

# Benton County Genealogical Society

## NEWSLETTER

Located in Philomath, Oregon  
Founded in 1971 in Corvallis, Oregon

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<https://www.bcgs-oregon.org>



**Did your ancestors** have jobs with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the Great Depression? Or perhaps someone in your family took part in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

Those programs and others were part of the New Deal of the 1930's and the early 1940's. The February newsletter will be devoted to what we can find out about that era.

**Page 2** has an article that I wrote for the November 2017 newsletter about my grandfather and the WPA. Since then I've discovered other ancestors who were able to keep their families afloat during the Great Depression through federal work.

I hope you'll send in a **story or two** about an ancestor who was a part of this historical time. The stories I've found have been enlightening. I'm grateful that my ancestors survived.

You could also share anything you know about an ancestor's life during this time. **Pictures are great, too!**

Thanks  
Sue Van Laere, editor

### The Benton County Genealogical Society

**TYPICALLY** meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month, September-June. The business meeting begins at 10:00 a.m. at the Benton County Historical Society, 1101 Main St., Philomath. ADA parking and access are available at the rear of the building. The program begins at 10:30 a.m. Refreshments follow at the Museum Annex. Guests welcome!

### Getting Together

We hope to have our society together again at least by September 2021. Watch our BCGS Newsletter for further updates.



Let's all stay safe so we can enjoy each other's friendship again!

Source: [clipart-library.com](http://clipart-library.com)

For your peace of mind, Snoopy and Woodstock are at least wearing invisible masks!

# THE WPA AND MY GRANDFATHER

Shared by Sue Van Laere

I recently discovered that my grandfather, Harlan Winkler, had been employed by the WPA. This is why, every once in a while, you should look at your sources once again! On the 1940 census, Harlan's employment was listed as "WPA construction cement." I had always heard that he helped lay the brick streets in my home town of Lexington, Dawson County, Nebraska. This is probably true, but I think the bricks were put in place earlier in the 1900's. Now I want to find out what he was doing with the WPA that involved cement. Was it street work again or construction? I think my next step will be to contact the Nebraska State Library to see if the records for Dawson County are there or where to find them. Wish me luck.

Harlan was 62 years old in 1940, fairly old for hard labor. I know he had stopped farming and that 1940 was the first year that anyone received regular monthly Social Security payments. I plan to send for his Social Security application for benefits to see when he applied. I'm also curious about how he and my grandmother survived during hard times associated with the Depression.

If you're unfamiliar with all the jobs created by the New Deal, I'm including some **resources on page 3**. People did all kinds of research projects such as inventorying cemeteries, church records and county records. They also interviewed pioneers and wrote local histories. We have some of them in our library that I'll list in the February newsletter.



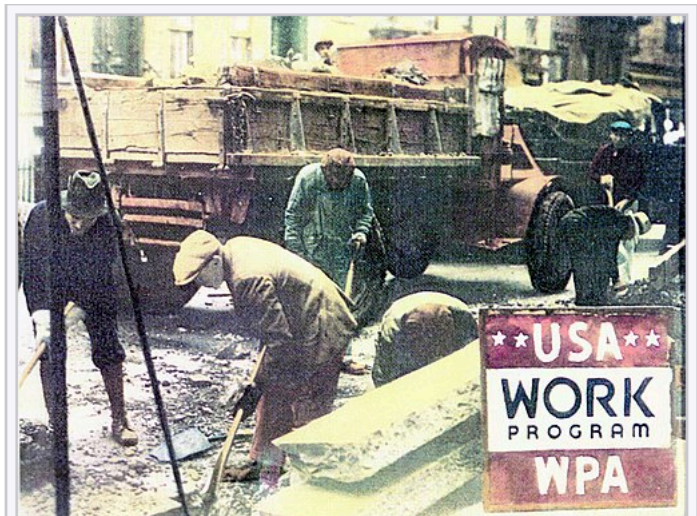
Harlan Winkler, Sue on the right with one of my cousins. ca 1946 Willows, California

## The Civilian Conservation Corps

The CCC was a New Deal program to help young people learn skills and have money to send home to help their families.

My father-in-law was in the Corps in 1934-35. It was one of the highlights of his life. He kept all his papers and many treasured photos.

August is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> row, 5<sup>th</sup> from left  
Las Posadas, California 1935



WPA employed 2 to 3 million unemployed at unskilled labor

# Looking Ahead to February's Newsletter

## The Great Depression 1930-1940

Several BCGS members have let me know they're interested in the New Deal of the 1930's. The WPA (Works Progress Administration) was part of the New Deal and had a huge and lasting influence on citizens' lives. Our lives too. If not for the New Deal with WPA jobs and other programs that were available to our ancestors, our families would probably be quite different.

Since I've been interested in this for a while, I went back through materials I have such as censuses, obituaries, letters and, recently, newspapers. I've found quite a bit about both sides of my family, especially the amount of difficult work they did to get by.

I hope you'll have some stories to tell. We'll print them in the February newsletter so you will have time to look through some of your materials. I know every time I go back and look at things again, I find something new that I already had but this time was ready to see it!

### Some websites that are full of information:

<https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/eras/>

This website is from Virginia Commonwealth University

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Works-Progress-Administration>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New-Deal>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian\\_Conservation\\_Corps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian_Conservation_Corps)

<https://lisalouisecooke.com/2017/04/wpa-records-for-genealogy>

**Just for fun, here are some questions about this era. How many answers do you know?**

- \* How many places in Oregon were built by one of the programs of the New Deal?
- \* Name the WPA worker in Benton County who did numerous surveys that we still use today. **Hint:** go to our website, click on Publications and you'll find his name.
- \* What was the name given to towns that quickly arose during the Great Depression? Who were they named for and why?

**\*Good News--Still Relevant! \***

**Roots Tech Connect 2021**, 15-27 February 2021, will be a FREE online Conference experience. You can register now at: [www.rootstech.org](http://www.rootstech.org).

The free annual **National Archives Virtual Genealogy Fair** is postponed until March 2021. However, you can see the free virtual programs for 2019 through 2013 online at <https://www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-fair> Many selected topics to choose from.

**HELP NEEDED**

**OPEN POSITIONS FOR ONE YEAR**

- Programs
- Library chair
- Membership
- Historian
- Photographer

**Any board member would be glad to give you the scoop!**

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**Appointed Positions**

**Membership:** OPEN

**Librarian:** OPEN

**Programs:** OPEN

**Historian:** OPEN

**Photographer:** OPEN

**Audit:** Connie Patterson

**Refreshments:** Pegge Gee

**Host:** Kathryn Moss

**Research:** Lois Courtney

**Book Sales:** Maridee Symons

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*Good-bye 2020. We have great hopes for 2021. So let's all take care of each other: masks and distance for a little while longer.*



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