



Benton County Genealogical Society

◆
MARCH 2026



March Madness



The month of March can be a busy time for many of us. Weather permitting, I will begin cleaning up my garden beds in preparation for spring planting. My husband and I will celebrate 47 years of marriage on St. Patrick’s Day. We look forward to spending time with our grandkids over spring break. And we will watch the March Madness basketball events, as long as the Beavers are playing!

March is also a time to celebrate National Genealogy Day on the second Saturday of the month. It is a day to encourage people to learn more about themselves by exploring the lives of their ancestors. This year, that will fall on March 14th, the same day as our general meeting and program about the Victor and Vina Moses family. (See the program flyer at the end of this newsletter.)

Along the same theme, the first full week of March is “Celebrate Your Name Week,” which includes various suggested activities for all of you budding “onomasticians” out there. Of particular interest to genealogists is how names have evolved over time, especially when researching historical records. ~ LJC



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February Program Recap



Special thanks to Jim Birken for presenting at our February meeting. A total of 32 people attended the Saturday program, "A Trip to Discover My Polish Roots." About 15 of them were visitors, which was a nice surprise. Jim described his fall trip, a cruise that ended in Krakow, and the extension he made on his own to Przemyśl (pronounced puh-**sheh**-muh-shl), a town in southeast Poland near the Ukrainian border. He described the company he worked with for research on his Jewish family roots in Poland.

During WWII most of the Jewish residents were executed or fled, so there were no continuing survivors living there. Jim was aided by a tour company that provided transportation, housing, and guide services. He was able to see at least one site where his grandmother's sisters lived as well as memorials in honor of those killed during the German occupation. ~ Lois Courtney

BCGS: 10 Years Ago



Left to Right, Top Row: Ellen Bartish, Mary Gallagher, Ron DeYoung, Susan Hayes, Dana Sanchez, Barbara Hays, Maridee Symons, Sandra Potter, Linda Olsen **

Middle Row: Lee Rudisill, Grace Maddux, Pegge Gee, Kathryn Moss, Mary Dean Snelling, Katie Ross, David Utt, George Davidson, Earle Greig, Dave Kribs, Linda Modrell & her granddaughter (white cap).

Bottom Row: Deloras Martin, Sue VanLaere, Lois Courtney, Linda West, Jane Mathews, Judy Juntunen, Leila Crawford, Connie Patterson, Elizabeth Williams holding daughter Anastasia, Ted Gump

** Fun fact: Linda Olsen was actually behind the camera. She later added herself to this photo, and no one was the wiser!

WikiTree.com “For Free, Forever”



About 7 years ago Linda and I joined Wikitree. And with the help of my cousin, we have put most of our collected genealogy records on WikiTree.

Wikitree is powered by a great many volunteers and you are offered help from the get-go. WikiTree volunteers seem to really enjoy helping new members.

Each person on WikiTree has a profile. Here is my Dad's profile, for example:

[wikitree.com/wiki/Olsen-5322](https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Olsen-5322)

Mine is at:

[wikitree.com/wiki/Olsen-5978](https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Olsen-5978)

I did not share very much. New people can show just their last name and minimal other info.

In the beginning, I was worried that other people could modify my profiles. They can, but first they must agree to the honor code. If changes or additions are made, I receive a notification and if necessary I can reverse those changes.

Go to [wikitree.com](https://www.wikitree.com) for more information or to sign-up. ~ Ron Olsen

Genealogical Forum of Oregon: Open House

The GFO open house is scheduled for March 15–21, 2026.

20 free classes will be available and most are online via Zoom. Pre-registration is required. See website for link to register.



The research room will be open every day throughout the event.

Library tours are on Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday afternoons.

Beginning research help -- five sessions available every day (with no fee) for individual help from our research assistants in the library. Sign up at the reception desk or request a session at info@gfo.org.

At the time this newsletter was written, the schedule of free events had not been posted. Please check the GFO website for updates.

[gfo.org/learn/open-house-2026-pre.html](https://www.gfo.org/learn/open-house-2026-pre.html)

Spotlight: Kathryn Moss

Our long-time Vice President, Kathryn Moss, is retiring. It is an excellent time to find out more about her genealogical journeys and involvement in BCGS.

Katherine grew up in a small rural area in Idaho called Swan Valley. Her father had several children from a previous marriage and after his first wife died, he married Kathryn's mother. They had more children so her family included siblings, and older half-siblings.



Her genealogical journey began at the urging of her husband Dale, a professor at OSU who had long been exploring his Moss family line. She was also inspired by an aunt with a passion for the subject. Thanks to the two of them, she began a journey about her mother's family line, the Kearsleys. One interesting story: Kathryn's aunt, who was not able to travel to England for her own research, hired a researcher to go over for her. Some years later Kathryn and Dale (after his retirement) spent 2 years in Salt Lake volunteering at the LDS library. Kathryn showed an expert there the book the researcher had prepared for her aunt. The expert said that sadly that researcher had been discredited as he often made up things, including lineages and documents. So Kathryn's task then was to sort the truth from the fiction. As part of that process she learned to read Old English handwriting and eventually had a reasonably accurate vision on those deep British roots.

Kathryn enjoys research, with all the avenues one can follow and the puzzles to be solved. She meets weekly with another friend who is also doing British-oriented family research. She relies a lot on probate records, which often contain a richer source of information, as well as parish records.

Many of us come to this ancestry passion later in life and regret conversations we didn't have with relatives who are gone. Kathryn said she regrets not talking to her older half-siblings about their origins, their mother and the area they all grew up in. Her nostalgia for that time, which sounds rich and idyllic, also included references to a little school house. She wonders about the story of that little school. She believes it is gone now, but had this stunning picture of it to show.

In her own life, Kathryn lives on a beautiful 5-acre retreat in a family home clearly designed to encourage company and conversations. She has 8 children and has been widowed for a number of years. She volunteers one morning a week at the local Family Search Center. It was a lovely visit with a wonderful woman. ~ Lois Courtney



Recognize any of these?

PEnnsylvania 6-5000

KLondike 5-####

MUrray Hill 5-9975



I recently discovered the 1958 Good Samaritan Hospital bill my mother had kept as a “souvenir” after I was born. Aside from the reverse sticker shock I experienced while reading it (total \$175 for 6 days), it showed my parents’ home phone number using the old 2 letters + 5 numbers: HU 6-4152. I had no idea what the HU stood for but I do love a good mystery, so....



Benton County Exchange Codes		
Location	Exchange Letters/Word	Dialed Numbers
Alpine	MONroe	66
Alsea	HUNter	48
Bellfountain	GARfield	42
Blodgett	GLobe	45
Corvallis	PLaza	75
Kings Valley	HOMestead	46
Lobster Valley	HUdson	48
Monroe	THornwall	84
Philomath	WAverly	92
Summit	GLendale	45

An extensive scan of Gazette Times archives on Newspapers.com (the 1950's “want ads” sections were most helpful) finally revealed the code for Lobster Valley (HUdson) as well as other communities in Benton County.

There is a national list of recommended exchange words (look for “telephone exchange names” on Wikipedia), but who decided which community would get each word? (And why didn’t Monroe get MONroe?) By sometime in the 1960's, the words disappeared and only the numbers remained. Too bad. Those old letter-number combinations might make great passwords!

Side note: Have you seen the newly transformed gathering spot in downtown Corvallis at 4th and Madison, site of the old JC Penney building built in 1955? It is called “The Plaza.” ...Coincidence? ~ LJC

PEnnsylvania 6-5000 is an old telephone number from New York City. It was immortalized in song by Glenn Miller in 1940.

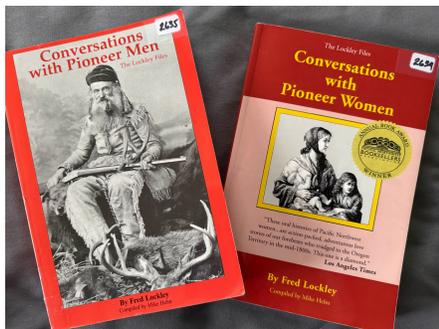
MUrray Hill 5-9975 was one of the fictional phone numbers used on the “I Love Lucy” show.

KLondike 5-####, where the #'s represent any numerals, was often used in old movies, plays, etc. 555- was not assigned to any location so it was a safe number to use in fictional settings.

The Lockley Files

Fred Lockley (1871–1958) worked for several newspapers across the country before joining the Oregon Journal around 1911. It was here that he earned his nickname, “The Journal Man.” Over his lifetime, he interviewed both the famous (e.g., Thomas Edison, Harry Houdini, Count Tolstoy) and the everyday pioneers of the early 20th century.

Following Lockley's passing, Oregon-born author Mike Helm compiled and published selections from Lockley's vast collection of notebooks. The resulting books (such as “Conversations with Pioneer Men” and “Conversations with Pioneer Women”) now serve as essential primary sources for the history of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest.



Our BCGS library includes both these books. They are packed with oral histories of those who survived the 2,000-mile trip across the plains to Oregon. While Hollywood movies often dramatize parts of their journeys, the harsh reality of their stories can make for some pretty haunting reading.

One early Oregon pioneer woman who survived the cross-country ordeal was not included in “Conversations with Pioneer Women.” Sadly, she died shortly after arriving in Oregon from Kentucky. At only 38 years old, Anna Hughart became the first known female immigrant to die in Benton County. She is buried alongside her husband, Joseph, in Locke Cemetery, just off Lewisburg Avenue north of Corvallis.



Oregon Drone Adventures created a compelling video about Anna's journey:

“She Survived the Oregon Trail – Then Lost Everything.” You can find it on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wq977sM9R6M>

The videographers consulted the Lockley Files to help identify the many challenges faced by the immigrants and the wagon train masters. Wagon trains sometimes had executive councils, an elected captain, and even their own constitution. Bylaws were created to keep order while travelling through the “lawless West.” Some of the bylaws included the following:

- Anyone guilty of willful murder shall be punished by death and shall not be forced into trial before three days.
- Anyone guilty of manslaughter shall be delivered to the authorities in Oregon.
- Any one guilty of Rape or attempt at it shall receive thirty nine lashes for three successive days.
- Any one guilty of open adultery, or fornication shall receive 39 lashes on their bare back.
- Any one guilty of Larceny shall be fined double the amount, and receive 39 lashes on his bare back.
- Any one guilty of indecent language shall be fined at the discretion of the Ex. Counsel.
- Every Dog found running about Camp at large shall be shot at the discretion of the Capt.

<https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/concern/defaults/12579t43z>

A Brief History of Benton County

Reprinted with the permission of the Special Collections and Archives Research Center (SCARC), Oregon State University. Sources consulted are hyperlinked throughout the text.

The lands comprising Benton County, Oregon are the home of the Kalapuya people. Comprised of over a dozen independent groups speaking “mutually intelligible dialects,” the Kalapuya occupied the Willamette Valley in present-day Oregon; the Chepenefa band of the Kalapuya people lived along the Marys River watershed.

It's estimated that, at their height, the Kalapuya bands comprised more than 15,000 individuals. As Europeans moved west and began to settle in indigenous lands in ever-increasing numbers, however, the introduction of European diseases such as small pox and malaria decimated the population; by 1849, there were fewer than 600 Kalapuya people living in the central Willamette Valley. In September 1850, the passage of the Donation Land Claim Act – a precursor to the Homestead Act of 1862 – granted 320 acres of land, “free of charge, to every unmarried white male citizen eighteen or older, and 640 acres to every married couple arriving in the Oregon Territory before December 1, 1850.” The act brought thousands of white settlers to Oregon; nearly 7,500 land claims were filed before the law expired in 1855. The Treaty with the Kalapuya, signed between the United States government, and the people of the Kalapuya, Molala, Clackamas, and Tumwater in Dayton, Oregon in January 1855, ceded all lands in the Willamette Valley to the U.S. Between late 1855 and 1856, those Kalapuyan peoples remaining in the Willamette Valley were forcibly removed to a number of reservations, with the majority being forced onto lands which would eventually become the Grand Ronde Reservation. Descendants of the Kalapuya people are part of the federally-recognized Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon.

Named for Democratic Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, Benton County was formed December 23, 1847 by an act of the Provisional Legislature of Oregon. At its founding, Benton County stretched from the southern border of Polk County to the [northern] California border and from the Willamette River west to the Pacific Ocean, a total of 18,660 square miles. Benton County was later subdivided to form – either wholly or in part – the short-lived Umpqua County (1851), Lane County (1851), Douglas County (1852; from Umpqua), Jackson County (1852; from Umpqua), Coos County (1853; from Umpqua and Jackson), Curry County (1855; from Coos), Josephine County (1856; from Jackson); and Lincoln County (1893; from Benton and Polk).

In 1851, Marysville – which may have been named due to its proximity to Mary's Peak – was named county seat of Benton County; two years later, on December 20, 1853, Marysville became Corvallis by virtue of legislation passed by the 5th Oregon Territorial Legislature. Three years later, in 1854, the first county courthouse was erected. Though extensively renovated in 1976, Corvallis's current courthouse, built in 1889, is the oldest in Oregon still in use as a courthouse.

Sanborn Maps

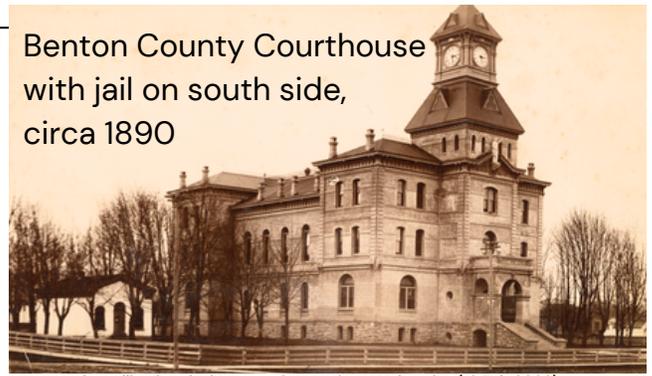
Sanborn insurance maps provide a fascinating glimpse into the location, size, and construction details of city businesses between roughly 1867–1950. Best of all, these high-resolution maps are accessible for free on the Library of Congress website. Of the roughly 12,000 North American cities and towns represented in the collection, only Corvallis is included for Benton County, with five map collections ranging from 1884 to 1912.

The maps sometimes identified a specific business name (especially larger buildings), but usually recorded the general type of business for each building, such as "Notions", "Barber" or "Blacksmith." Buildings were color-coded by construction type, and included notations related to fire hazard, number of stories high, and number of windows.

If one of your ancestors worked at or owned a city-based business somewhere in North America, this might be one way for you to visualize what their neighborhood looked like in the late 19th or early 20th century.

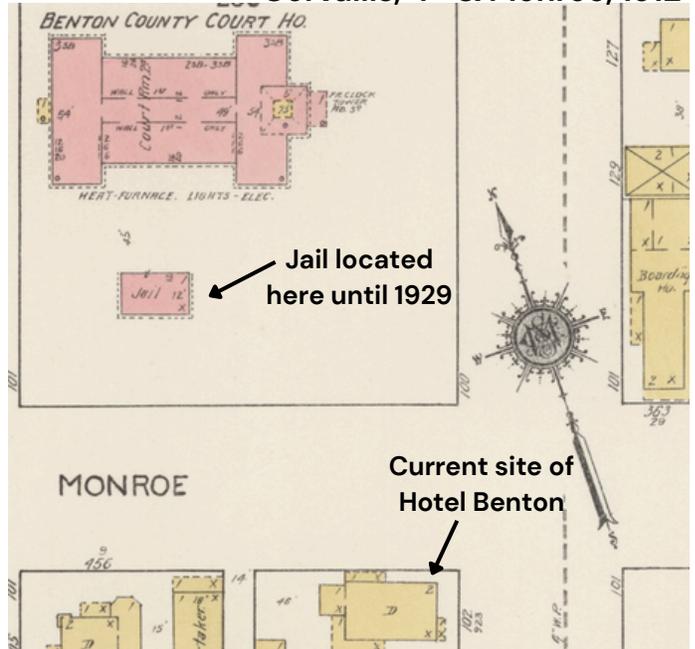
loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/

Benton County Courthouse with jail on south side, circa 1890



Corvallis Historical Images, Oregon State University. (16 Feb 2026). Benton County Courthouse, circa 1890 Retrieved from <https://oregondigital.org/concern/images/df71xj934>

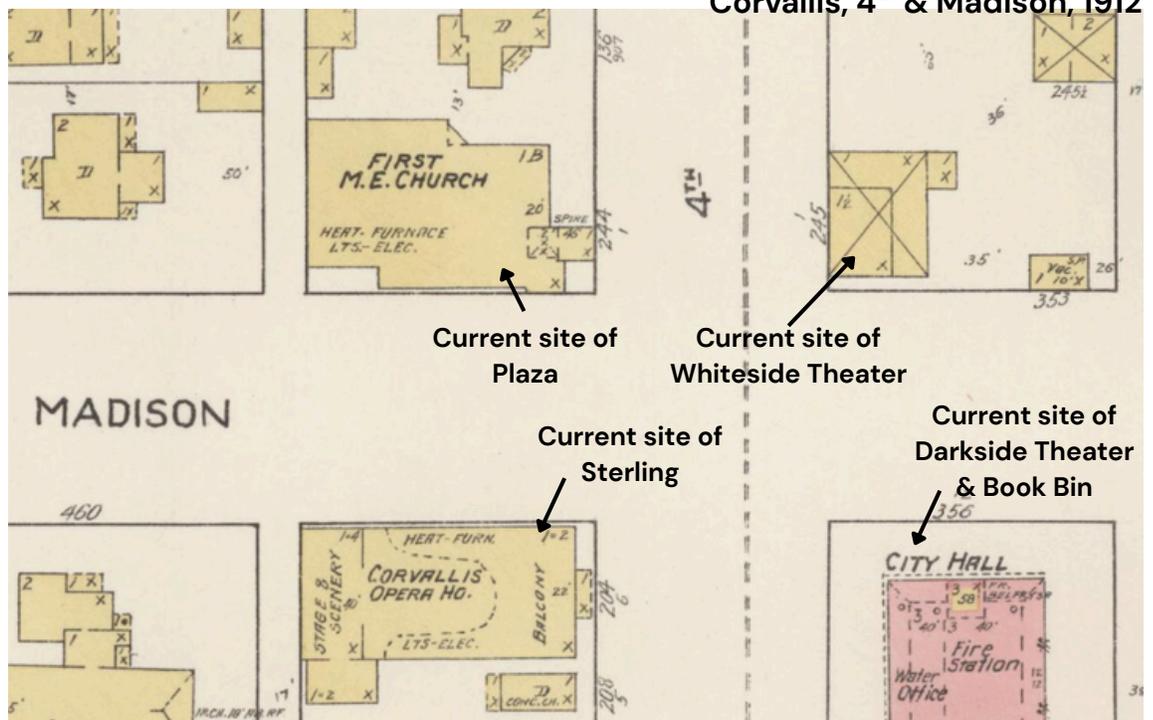
Corvallis, 4th & Monroe, 1912



Jail located here until 1929

Current site of Hotel Benton

Corvallis, 4th & Madison, 1912



Pinkish-red represents brick or tile construction

Yellow-gold represents frame or wood structures

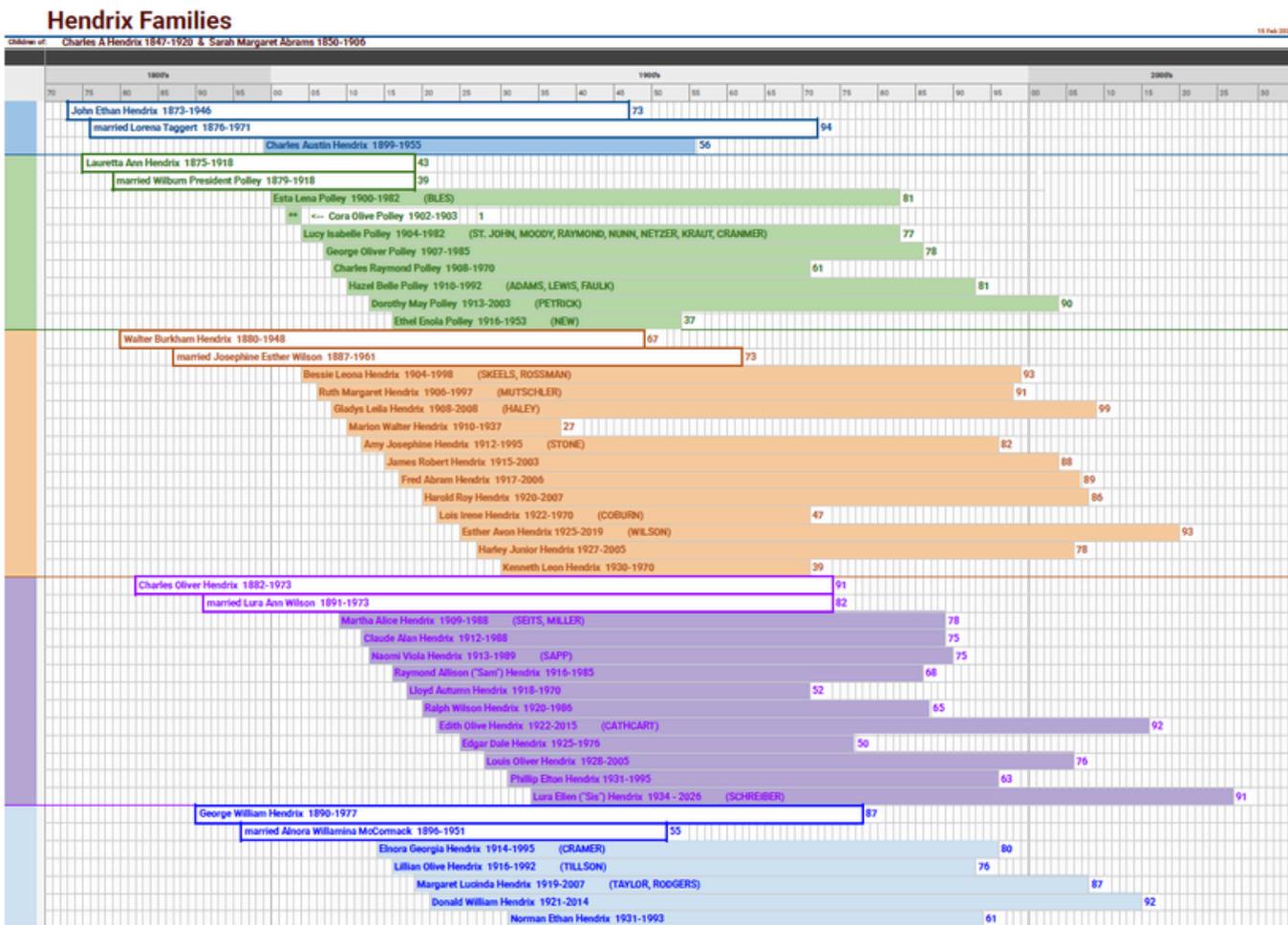
Visualizing Large Families with a Gantt Chart

Is your family tree deep or wide? My husband's side of our tree is deep with some branches extending back to the 1500's. I've chosen to make my side wide, mostly confined to the 1800's and forward, and includes siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins. My mother came from a family of 12 children, and she had 25 first cousins on her father's side alone. 11 of those 25 were double cousins. Many of them grew up close to each other so they often felt like siblings.

It is nearly impossible to use the vertical tree view to show extended family branches without shrinking it down to an unreadable size. A Descendancy chart lists all of these relatives in plain text form, but it is hard to see who was alive at the same time in any given year. Gantt charts create a nice visual arrangement and help those of us who descended from these large families to better understand how we are related to each other.

In the future, I may add historical events (WWI and WWII) to this chart. For now, I use it as a quick reference to show individual timelines and how they overlapped. ~ LJC

This chart was created using Google Sheets.



We need you!

The VP position is still open. Please consider ways you can be involved. Ask an officer if you have any questions about the appointed positions.

*** REMINDERS ***

Annual \$20 membership fees were due in January. If you have not yet paid your dues, see payment options:
<https://www.bcgs-oregon.org/membership>

Not yet a member?
See our website for how to join.



Thank you for supporting the Benton County Genealogical Society

Officers

Dana Sanchez, President

<**vacant**>, Vice President

Lois Courtney, Treasurer

Linda Olsen, Secretary

Appointed Positions

Membership: **Candy Koetz**

Programs: *** OPEN ***

Librarian: **Liza Wilson**

Audit: *** OPEN ***

Refreshments: **Pegge Gee**

Host: **Kathryn Moss**

Research: **Lois Courtney**

Book Sales: *** OPEN ***

Website: **George Davidson**

Facebook: **Payton James-Amberg**

Publicity: *** OPEN ***

Library Volunteers: **Lois Courtney**

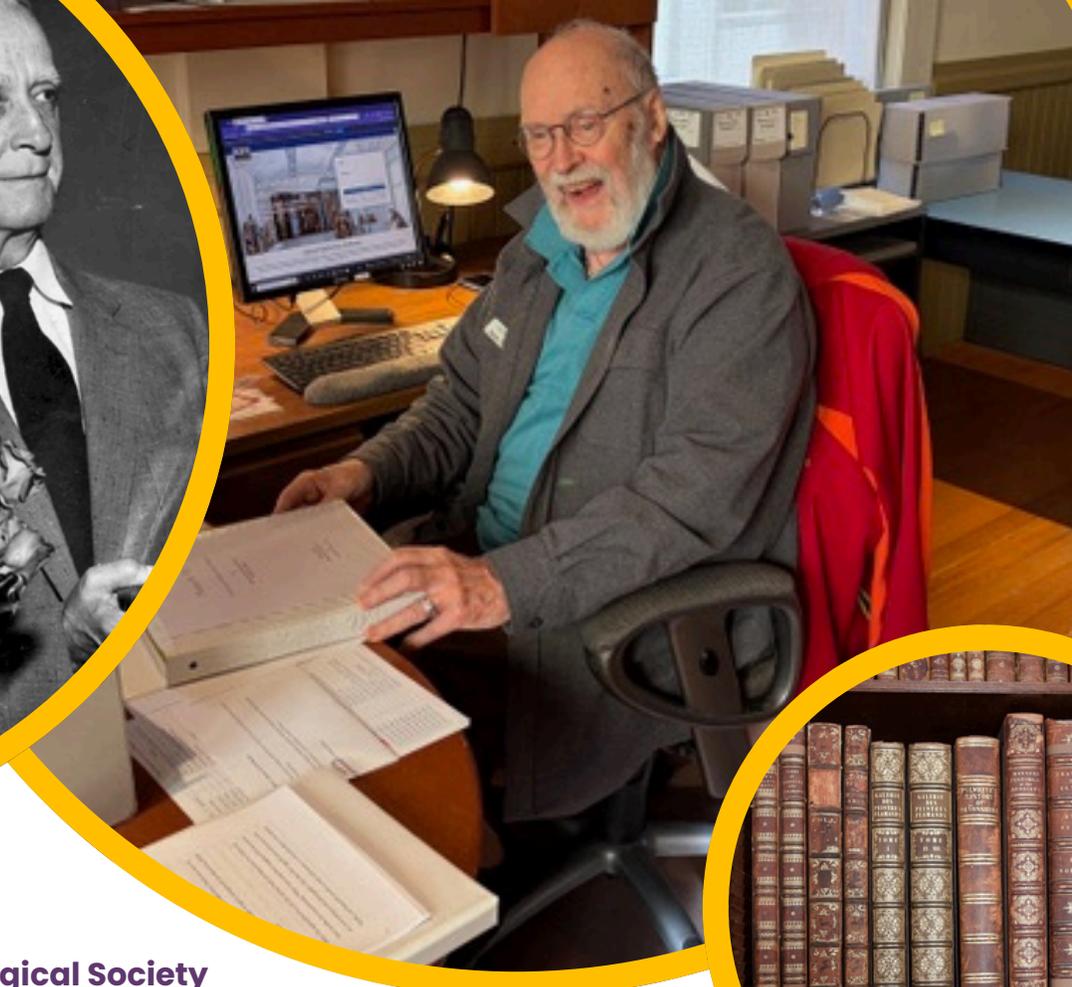
Newsletter: **Laurie Corliss**

BCGSOR@GMAIL.COM

[BCGS-OREGON.ORG](https://www.bcgs-oregon.org)

Benton County Genealogical Society
PO Box 35
Philomath, OR 97370

Meetings are held
on the second floor at the
Benton County Historical Museum
1101 Main St
Philomath, OR 97370



**Benton County Genealogical Society
presents**

MOSES & ME

Moses Family Papers at the Benton County Historical Society

While you may know the name of Vina Moses, do you know anything about the family into which she married? With *Moses & Me*, Walter Frankel will show the depth of the BCHS's documentary collections to tell the Moses story, simultaneously sharing what one volunteer has done over twenty-five years.

Mr. Frankel is a volunteer with the Benton County Historical Society. He is also a member of the Benton County Cultural Coalition Board and the Oregon Cultural Trust Board. Before retiring in 2000, he enjoyed a distinguished 37-year career as a librarian, beginning in New York and ending in Corvallis.

**Saturday March 14th
11:00 am - Noon
FREE**

On the second floor at the
Philomath Museum, 1101 Main St.

A wheelchair ramp is located at the northeast corner of the building.
Please do not bring food or drinks into the museum.