

Mar 77

EVENT: March meeting
WHEN: Mar. 8, 1977 7:00 P.M.
WHERE: Fernwood Grange Hall
PROGRAM: Earle Coburn speaking on the history of the Masonic Lodge in Yamhill County.

Come and bring a friend, potluck at 7:00 P.M., business meeting and program at 8:00.

Mr. Earle Coburn, our March speaker, has been interested in Masonic history for many years. The Masons were an important part of early Oregon history. Fraternal groups meant a lot to our Oregon ancestors and their records can be an important source of local history.

The museum is on its regular winter schedule again. It is open every Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.
Call Roma Sitton at 472-7935 for appointments to visit the museum on the days it is not open.

EARLY YAMHILL COUNTY PLACE NAMES--BEAN'S HOLE

On August 25, 1846 Hugh O'Brian recorded a land claim at Oregon City. It read:
Hugh O'Brian claims 640 acres of land in Yam Hill county, situate on a branch of the N fork of Yam Hill river, at the foot of the mountains, and known as BEANS HOLE, commencing at a stake near a point of timber called Dawson's timber, thence one mile crossing the branch to a stake, thence one mile to a stake, thence one mile recrossing the branch, then to the place of beginning, which he holds by occupancy.

We know that Bean's Hole was on Baker Creek because we know where the Mr. Dawson of "Dawson's timber" settled. William Dawson had arrived in Oregon in the fall of 1845 and in January of 1846 he took out a claim which later became his donation land claim. He settled on Baker Creek two or three miles west of present McMinnville. Bean's Hole was a little farther up the creek where the little valley becomes almost completely surrounded by hills.

Bean's Hole was named for James R. Bean who had also arrived in Oregon in 1845 and in the same wagon train with the Dawsons and the Jesse Hendersons, who also settled near by. Apparently, this is where Bean spent his first winter in Yamhill county, "between the north and south forks of the Yamhill river".

As a name for the valley, Bean's Hole did not survive for long. Within a few years it came to be known as Happy Valley, a name that has endured to the present.

Early settlers in Yamhill county recognized the power potential of Baker Creek almost immediately. Soon after 1850 a sawmill was set up in the upper part of the valley. A man by the name of John H. Berry took a claim six miles west of McMinnville on Baker Creek in 1851 and built the mill. In 1853 John E. Brooks bought the mill and the logging teams, and ran the mill for several years. The site of this early sawmill was very near the site of McMinnville's first electric power plant.

The first grist mill in Happy Valley was begun in 1860 by Jacob Hawn, who had a hand in building many of Oregon's first mills. The grist mill was located farther down the valley than the sawmill. Jacob Hawn suffered a heart attack and died while he was working on the mill. The partially built mill was abandoned for several years. Christopher Newby bought the property in 1869 and finally put the mill into operation. It was known as the Cornucopia Flouring Mill and continued to operate for many years.

In 1887 a McMinnville newspaper article asked that "all people will please notice that in the future the Newby Flouring Mill in Happy Valley will only be run on Fridays and Saturdays! Actually Christopher Newby had sold out several years before. Not long after this the mill discontinued operation altogether. It was finally torn down and the mill stones lie buried under the present road bed near where the old mill stood.