

Sisters author unearths family history

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Family genealogy research and a missing divorce record opened the door to an entirely new, and unplanned, venture for Sisters resident Linda Davis.

After unearthing some unknown facts about her great-grandmother, Jeannie Fox Miller, Davis embarked on a five-year odyssey of learning Jeannie's story and recording it as a biographical fiction.

"Basically I took anecdotes and wove them into a story. I made up a theory of how she had interest in fruit farming," Davis explained.

"Jeannie's Journey, Great Grandmother's Pioneering Tale," is the story of how an ordinary high school English teacher, wife and mother ended up moving from Chicago to Hood River, Oregon in 1908 to become a fruit farmer.

Davis conducted extensive research about her ancestors to write the book, a feat she never dreamed she would accomplish.

"Underlying the story itself is the journey I took to write the book," said Davis.

"Many researchers of family history begin with

only fragments of information, if anything. If they are lucky, they have some photographs, some documents like birth certificates, and perhaps some family stories. The gaps regarding an ancestor's life are usually wide and deep. Attempting to put these fragments of information together with additional research is like putting together a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle, one piece at a time. But the rewards can be overwhelming, not to mention emotional," Davis continued.

Davis's own journey of discovery included a trip to a Chicago cemetery and the Cook County public records office to obtain a copy of her great-grandmother's divorce decree, which held the key to unlocking the secret surrounding Jeannie's emigration to Oregon.

A little-known cult, the Korashans, played a key role in the fork in the road of Jeannie's life. Since Davis had never heard any of this story from living relatives, all of whom have passed on, the shocking details that she learned about Jeannie and other relatives had likely been "swept under the rug."

"Jeannie's involvement with the cult in Chicago was probably an embarrassment

that family did not want known and passed down to descendants," Davis speculates.

In spite of that, Davis says she has a certain degree of admiration for her great-grandmother, who bucked the traditions of the time to live a life true to her conscience.

"Aside from some of the whacky religious and scientific ideas, many of the values she adhered to are alive today as we struggle in the global economy and for social and economic justice. That makes me proud," said Davis.

In April of this year, the project reached completion with the printing of the book.

"It feels really good to be finished with the book, like a relief," Davis shared.

"However, I miss in a way working on the book. I have learned little things since that would enrich the story. It was quite an experience."

As a college student, after a year at University of California at Santa Barbara,

Davis graduated from Portland State University with a degree in geography and urban studies. While at PSU, she gained two years of experience conducting research with members of the faculty, gaining valuable experience. She went on to have a 35-year career in land-use planning in Salem, Boise, and Beaverton.

During her 14 years as the Beaverton planning director, Davis saw the Portland suburb grow from a population of 27,000 to 60,000 residents. For the final eight years of Davis's career she served as a land-use planning consultant in private practice.

First-time author Davis and her husband, Tom, whom she met in Boise, moved to Sisters in August 1999. Her avocation as an accomplished weaver began 40 years ago, also in Boise. She is a member of the Central Oregon Spinners and Weavers Guild and creates beautiful woven works of art

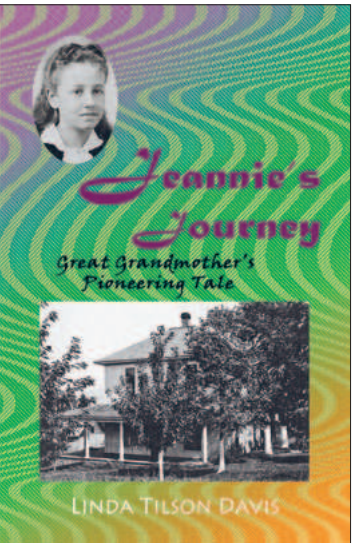


PHOTO PROVIDED

Linda Davis has published a new book on her grandmother, that are displayed throughout Central Oregon.

Davis has also been a long-time member of the board of Friends of the Sisters Library, currently serving as the board secretary.

Davis's book is available for purchase through Amazon. For more information she can be reached at tomlin@bendcable.com.

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Free Shuttle Bus SCHEDULE
Wednesday, August 3rd - Sunday, August 7th

Sisters Elementary School, 611 E. Cascade Ave.
Redmond High School, 757 Rimrock Way

| Leave Sisters Elementary School | Leave Redmond High School | Leave County Fair |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 9:30 a.m. | 10:00 a.m. | |
| 11:30 a.m. | Noon | 3:30 p.m. |
| 4:30 p.m. (not on Sun.) | 5:00 p.m. | 5:30 p.m. (Last bus on Sun.) 10:30 p.m. (Wed./Th.) 11:30 p.m. (Fri./Sat.) |

Bend High School, 230 NE 6th St.

| Leave Bend High School | Leave County Fair |
|------------------------|---|
| 9:30 a.m. | |
| 11:30 a.m. | 2:30 p.m. |
| 3:30 p.m. | 4:30 p.m. |
| 5:30 p.m. | 9:00 p.m. |
| | 10:30 p.m. (Wed./Th.) 11:30 p.m. (Fri./Sat.) |

Note: Sunday August 7th Schedule

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| 9:30 p.m. | 3:30 p.m. |
| 11:30 p.m. | 5:30 p.m. |

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