

‘Curtis Fever’ sweeps the High Desert

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Over a century ago, a well-known studio photographer from Seattle named Edward S. Curtis undertook a project of monumental proportion and importance. He set out to capture the world of the Native Americans west of the Mississippi River, including British Columbia and Alaska, before their way of life changed forever.

Curtis was 32 years old with a family and a successful portrait photography business when, in the summer of 1900, he encountered American Indian culture relatively untouched by contact with the “white man’s” world. This watershed experience changed the direction and purpose of his life as he determined to document the everyday life of Native Americans, which was beginning to seriously decline.

In order to accomplish this herculean task, he needed financing and people to help pack in all of his equipment, including his 60-pound Century-brand camera and glass plates on which the images would be captured. J.P. Morgan agreed to provide financing for the expeditions as long as Curtis agreed

to produce outstanding books containing his photographs and text.

The story of Curtis’s odyssey and the resultant 20-volume set of books, titled “The North American Indian,” are the subject of “Curtis Fever” — coordinated talks, film showings, a poetry reading, author presentations, and exhibits of Curtis’s photographs occurring throughout Central Oregon through the end of October.

What Curtis expected to take five to seven years to complete spanned a quarter of a century. It cost him his family, his health, and his financial security. Measured in today’s dollars, it cost \$35 million to complete the project. A complete set of the rare 20 volumes today would sell for over a million dollars. A number of the complete sets are in private and public collections in the U.S. and Europe. One is in the vault of the High Desert Museum.

The full set contained more than 2,200 original photographs, printed in photogravure, and nearly 4,000 pages of anthropological text including transcriptions of language and music. There were also supplemental bound portfolios, each containing 36 oversize gravures

on 18x22-inch etching stock.

Over the last several decades there has been a surge of interest in Curtis the man, and his work. What started out in Bend as a collector wanting to offer for sale some original Curtis prints through Atelier 6000, has become a two-month-long exploration and celebration of this unique individual and his invaluable contribution to the fields of anthropology and ethnography.

The High Desert Museum has on display its complete set of the “The North American Indian.” They also have an exhibit of prints that depict tribes from the Oregon high desert region.

The museum will also present “In the Land of the Head Hunters,” Curtis’s feature-length, silent film made in 1914 to showcase the Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island. The restored film includes a rendition of the original orchestral score that Curtis commissioned from John J. Braham. The film will be shown October 19 at 7 p.m. It is necessary to RSVP to 541-382-4754.

A6 Studio and Gallery has a two-month exhibit of

more than 50 of Curtis’ original photogravures, offering intimate views of daily life among our region’s native peoples at the turn of the century. Every Saturday through October, at 4 p.m., A6 will offer guided exhibit tours for \$6. Self-guided tours are free and available every day.

Bendfilm will offer two showings of the 2000 Sundance documentary “Coming to Light: Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indians,” one at Tim Pan Theater on September 28 and another at the Madras Performing Arts Center on October 3. The film tells the story of the life of Edward Curtis, the creation of his monumental work, and his changing views of the people he set out to document. Descendants of Curtis’s subjects tell stories about their ancestors in the photographs and share their own perspectives.

The Deschutes Public Library Foundation presents Author! Author! with Timothy Egan, the Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter and National Book Award-winning author of seven books, including “Short

Nights of the Shadow-Catcher — The Epic Life and Immortal Photographs of Edward Curtis.” Egan will appear on October 1 at 7 p.m. at Bend High School. Admission is \$25 and tickets are available at www.dplfoundation.org.

Two other presentations at the downtown Bend library include Justine Lowry’s look at “Edward Curtis Through Native Eyes” on October 7 at 6 p.m. Lowry is part-time faculty and professor of Native American Art History. She will explore contemporary Native American artistic responses to Curtis’s photographic works.

Second Sunday at the Bend library on October 11 at 2 p.m., will feature Elizabeth Woody, a member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, who will read from her work. Her poetry reflects her close ties with her family, the natural world, and her people, who she portrays with humanity and sympathy.

For information on any of these events check online at www.dplfoundation.org, www.atelier6000.org, www.highdesertmuseum.org, and www.tinpantheater.com.

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<p>NOTICE: You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.</p> <p>You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form. If you want the court to hear your case, there may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.</p> <p>There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site (www.bayarea.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a mandatory fee for waived fees and costs on any settlement or admission award of \$15,000 or more in a civil case. The court's fee must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.</p> <p>AVISO: Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información continuación.</p> <p>Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegerán. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto y el dinero que procese su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de los Cortes de California (www.courtinfo.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le citó a su caso. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de solicitud de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su salario, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia.</p> <p>Hay otras requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services (www.bayarea.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de los Cortes de California (www.courtinfo.ca.gov) o por teléfono en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. AVISO: Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a imponer las cuotas y los costos escritos por imponer un granito sobre cualquier recuperación de \$15,000 ó más a la vez recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar al granito de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desear el caso.</p>		
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