

Summary of Star History Committee Planning, December 6, 2022

From Lynn Davis, History Committee Member

The Star History Committee has been talking with the owner of the Grange building near State Street and Highway 16 about getting the building to move it to a favorable site for Star's future history museum.

In planning for the museum, the Committee has seen the need to do an oral history exhibit of 12-15 seniors to capture their memories of early Star while they still have good health. We are also trying to get the exhibit done in time to be a field trip next summer when Liz Hobson, head of the Idaho State Historical Society and Idaho State Museum, hosts the annual national conference of the Association for State and Local History. Our exhibit will be portable for easy set-up, take down, storage, and travel when needed by Star government. The field trip will also include a walking tour of Star. Liz is a huge help in steering us to various resources.

Last spring we did the first oral history of Jane Raynor, one of the oldest residents of Star. We are engaging a professional historian Dean Hagerman, recommended to us by the head of Boise State University's history department, to interview the others on the list. Dean does not have the equipment necessary for easy transfer of the interview files to exhibit equipment, so we are now exploring the exhibit production end of the project to easily and cost efficiently merge the interviews with software and hardware.

In addition to Jane Raynor, the citizens we would like to interview are:

1. Mary Kolsky
2. Marq Ross
- 3/4 Jack and Betha Foster
5. Herb Quenzer
- 6/7 Kay and Bud Helmick
- 8/9 Jak and Butch Kirtley
- 10 Jane Raynor (already done)
- 11 Gary Ohlson
- 12 Delbert "Dell" Stephens – Star Quarter Horse Ranch

We have asked Meredith Hudson if she would post on the Star website if anyone had a suggestion for our interview list of long time Star residents. We will limit our list to 15 because it is looking like our end product will be a professional 10-minute video meshing all the interviews.

Liz Hobson gave us a list of companies that video interviews and that produce exhibits. Research has narrowed down the vendor options.

December 6, Committee members Mayor Trevor Chadwick, Lynn Davis, Meredith Hudson, Jacob Qualls, and Chip Sitton met with Mary Johnson, owner of Catapult3, a comprehensive exhibit producer in the Treasure Valley, and one of her designers, Neal Christian, to brainstorm and see first-hand some of the software and hardware available for exhibits. Neal will return Thursday,

Dec. 6, 6 p.m., to our monthly History Committee meeting to show some designs that could work for us. The company estimates the exhibit structures would cost around \$2500.

Last week Lynn interviewed Brandan Fisher of Fish Dawg Productions, which specializes in producing video interviews. They seem to have the equipment we need and their creative work is stunning. They have worked with Catapult3 in the past.

In brainstorming with Brandan, he suggested we consider using a QR code on the side panels that people could download on their phones. His creative team would work with Dean and videotape the interviews and weave them into a 10-minute (a time that is short enough for people to stay engaged) video. His team would video the interviews as Dean conducts them. Dean himself would open the exhibit video with his own words about Star's history. To be cost effective, the team would do 4 interviews a day at an appropriate indoor or outdoor site that gives context to the person. There would be two videographers. It takes 2 hours from set up to take down. Brandan is estimating the cost at \$5000 each day of videotaping. To help keep costs contained, I told Brandan as a professional editor I could help them with the editing.

By preplanning the entire project on the front end, we can be budget wise. It is looking like we should keep our equipment simple. Instead of 12-15 separate video stations and accompanying printed whole interview texts, we should create a 10 minute oral history video that weaves all the interviews into one. Side panel displays would carry the printed texts with photos. At the December monthly History Committee meeting, Neal will also present some other designs to consider, including 2-sided pop-ups. Catapult suggested that Star might want a stand to put printed materials on next to the video monitor. The retractable pop-ups are light weight and easy to manage. The pop-up size would probably be 7 feet tall, 30 inches wide; three pop-ups would spread out about 9 feet.

Jacob said it would be nice to rollout the exhibit at Star's Fourth of July Parade. Catapult said they carried tents for outside use of exhibits. Catapult can duplicate exhibits within a 3-4 week period if more copies were needed. As a comprehensive producer of exhibits, Catapult said they had routers and laser cutting capabilities. They have done the exhibits for Idaho's Capitol.

The goal is to have a professional unified look, using equipment that works together, for exhibits that are easy to operate and maintain, and in some cases easy to transport and set up when and where needed. As noted above by Catapult, hardware -- the equipment to stage the exhibit (video and pop-up screen), and the side panels containing the printed interview -- may run about \$2500. We are looking at total exhibit production costs to be under \$50,000, which is not out of line with typical costs. This exhibit will have a long-term life so it is important it be professional. We could look for sponsors to underwrite costs, and we would acknowledge such sponsors in the video trailer.

When Dean said he did not have the equipment to make the oral history transfer seamless, we realized we needed to complete a plan of start to finish so we can be efficient budget wise, so we don't have to back track and spend funds unnecessarily.

At Thursday's upcoming monthly History Committee Meeting we can present these details of our vendor research to decide what we should do regarding the oral history exhibit.

After Dean Hagerman completes the interviews, we would like to work on an exhibit of the area's old barns before they are all gone, since Star was a farm town. Jacob suggested other future themes would be to interview all of Star's living mayors and also do a video on the legendary family ranches, such as Jerry Gage, Mike Moyle, and Phillip Stillwater (spelling?).

We would also like for Dean to research how the Oregon Trail seasonally used a trail through Star. Mayor Chadwick said that the pioneers made Star a crossroads, from which the families split off to continue in various directions. The Mayor also noted that December 14, 2022, marks the 25th year of Star being incorporated as a city – December 10, 1997.

The Mayor asked the Committee to keep a spreadsheet of costs. He would ask City Council to approve the needed budget and if we do get sponsors, we will reimburse the city budget. Per the Mayor, we have an email understanding with historian Dean Hagerman, who will do the history research for our exhibits.

The Long Term Picture (with the History Committee in an advisory capacity)

To get a building and site prepared for the History Museum and a fundraising program up and running, an experienced person should be hired. This might mean creating a History Foundation, a project that needs more research. We don't want to make things more complicated than they need to be. We need to keep things as simple as possible. In due time, there will be a need for an executive director/manager of the History Museum.

There is a need to have an historian do research and write a history of Star that could be printed and sold to the public at the History Museum and elsewhere. This could take 1-3 years from past experience. From the history box of Star archives at the Star Library, it appears that key elements to Star's past include the irrigation development, early mining, farming, residence of Idaho's best known artist James Castle, the Oregon Trail seasonal use, and the Boise River.