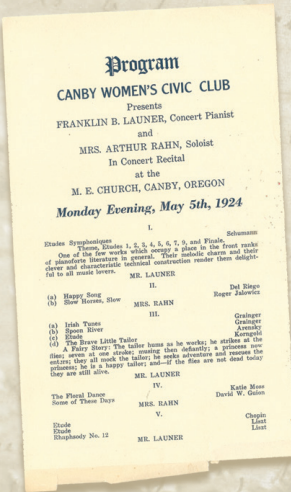


## Introduction

Women shaped and reshaped the cultural, social, economic, and political fabric of Canby as it evolved from a collection of farms in the 1880s into a thriving community in the 20th century. On occasion, they broke gender norms to instigate change. More often, they embraced traditional roles to improve the circumstances of their community. In most cases, their efforts received limited recognition and/or went unrecorded. The nine women on this trail are representative of the hundreds of women who played a significant role in making Canby a better place.

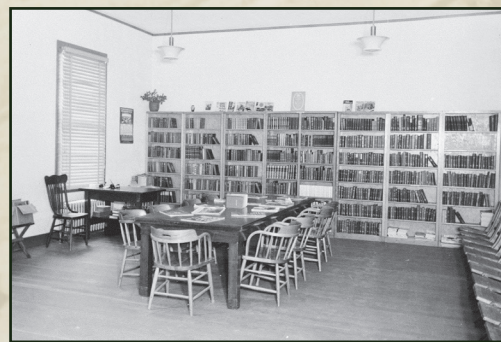
## The Canby Women's Civic Club

For decades, the members of the Canby Women's Civic Club (CWCC) campaigned for improvements and drove change in their town. At their first meeting on January 30, 1924, a small group met, voted for officers, and directed the secretary to send a notice inviting "All ladies interested in a better community" to join the organization. The response was impressive: 120 women paid dues and became charter members. The results of four decades of their efforts are still evident across Canby's landscape. The city's library exists because of the persistence of CWCC members. The campaign to establish a community swim center succeeded in part because of their support. The group's legacy includes Canby's street names and the tradition of permanent and seasonal plantings of trees, shrubs, and flowers in public spaces. As part of their dedication to community improvement, the club provided assistance to families in need, donated equipment to Canby schools, and sponsored annual city clean-ups. Their initiatives touched every aspect of the community and left an indelible mark.



## The Canby Public Library

The women of Canby have supported the concept of a public library since 1875 when Anna Lee and Catherine Wait gathered books and delivered them to the newly constructed school house. In the 1880s, Cynthia Hosford maintained a small public library in her family's store. Over the next 30 years, a make-shift collection of books moved from one business to another. In 1925, the CWCC committed their organization to supporting a library, first in the 1901 city hall, then at their clubhouse. In 1935, working with other community organizations, the CWCC voted to find a permanent home for a library and received funding from a New Deal program to pay the salary of a librarian. Portia Shewey and two other women went door-to-door, collecting books and funds. Despite resistance from some on the city council, Shewey convinced the group to establish a library in the new city hall council chamber. They instituted a library board and named Shewey to that body, where she served until her death in 1953.



Canby Library/City Council Chamber, circa 1950

Charles & Portia Shewey



# BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY

## The Canby Women's Heritage Trail

A SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR



The Canby Women's Civic Club at their Annual Picnic, 1933

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

- SOURCES:**  
The Canby Depot Museum's archival material, including Myra Weston's research and written accounts of Canby's history. The Museum of the Oregon Territory archival collection.
- RESEARCH:**  
Nora Clark, Carol Palmer, Peggy Sigler, Tama Tochihara, Liz Carter.
- CONSULTING:**  
Peggy Sigler, Beth Saul, Nora Clark, and Janet Dilg and Kimberly Jensen of Oregon Women's History Consortium
- GRAPHIC DESIGN:**  
Gina Hutchinson
- EDITING:**  
Kelly Harms
- WRITING:**  
Carol Palmer
- TRANSLATION:**  
Passport to Languages
- Photographs courtesy of The Canby Historical Society, the Jones Family of Michigan (Portia Shewey photograph).

presented by  
**The City of Canby's Heritage and Landmark Commission**

- Doug Birkeland      Carol Palmer  
Tony Crawford      Rowena Price  
Kelly Harms      John Serlet  
Pam Judy  
Greg Parker, City Council Liaison  
Jamie Stickel, City Staff Liaison

The activity that is the subject of this publication has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

This publication has been funded with the assistance of a matching grant-in-aid from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

For more information or to download, visit  
[www.canbyoregon.gov](http://www.canbyoregon.gov)





Triangle Park; Inset: Laura Thompson  
(4th from the left)

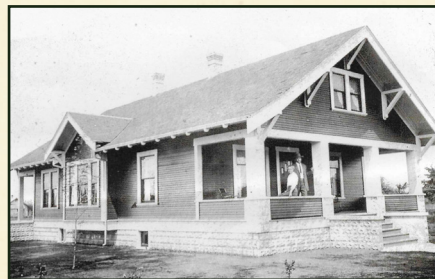
**1 Laura Thompson** moved to Canby in 1920 and, with her husband, established and managed Fir Lane Poultry Farm. She was on the Canby School District Board, serving as its chairperson in 1932. Thompson volunteered for many years as the Poultry Department Supervisor at the county fair. She served on the Canby United Methodist Church Board of Trustees and maintained its history. In 1930, she organized Canby's first Camp Fire Girls group and remained active in the organization, locally and regionally, for decades. The Wait family recognized her dedication to the organization with the donation of Triangle Park for the group's use; Thompson made it the focal point of the Canby Camp Fire experience.

Triangle Park | Knightsbridge & Holly St



Hazel Vinyard, 1914

**2 Hazel Phillips Vinyard** oversaw the mobilization of Canby women during World War II to replace men going into the armed forces. Active in the Canby Women's Civic Club, she held office many times. While serving as its last president, she convinced members to donate \$2,000 to support the construction of a community pool, ensuring the success of that initiative. Vinyard also served the community as a member of Canby United Methodist Church, Laurel Eastern Star, Kirk Rebekah Lodge, and the Maplewood Grange.



Phillips/Vinyard Home in 1912

Phillips/Vinyard Home  
290 NW 5th Ave



Bertha Knight Lee,  
1905

**3 Bertha Knight Lee** was an active community volunteer as a member of the Canby Women's Civic Club, Laurel Eastern Star, and Kirk Rebekah Lodge. Lee channeled most of her efforts into supporting the Canby United Methodist Church: arranging flowers, preparing meals, working on bazaars, recording its history, and teaching Sunday school.

1912 Canby United Methodist Church | 1522 NW 2nd Avenue



Methodist Church, 1912



Laura Knight Bair

**4 Laura Knight Bair** led Canby's Red Cross Chapter during World War I, working in support of troops and civilians in Europe. She served as treasurer of the Canby Women's Civic Club for decades and was instrumental in its tree planting initiative. As an active member of the Canby United Methodist Church, she served on its committees and volunteered for community projects. Bair also opened her home to community events, such as graduation parties and anniversary celebrations.

Bair House | 375 NW 3rd Ave



Bair House



Ida B. Knight (2nd from the left) and  
the Canby Post Office crew, 1935

**6 Ida B. Knight** managed Canby's mail operations from 1910 to 1935 as the assistant postmaster. Knight also served as clerk for the Canby School District for 33 years, was one of the first women appointed to the Clackamas County Board of Health, and volunteered at the county fair as the "domestic science department supervisor". An original member of the Canby Women's Civic Club, she served as the group's secretary for many years.

Arestad Building | 121 N Grant St

**5 Myra Adcock Weston** and her husband purchased the Canby Herald in 1947. Weston worked as reporter, editor, and columnist while her husband ran the print operation. Her passion for reporting led to her dedication to collecting and recording stories of Canby's history. Weston also served as secretary of the Chamber of Commerce from 1971 to 1981 and for several years as the city treasurer. She led community drives to fund uniforms for the Canby High School Band, to refloat the Canby Ferry in 1953, and to change the city's tax base in 1966.

Canby Herald Building | 241 N Grant St

Myra Weston with telephone directories  
printed by the Canby Herald, 1959



Elsie and Glenn  
Cutsforth, circa 1937

**7 Elsie Egli Cutsforth's** long list of local and state awards for civic and business achievements speaks volumes about her impact on Canby. In partnership with her husband, she grew a small meat market into a successful grocery store. Not content to focus only on business, Cutsforth served on the Canby's Planning Commission for 27 years. As a member of the Chamber of Commerce, Business and Professional Women's Club, Laurel Eastern Star, and the Canby Athletic Booster Club she worked with others to support the community. On a personal level, the assistance she provided to those in the community ranged from supplying holiday meals for the elderly to opening her home to people in need.



Interior of Cutsforth Store,  
1953

1937 Cutsforth's Building | 248-266 NW 1st Ave



Elizabeth "Lizzie"  
White, 1935

**8 Elizabeth White** made her mark in Canby as a businesswoman at G. H. White Garage. She and her husband converted their livery stable into an automobile business in the 1910s, constructing a new building on 99E in 1921. White did everything from pumping gas to ordering supplies, selling parts, and maintaining the books. As a founding member of the Canby Women's Civic Club, and the club's president

for decades, she oversaw the group's ambitious community improvement agenda. During both world wars, White volunteered with Canby's Red Cross.

G.H. White Garage | 103 SW 1st Ave



White's Garage, 1935

**9 Bertha Dedman** holds the distinction of being Canby's first woman mayor, serving from 1957 to 1959, when the city council was grappling with rapid growth. Under her leadership, the city initiated infrastructure improvement projects and constructed additional office space in the city hall basement. Dedman's contributions extended beyond city governance. She taught elementary students in Canby and managed Dedman's Drug Store after her husband's death. As an active member of the Business and Professional Women's Club and the Canby Women's Civic Club she worked with other women to better their community.

Holly Street City Hall  
182 N. Holly St



Holly Street City Hall,  
circa 1945

OUR MOTTO  
"Duty makes us do things  
well, but love makes us do it  
beautifully. Gospel Hymns #6.  
-Phillips Brooks.

Bertha Dedman