



March 81

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Yamhill County Museum, 6th and Market Street, Lafayette, Oregon

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

DATE: TUESDAY MARCH 10, 1981 NOON
PLACE: AMITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 203 Nursery St., Amity, Oregon
POTLUCK: Bring your own service
PROGRAM: Kenneth Holmes giving a presentation on Mt. St. Helens

MUSEUM NEWS

Day meetings are nice and we will have one more. Some of those who work cannot come during the day.

~~I visited Newberg's museum at George Fox College Library. It is very nice. They have lovely cases built just for their collection and are running very low on space.~~

We plan to open the museum on Wednesday through Sunday this year. Monday's and Tuesday's were always very slow days.

We have about seven boxes of books left to sell. There are 50 books in every box. Keep busy selling. This fund is to support your museum and print our book on district schools that will soon go to press.

Do you have a collection of articles you would like to show for a program or a family history you would like to share? It is hard for one person to gather our history. Please help.

We have several new members. Also, a group on tour from Vancouver, Washington came to the museum on Feb. 19. We will expect schools and clubs to tour soon.

I hope to collect all our large funds for building, roofing, heat, etc. to let you see what we have accumulated the past ten years. Also, I am afraid that we cannot have a raffle as there are too many laws and regulations. We might think of a hobby show, quilt show, gun show, doll show, or a mixed collection. Any ideas?

We have several old abstracts just in. They are valuable information. If you have one on your property that you are not interested in keeping please bring it to us. Also old photos.

~~We have a book listing all our memorials, if you wish to look at it. We keep it in a fire protected file cabinet. Mrs. Clara Walker's apple doll collection was enjoyed by all. She teaches how to make them. Try it sometime. Call for appointment at the museum anytime. Call 472 - 7935.~~

ROMA SITTON

HISTORY NOTES

Not enough has been done with the oral history that was gathered during the WPA Writer's Project of the 1930's. Many of the recorded interviews were with people who had lived during the early settlement of Oregon. I found a few of these interesting interviews that were done in Yamhill County in the Manuscript Collection of the University of Oregon Library in Eugene. The following interview was one of these and is unusually descriptive.

(over)

Mrs. Willamina Murray Spencer was born in Muddy Valley, Yamhill Co., Oregon in 1857. She is the daughter of Charles and Mary Elizabeth Murray who came to Oregon in 1852. Charles Murray was born in Belfast, Ireland in 1818 and came to America with his father in 1830, landing in New York. But not desiring to live in the city they made their way to Ohio and from there to Illinois, but not liking it there they moved to Iowa. It was here that Charles met and married Miss Mary Elizabeth Sullinger, who was born near Crawfordsville, Indiana, but early in life moved to Iowa with her parents.

Mr. Murray felt the call of the Oregon country, so in 1852 he loaded all his belongings into a Prairie Schooner and started over the long trail and after a tiresome journey reached Vancouver. He made a selection of a location near what is now St. Paul, Oregon. The first winter they suffered from typhoid fever and at one time the entire group of 27 were sick, but fortunately none of them was called to cross the Divide.

The next spring, Mr. and Mrs. Murray decided to move to higher land and finally settled in Muddy Valley. Here they continued to reside until the Reaper of All called for them. Here on the farm was born their daughter Willamina in 1857. Mrs. Spencer says, "My earliest recollections are of the old homestead where I was born, I had no near neighbors so my brothers and sisters were my only playmates. However, there was little time for play as we children must help with the work on the farm. My education was obtained first by the instruction of my parents teaching me at home and later by attending school three months each spring in a schoolhouse built of rough lumber, and desks and seats made from slabs with holes bored, in which the legs were placed. The teachers did not receive enough to justify them to board themselves so they would board around those having children in the school. It was always a time of rejoicing when the teacher came to make their home with us. It meant better food and pleasant evenings spent in stories and games. The games were Blindman's Bluff, Miller Boy, Drop the Handkerchief, and Pussy Wants a Corner. Many of the stories told of historical events and there were even ghost stories to make the children squeal.

"On Sunday we all climbed into the wagon and drove about five miles to church and Sunday school. After Church we would either go home with some of the neighbors to spend the day or some of them would go home with us. My mother was a good cook and father was a very sociable man, so our home was quite a gathering place. Sometimes the children were so bashful that they could not eat at the table with the others.

In 1874 I was married to Alexander Spencer. The first few years after we were married we cast our lot socially with the people of Muddy Valley, sending our children to the Eagle Point school. In the early eighties a schoolhouse was built on the Peavine ridge. As this was much nearer we sent our children to this school, and cast our lot with these people socially. The first school on Peavine Ridge was taught by Miss Emma Hughbert, now Mrs. Arthur of McMinnville.

"In 1913 I laid my companion to rest and I have greatly missed him all these years, but I calmly await the call of the Life Giver."

(this interview took place in 1939 or 1939)

PREPARED BY RUTH STOLLER