On The Map

Meet Levi Wiest, Central Oregon's Pioneer Surveyor.

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Diamonds in the Desert

History Pub is back, just in time for Spring Training.

See p. 5

The Homesteader

Deschutes County Historical Society Newsletter—MARCH 2025

The 2025 Leon Devereaux Pioneer Scholarship

Deadline for Application:

March 31, 2025

Leon Devereaux, Bend Senior High School Class of 1941, WWII Pilot, Former Bend Mayor, and DCHS Board Member

The Deschutes County Pioneers established a scholarship for high school seniors years ago. The Pioneers recently merged with the Deschutes County Historical Society (DCHS), and DCHS continue to award the scholarship. The mission of DCHS is to preserve, promote and celebrate our shared local history. The purpose of the scholarship is to carry out this mission by encouraging high school seniors in Central Oregon to foster an interest in the community's history through qualitative and quantitative research and evaluation of archives and sources presented in a form that inspires others to learn and take action to shape the future.

DCHS will award two $1,000 nonrenewable scholarships to eligible students who submit their application no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 31, 2025. Please visit deschuteshistory.org/ld-scholar/ for complete details and online application form. Scholarship winners will be announced in late April, 2025.

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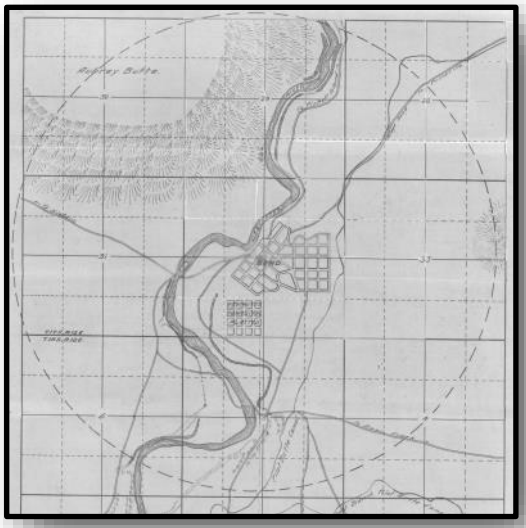
Levi Wiest, the Man Who Literally Put Bend on the Map

By Mike Berry and Priscilla Ross

March 16-22, 2025 is National Surveyors Week, promoting public recognition of surveying and celebrating the role that surveyors have played in the nation's development, growth and economy. This offers a great opportunity to examine the life and times of Levi David Wiest, an early Central Oregon pioneer, civic leader and businessman. Wiest surveyed the lots and roads of the fledgling town of Bend and was considered "the dean of Central Oregon irrigationists", having designed, surveyed and overseen the construction of the vast canal systems that irrigated the high desert in the early 1900s.



Circa 1904 Wiest Map of the Bend area

Levi was born on January 20, 1859 on the family's homestead near Spring Grove, Pennsylvania. He was the youngest of nine children. His ancestor, Jacob Wiest, sailed from Switzerland in 1735 and was awarded the land grant in Pennsylvania. Levi knew that he would not inherit any of the property given his birth order so looked to other work opportunities that would satisfy his desire to explore the country.

L. D. WIEST,
CIVIL ENGINEER and SURVEYOR,
SHERIDAN, - WYOMING.
Irrigation, Locating Claims, Town Sites, Mines, Shafts, Surveying, Platting, Etc., Etc., Promptly Executed.
Estimates of all kinds Accurately Given.

Advertisement in the 1889 Sheridan Wyoming P ost

Between 1879 and 1883 Levi attended Pennsylvania College in Gettysburg, and the University of Michigan School of Engineering in Ann Arbor. His survey career began after graduation when he surveyed and subdivided his father's Pennsylvania farm in 1883. Desiring to explore the west, he worked for County Surveyors in Kansas City, Missouri and Salina, Kansas in 1884. After his marriage to Flora Shunk in 1885, they moved to Omaha, Nebraska where he worked for the Engineering Departments of the Union Pacific Railway and the Missouri Pacific Railway Company. While living in Omaha Levi and Flora welcomed their first daughter, Marion, in 1886.

Levi Wiest on left, circa 1890s in Wyoming

Levi's desire for "The West" wasn't sated by the family's time in Kansas and Nebraska, so in 1889 the family moved to Sheridan, Wyoming. Even though she was only three years old at the time, Marion had vivid memories of the trip. When they had to cross the Platte River, their wagon swayed quite a bit in the water. She was sure they were going to be carried downstream. Their challenges didn't end there! The horses pulling their wagon ran down a steep hill too quickly and the wagon was overturned. Marion's doll was broken and Levi suffered a broken leg. It all made for a memorable start to their move.

For the next 10 years in Wyoming, Levi served in a variety of positions including City Assessor, Assistant County Treasurer, County Surveyor, City Engineer, U.S. Deputy Surveyor and U.S. Mineral Surveyor. The irrigation methods used in the area piqued his interest and he became an accomplished irrigation system engineer and surveyor. In 1896 he surveyed and oversaw construction of around 200 miles of irrigation canals, ditches, and laterals.

During their time in Sheridan, Levi and Flora welcomed two more daughters, Pauline and Margaret. Marion remembered that her father was away from home much of the

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Deschutes Historical Museum

129 NW Idaho Avenue
Bend, OR 97703
Open Tuesdays-Saturdays
10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
541.389.1813

www.deschuteshistory.org
info@deschuteshistory.org

Museum Staff:

Kelly Cannon-Miller, Executive Director
Vanessa Ivey, Museum Manager
Rebekah Averette, Collections Manager
Tracy Alexander, Membership Officer
Michelle Patrick, Visitor Services

●●●●●

2025 DCHS Board of Directors:

Jane Williamson, President
Karen Green, Vice President
Heidi Kennedy, Secretary/Treasurer
Adrian Bennett, Past President

Board Members:

Paul Claeyssens, Tony DeBone, Greg Fulton, Eric King, Brad Lemmon, Julie Lowy, Liz Rink, Glenn Voelz

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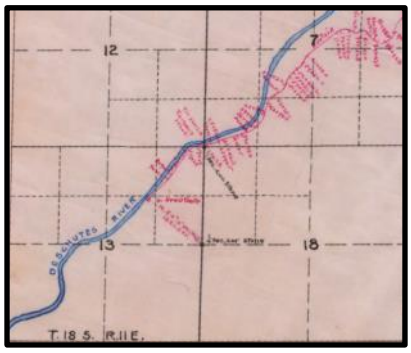
Complete minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors are on file with the Museum office.

Continued from P. 2— Levi Wiest

time, as his work took him to the gold and coal mines in the mountains. Often his compensation was in the form of meat, eggs, milk, vegetables, and other farm products. The Crow Indians living in this area were curious about their neighbors and would peer in the windows of the Wiest home to see how they lived. Marion said that at first it was very startling for her and her sisters because the Indians looked scary, but she said they were very nice.

By 1899, wanderlust again pulled the Wiest family west and in December of that year they were in Portland, Oregon where Levi began working for the Oregon–Washington Railroad and Navigation Company. In the summer of 1900 he saw a newspaper advertisement posted by A.M. Drake for an irrigation engineer in Crook County and on August 15, 1900, Levi arrived in Farewell Bend, population 21. He had finally found the western frontier he longed for and it would be his home for the rest of his life.

Above: Title block of Wiest's 1901 map of the Pilot Butte Canal.
Below: Detail of Wiest's 1901 map of the Pilot Butte Canal
The original map is 12 feet long



Levi was the vice-president and chief engineer for Alexander Drake's Pilot Butte Development Company and upon his arrival in Bend he hit the ground running. Drake was planning a huge irrigation project, now known as the Central Oregon Irrigation District, and time was of the essence to get federal approval. Between December 1900 and May of 1901, Wiest designed and surveyed the first phase of Drake's irrigation system, the Pilot Butte Canal. He engineered and laid out a total of almost 30 miles of canals, ditches, and laterals stretching from south of Bend to the future townsite of Redmond. He also engineered additional canals being built by Drake. This initial irrigation system was instrumental in the establishment of Bend, Redmond and the surrounding communities. Given the size of the project and the necessity of constructing the canals in solid basalt subsurface conditions, it was recognized as a substantial engineering feat for its time. To this day ditch riders on that system comment about how well water moves through the canals. Wiest also surveyed an irrigation system near the town of Tumalo in 1902 and a proposed system near Suttle Lake.

In 1904, Levi surveyed Drake's townsite of Bend, encompassing the downtown core of the city. In 1907, he was hired as the Chief Engineer for the Arnold Irrigation District where he served on the Board of Directors until 1920. In 1910, he subdivided his homesteaded land, naming the subdivision "Wiestoria." The homestead consisted of five 40-acre pieces and was located in the northeast section of the town site. He worked on the original domestic water system of Bend and conducted a survey for the power dam that created Mirror Pond in 1910.

The Deschutes County Surveyor's Office has two of Wiest's survey field books and a couple of survey worksheets that show the Bend area between 1900 and 1904. These maps, when overlaid on current maps, are amazingly accurate as far as the locations of the Deschutes River, early wagon roads, canals, and major topographic features. His work was very exacting and he even created a coordinate grid for the Bend area that other surveyors in the early 1900s utilized in their work as the town grew.

Wiest home circa 1920s

When Levi and family initially came to Bend they lived in a cabin close to what is now Pioneer Park. Levi dreamed of building a house modeled after homes in his native Pennsylvania that would "last forever." He drew the plans and blueprint for this home and in 1914 construction started. The home was located on what is now NE Third Street and was three stories tall, built with native stone quarried near Bend. The home had hardwood floors, a coal burning furnace (first of its kind to be used in Bend), an indoor bathroom (another unique feature for the time), and a large library. After several transfers of ownership, the house was demolished in 1967.

Levi was an active citizen. In 1901, he was elected to Director of the Bend School Board. He and Flora helped organize the first church in Bend, First Presbyterian Church, in 1902.

Wanderlust continued to be part of Levi's life. In 1920, he and Flora left to explore the country and reunite with relatives in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Levi also wanted to see and evaluate road construction projects along the way. They were both about 60 years old at the time and embarked on this trip in their Model T Ford. The road trip was about 13,100 miles and took them through 28 states in ten months, camping off road for most of the trip. Levi kept a detailed journal of their experiences. To quote one of the closing comments in his journal: "The most surprising feature of our trip was the fact that we never realized that we were away from home. This we believe was largely due to the security and comfortableness in which we traveled..."

Flora and Levi Wiest circa 1930s

Levi passed away at home on March 6th, 1934. He left his mark on Bend's growth and development. In 1943, Flora signed a contract with the FHA to convert their home into nine apartments to be used for emergency housing during WWII. Following that agreement she lived with her sister in Astoria and then her daughter in Redmond until her passing on February 9, 1945.

February Volunteer Meeting Re-Cap

It was fun seeing so many intrepid volunteers who braved the cold and snowy weather to attend our first volunteer meeting of 2025! We covered lots of ground and want to make sure that everyone has the information that was shared.

Volunteer Hours: Please remember to log your hours in the Volunteer Hours Binder near the front desk. Volunteer time you do from home counts as well. Tracy tallies your hours and enters them into our development database as an in-kind donation. *Did you know that volunteer time is currently valued at $33.49 per hour?*

2025 Events

There are several events scheduled to take place at the DHM this year. Events that we produce often require extra volunteer help to plan, prepare, and staff on the day of the event. Events that are produced by outside organizations and are held at the museum need volunteer support as "ambassadors" for the museum.

Below is a list of upcoming events, events in **BOLD** are produced by DCHS staff, and could use extra planning support:

June 7:	**The Oregon Archaeology Roadshow *Volunteer planning support and day-of support needed***
June 22:	Volunteer Appreciation Party *All volunteers invited, no work required!*
July 4:	**Fourth of July Open House Day-of *Volunteer help needed***
August 9:	**4th Annual Antique Fair *Volunteer planning support and day-of support needed***
August 29-30:	"The Little Woody" Volunteer -help needed.
September 13:	Oregon Festival of Cars Day-of Volunteer help needed
September 20:	"Bark Bash" a Humane Society of Central Oregon event (new event, stay tuned for details)
November 7-8:	**Annual Chili Feed and Raffle *Volunteer planning support and day-of support needed***
December 13:	**Holiday Gelatin Salad Show *Volunteer planning support and day-of support needed***

>Please contact Tracy Alexander or Vanessa Ivey if you are interested in helping with any of the above events.

Walking Tours:

Walking Tours of Downtown Bend will begin in May, as part of National Heritage Preservation Month. Tours take around 90 minutes, include about a mile of walking, and up to 15 participants. Vanessa will be starting training for interested volunteer tour guides in April.

School visits are getting booked, and volunteers are needed for guided in house school tours, usually taking place Thursdays and Fridays. **>Please contact Vanessa Ivey if you would like to attend Tour Guide training**

Front Desk Help: With warm summer months approaching, back-up front desk volunteers are needed to cover volunteers who travel. **>Please contact Vanessa Ivey if you would like to be added to the Back-up Front Desk Staff list**

Third Floor Collections Department Updates:

Over the past few weeks, Rebekah has been working on several collections projects including a database clean-up in preparation for the PastPerfect Database to be launched on-line, inventory of 3rd floor collection to make sure objects are where they should be, are safely stored, and are accurately listed in the database, and creating a comprehensive Collections Volunteer Manual.
>**Rebekah will schedule a meeting for Collections volunteers to review these projects and review training for these ongoing processes.**

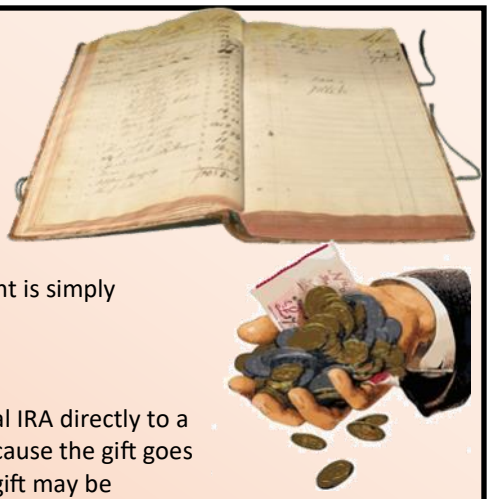
Exhibit Changes are Coming:

The 2nd floor gallery the Van Vleet Photography exhibit will come down in March to make way for the 2025 Novel Idea exhibit, "Read/Create: A Novel Idea," which will be on display over the month of April. *While this exhibit is on display, visitors can use their library card for admission.* When "Read/Create" comes down, the Van Vleet exhibit will be reinstalled with enhanced interpretive signs.

Also, updates will be coming to the 2nd floor Classroom gallery, stay tuned!
>Reminder: Please take some time to explore the museum's exhibits so that you are aware of any updates, changes, or problems that need to be addressed.

Thank you all for your time and support, we are only able to make this place work with your help!
Interested in becoming a volunteer? Visit our website for more information and to download an application form.

This Tax Season, Reduce Your Taxes by Donating to DCHS Through Your IRA



Here is a quick and easy way to help preserve and celebrate our local history, while reducing your taxable income: donate your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) to the Deschutes County Historical Society through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). A QCD is not subject to ordinary federal income taxes – the amount is simply excluded from your taxable income.

What is a Qualified Charitable Distribution?

A qualified charitable distribution (QCD) is a distribution of funds from your traditional IRA directly to a qualified charitable organization, such as the Deschutes County Historical Society. Because the gift goes directly to the charity without passing through your hands, the dollar amount of the gift may be excluded from your taxable income up to a maximum of **$108,000** annually, with some exceptions. Please consult your tax advisor for information regarding your specific exceptions.

Who can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution?

QCDs can be made by IRA owners who are aged 70 1/2 or older. Many individuals who are required to take money from their IRA but do not need it for living expenses have chosen to make QCDs from their IRAs to support the work of the DCHS.

Priscilla Ross, a long-time DCHS member, says "I have made charitable contributions using my RMD for a number of years. Supporting certain non-profits every year, including DCHS, is very important to me. The added benefit of seeing those dollars reduce my taxable income is very valuable." This may make sense for you too! Your tax advisor can provide additional information on your particular situation.

How do I make a Qualified Charitable Distribution to the DCHS?

Each financial institution has its own process for initiating a qualified charitable distribution. Many retirement plan administrators require you to use their distribution forms and comply with other requirements, so follow your financial institution's forms and procedures to ensure you receive any potential tax benefits associated with this gift.

March History Pub: Tuesday, March 25

Diamonds in the Desert- Bend's Baseball History in a Few Innings

Presented by Vanessa Ivey, DHM Manager
Doors open at 6:00 p.m., Presentation at 7:00 p.m.

At the turn of the 20th century, baseball clubs were organizing across Central Oregon, including the city of Bend. Baseball in Bend has continued for over ten decades from town teams to farm teams, semi-professionals to collegiate up and comers. Vanessa Ivey, DCHS Museum Manager, shares stories of an earlier era when baseball wasn't just a favorite pastime, but a way to build commerce in communities. The *swat* of a wood bat rang true whether you were a Bend Beauty or a Bend Elk, and twirling and hurling wasn't just a county fair ride description.

As Deschutes Historical Museum's manager for the past fifteen years, **Vanessa Ivey** is in the best position to research one of her favorite passions: *BASEBALL!* Growing up in Banks, Oregon she nurtured her love of the game both as a player and a fan. She continued her game playing at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon where she earned a bachelor's degree in science. These days, she spends her summer in the outfield on a local softball team, and during January travels to Tampa, Florida to play baseball at the New York Yankees Women's Fantasy Camp.

***Reservations required, $5 per person*: www.mcmenamins.com**

Memorials

Ruth Burleigh

Laura Pinckney

Tributes

Ralph C. Curtis

Jean Rotter

DCHS Teams Up to Celebrate the Tower Theatre's 85th Anniversary with Historic Movies and Prices

Join this weeklong celebration of Central Oregon's iconic venue and re-experience eight cinematic blockbusters from each decade the Tower was an active movie theater. DCHS's own Kelly Cannon-Miller and Jared Rasic, movie critic for *The Source Weekly,* will provide an introduction and movie discussion each day.

Showtimes and Prices:

March 1 2:00 pm	**Creature from the Black Lagoon** *(1954; 80 minutes)*	*Tickets: 25 cents*
	Captain America Serial—Episode 2 *(1944; 16 minutes)*	
March 1 7:00 pm	**The Maltese Falcon** *(1941; 100 minutes)*	*Tickets: 50 cents*
March 2 2:00 pm	**Singin' in the Rain** *(1952; 103 minutes)*	*Tickets: $1.00*
March 2 7:00 pm	**North by Northwest** *(1959; 136 minutes)*	*Tickets: $1.50*
March 3 7:00 pm	**The Graduate** *(1967; 106 minutes)*	*Tickets: $2.00*
March 4 7:00 pm	**Planet of the Apes** *(1968; 112 minutes)*	*Tickets: $3.00*
March 5 7:00 pm	**Raiders of the Lost Ark** *(1981; 115 minutes)*	*Tickets: $4.00*
March 6 7:00 pm	**Forrest Gump** *(1994; 182 minutes)*	*Tickets: $5.00*

VISIT WWW.TOWERTHEATRE.ORG TO PURCHASE TICKETS

Mark Your Calendars

MARCH

1 **ANNUAL MEMBERS' LUNCHEON**
11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
Bend Elks Lodge: 63120 Boyd Acres Rd.

THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON & CAPTAIN AMERICA SERIAL-EPISODE 2
2:00 p.m.

THE MALTESE FALCON
7:00 p.m. The Tower Theatre: 835 NW Wall St. Bend

2 **SINGIN' IN THE RAIN**
2:00 p.m. The Tower Theatre: 835 NW Wall St. Bend

NORTH BY NORTHWEST
7:00 p.m. The Tower Theatre: 835 NW Wall St. Bend

3 **THE GRADUATE**
7:00 p.m. The Tower Theatre: 835 NW Wall St. Bend

4 **PLANET OF THE APES**
7:00 p.m. The Tower Theatre: 835 NW Wall St. Bend

5 **RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK**
7:00 p.m. The Tower Theatre: 835 NW Wall St. Bend

6 **FORREST GUMP**
7:00 p.m. The Tower Theatre: 835 NW Wall St. Bend

25 **HISTORY PUB: DIAMONDS IN THE DESERT**
Presented by Vanessa Ivey, DHM Manager
McMenamins Old St. Francis; 700 NW Bond St., Bend
Father Luke Room, 7:00 p.m., doors open at 6:00 p.m.
Reservations required, $5 per person

"Bend Oregon Base Ball Team Season 1917"