olympics Teddy Bear
- Klea Espey - OWCC Family Membership

Although this is a very late announcement, be assured that each winner received their prize shortly after the drawing.

### Appreciation

Thank you Wendy for making our Christmas come early, with your donation of the vinyl for our restroom floor.



**GARY DENNEY**

FLOOR COVERING and CARPET WAREHOUSE, inc.

OR CC8 No. 81949  
WA GaryDFC081K7  
info@garydenneyfloorcovering.com

Wendy & Gary Denney

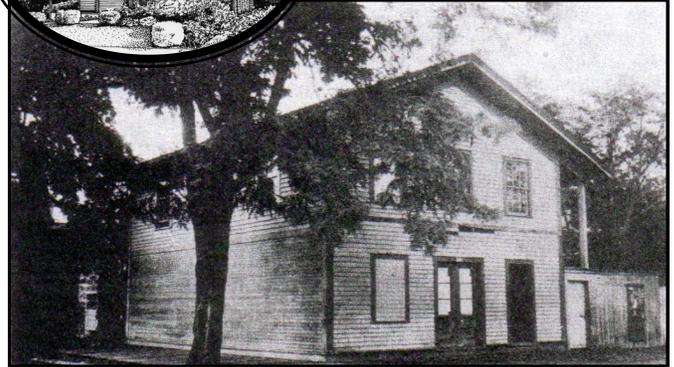
816 West 6th St.  
The Dalles, OR 97058  
541-298-4252  
Fax 541-296-1070

## CLERK'S OFFICE TABLE

This table, or one just like it, was given to the Courthouse this spring by Fort Dalles Museum. It was delivered by their staff and moved upstairs by Karl Vercooteren and a volunteer crew from Habitat for Humanity. The photo below shows County Clerk Luther Fox and staff in the 1883 Courthouse, now Clock Tower Ale, at 3rd and Washington.



## OUTSIDE STAIRCASE



This early photograph of the Original Courthouse when it sat where City Hall is now, shows the door to the outside staircase on the right. The inset is local artist, Sonja Little's rendition of the staircase as it looked in 2012.

## LETTER PRESS

The Word Press which Fort Dalles Museum contributed to the Original Wasco Courthouse is in place. The only thing we know about it is that allegedly it came from this Courthouse. It was used in book binding in some manner and possibly for duplicating with impregnating ink but we have yet to figure out how it was done. If you have any ideas or just want to tinker, just let us know.



## THE MISSING SIGN



From 1975-1995 the Original Courthouse sat between the Chamber of Commerce building and Mill Creek. It functioned as the Tourist Information Center for the Chamber. This large wooden sign was located to the front of the building and is prominently visible in period pictures. In 1996 when the building was moved to its current location, the sign was not re-erected. We don't know what happened to it. It has been suggested that it was a victim of the 1996 flood, but it is more likely that someone stored it in a safe place. If you know anything about what happened to the sign please contact Sandy Bisset at 541-298-1240 or wildflowers@gorge.net.

## CITY COUNCIL CHAIRS

Pictured at the right in our reading area is one of two oak chairs that were presented to the Original Courthouse by City of The Dalles this past summer. Although the chairs have been refinished and reupholstered over the years, it has been determined that they date back at least to 1910 when City Hall was erected, and possibly to the latter period of the Courthouse building's use as City Hall. Our thanks to the City.



Oregon  
Cultural  
Trust  
We Appreciate  
your  
Contribution



The **Original Wasco County Courthouse** is an Oregon Cultural Trust Partner. As a contributor to our organization you are eligible to participate in Oregon’s Cultural Trust Tax Credit program. Donors who contribute to Oregon cultural nonprofits, including the **Original Wasco County Courthouse**, are eligible to make a matching donation to the Oregon Cultural Trust and receive a 100% tax credit for the Trust donation (up to \$500 for individual, \$1,000 for a couple filing jointly and \$2,500 for a Class-C Corporation).

**Oregon Cultural Trust** is a cultural promotion and preservation organization in Oregon which provides grants and funding to arts, humanities, and heritage organizations for stabilization and expansion. The Trust's partners include Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Council for the Humanities, Oregon Heritage Commission, Oregon Historical Society, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. The trust is funded by the State of Oregon, corporate sponsors, and private donations. A special series of vehicle license plates also helps fund the trust.

There are approximately 1,400 non-profit organizations served by Oregon Cultural Trust. The Original Wasco County Courthouse is listed under the corporate name, **Original Courthouse Preservation Corporation**.

For more information contact <http://culturaltrust.org/>

## Admission Charge

Beginning January 1, 2017, the Original Wasco County Courthouse will begin charging admission. This was a difficult decision for us, as the founders of our organization committed to “always” admit patrons at no charge. Times have changed and it is no longer financially possible to continue free admission, with increased operating expenses.

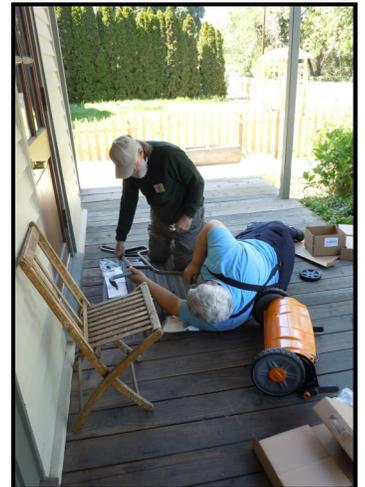
Adults	\$3.00
Age 12-18	\$2.00
Age 6-11	\$1.00
Under 6	FREE
Adult Groups	\$2.00 each
Student Groups	Suggested Donation*

\* arranged with Instructor in advance

We are developing a means of accepting debit and credit cards, and will have that in place by the time we open in the spring.

## We Bought a Pusher

Last spring we made the decision to invest in a push mower and save money by mowing our own lawn. Rodger and Karl unpacked it, put it together, and tried it out. Not long afterward a volunteer stopped by and proceeded to mow our lawn—all summer. We are secure in the fact that if we need a push mower, we have one. A sincere thank you to our lawn mowing benefactor, who made our lawn look great.



Karl and Rodger putting the mower together on the front porch.

## ART DECO

Can you guess the location of these Art Deco features. They will be disclosed at the History Forum the 18th of February.



Look at the ring we found in the donation jar last month. Now we need to figure out how to unfold it.



## MARK THE DATE

**Original Wasco County Courthouse  
Annual Meeting**

**June 3, 2017  
1:30 PM**

**Program to be announced**

WEBSITE  
EMAIL  
FACEBOOK  
WIFI



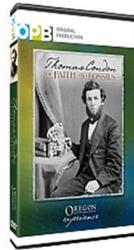
Just a reminder that we now have our own website, an email address, a telephone with voicemail, and as most of you know, a Facebook page. See page one of this newsletter for all access details. We do have access to the new Dalles City WIFI network, but unfortunately it is in our front yard only.

## 2017 MEMBERSHIP



Remember that membership dues for 2017 are now due. Our membership year runs from January 1 through December 31 each year. Please renew your membership and continue being part of our historic preservation effort. Ask a friend to join and help us exceed last year's membership.

## Thomas Condon Of Faith & Fossils



Frontier preacher and pioneer geologist, Thomas Condon was the first to recognize the scientific significance of the John Day Fossil Beds. This DVD was filmed in part at the Original Courthouse where Thomas Condon preached. Come to the Courthouse and view our copy or order your own from Oregon Experience—Oregon Public Broadcasting.

## WHY WE WOULD LIKE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

Each newsletter we can send by email saves the organization money in postage and printing. This savings allows to send out newsletters and announcements, more frequently. If you receive your newsletter by email you will be treated to full color photographs and graphics. In addition with a few keystrokes you will be able to send it on to friends. Those of you without email, please don't worry. We will continue to send the same information to you by snail mail.

## ORIGINAL COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION CORPORATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Original Courthouse Preservation Corporation is a Federally designated 501(C)3 non-profit organization. As such your donations and membership dues are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIPCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form and your check to  
Original Courthouse Preservation Corporation  
PO Box 839 - The Dalles, OR 97058

**2017**

### MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

*Please check appropriate box*

\$ 15.00 Individual

\$ 25.00 Family

\$ 40.00 Sustaining

\$100.00 Patron

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ additional donation

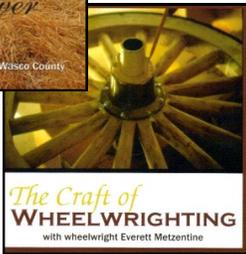
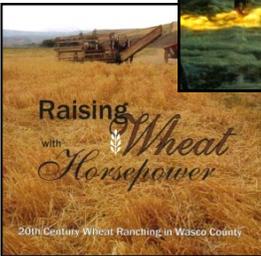
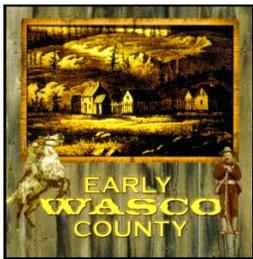
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ donation in memory or in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

*Oregon Cultural Trust Partner Organization*

# Original Wasco County Courthouse Video Collection

These programs have been re-mastered from the original 1970's era slide/tape presentations, created for and presented by the Original Wasco County Courthouse.

Order them individually at \$20.00 apiece, or buy the entire set for \$72.00, a savings of 10 percent. Proceeds from sales of these videos help support the preservation of the Original Courthouse. Available at the Original Courthouse Museum Store. Or by mail for an additional \$3.00



Jail Key

To purchase merchandise contact  
Sandy Bisset at  
wildflowers@gorge.net or  
541-298-1240.

# GIVE A GIFT OF LOCAL HISTORY

ORIGINAL WASCO COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
410 West Second Place—The Dalles, Oregon  
located behind The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce Visitors Center

OPEN  
May, June, July, August, September  
Thursday, Friday, and Saturday  
11 AM to 3 PM  
And by appointment year round

CONTACT US  
Mail: PO Box 839 The Dalles, Oregon 97058  
Phone: 541-296-4798  
Email: OriginalCourthouse@gmail.com  
Website: www.OriginalWascoCountyCourthouse.com  
Facebook: Original Wasco County Courthouse



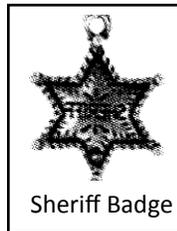
Cover photograph: Earliest known photograph [undated] of the 1859 Wasco County Courthouse in its original location, facing Court Street, on the northwest corner of 3rd and Court, where The Dalles City Hall is now located. Note the wooden sidewalks.

## Original Wasco County Courthouse

In 1859 when Oregon became a state this courthouse was erected to administer the law in Wasco County, which stretched from the Cascade Mountains to the Eastern state border. It housed the Sheriff's Office, Jail, and Clerk's office downstairs and Court was held upstairs, as were church services, public meetings, and other gatherings, the entrance being accessed only from an outside aircase. It served well until 1883, then was replaced, moved several times and took on many other roles until it became derelict and saved from destruction in 1975. It is an Oregon Historic Landmark and is on the National Historic Register.

## Commemorative Coin Gift Card

These coins were struck in 1976 as part of the American Bicentennial celebration in conjunction with the restoration and opening of the Original Wasco County courthouse. There is an engraving of the courthouse in its original location on 3rd and Court Streets on one side, and a map of the 130,000 square mile territorial Wasco County on the reverse. The coins in a protective case sell for \$3.00 each, and \$5.00 each affixed to the greeting card with envelope in a plastic sleeve. This card with coin and a brief history of the Courthouse makes a nice memento for your guest or family members.

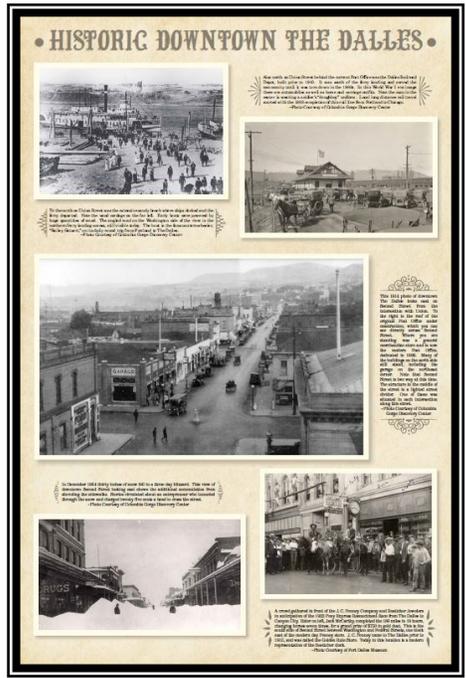
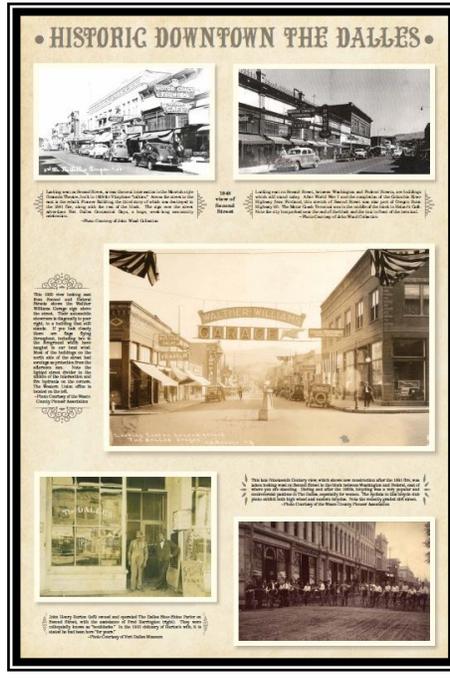
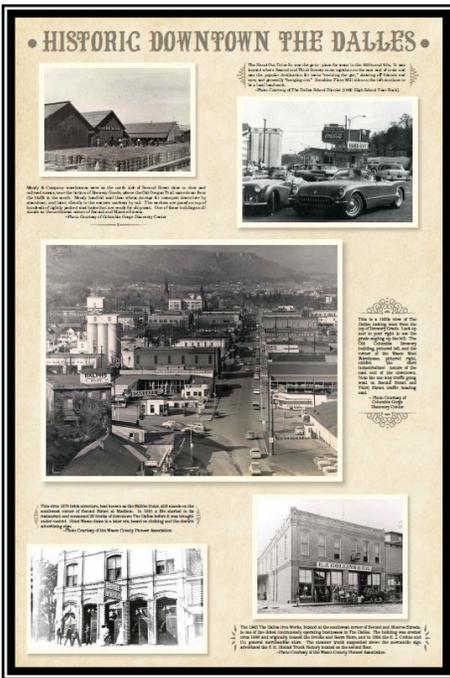


Sheriff Badge

## Charm Trail

Don't forget we have charms for your Charm Trail bracelet. Get an authentic pewter Sheriff's Badge and Jail Key for \$1.50 each. Available in our Museum Store and at Klindt's Booksellers when we aren't open.



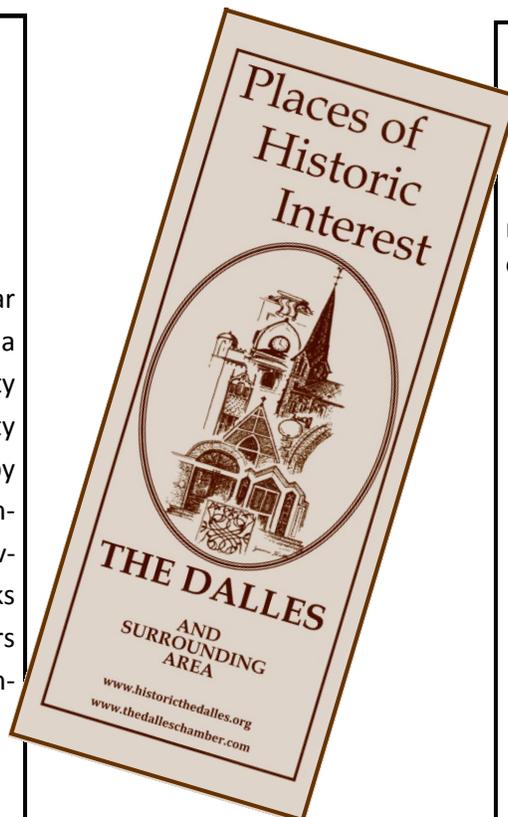


## SECOND STREET KIOSKS

Original Courthouse members Sandy Bisset, Trish Neal, Mary Davis, and Carolyn Wood were involved in creating these historical kiosks which Main Street has installed on Second Street corners at Union, Federal, and Madison. They showcase businesses which were historically visible from those locations. Many of the buildings are still standing. The reverse side of each Kiosk has a map of downtown and the location of current businesses. We thank the Main Street organization for giving us an opportunity to participate in this project. Tammy Keys from Bohn Printing did the final design work. Stop in and give her an Attaboy! Also thank Matthew Klebes and the Main Street Design Committee for making this project happen.

### PLACES OF HISTORIC INTEREST

The reprinting of this popular brochure has been enabled by a grant to the Original Wasco County Courthouse by the Oregon Community Fund and matching funds provided by The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce and the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center and Museum. Our thanks to Michelle Harmon and the members of The Dalles Chamber Heritage Committee for facilitating this effort.



### ALL THINGS HISTORICAL

Please support History in The Dalles by supporting the Original Wasco County Courthouse and our partner organizations.

- Original Wasco County Courthouse
- Fort Dalles Museum
- and
- Anderson Homestead
- Wasco County Historical Society
- St. Peters Landmark
- Mural Society
- District 21 School Museum
- The Dalles Fire Museum
- Columbia Gorge
- Discovery Center and Museum
- Wasco County Pioneers
- Civic Auditorium



**Original Wasco County Courthouse**  
**PO Box 839**  
**The Dalles, Oregon**  
**97058**

First  
 Class  
 Postage



Happy Holidays to you and yours

## ADA COMPLIANCE



As part of our commitment to ada compliant accessibility a curb cut was created in line with our entry ramp. This allows easier access to the entrance from the street. Please do not park in front of it.

We also have created a way to get wheel chairs and scooters over the doorway threshold to our building. Ask us and we can quickly set it up.

In addition we have a downstairs television link to enable viewing of upstairs programs without climbing the stairs.

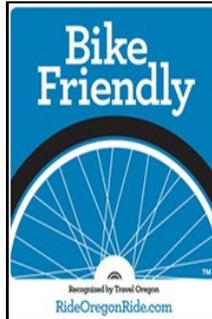
In the Spring we will install a railing along the ramp into our building making wheelchair access safer and giving others something to hang onto.

Please note that as much as we would like it to be, our restroom is not wheelchair accessible. We will install a grab bar in the near future.

## MISSION STATEMENT ORIGINAL WASCO COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The Mission of the Original Courthouse Preservation Corporation is to:

- **PRESERVE** the Original Wasco County Courthouse;
- **COLLECT, EXHIBIT, and INTERPRET** items related to the governmental/legal history of Wasco County;
- provide a venue for **PRESENTATIONS** of local historical interest;
- preserve and make available relevant **EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH MATERIALS.**



The Original Wasco County Courthouse has achieved a Bike Friendly designation through Travel Oregon. We have committed to provide drinking water, WiFi access, Phone charging capability, and a bike rack for our bicycling patrons. In return we receive recognition in Oregon bicycling brochures and websites. And additional visitors.