

# YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

DATE: TUESDAY MARCH 13, 1984 12:00 NOON  
PLACE: Community Christian Church, 2831 N. Newby, McMinnville, Oregon  
POTLUCK: Bring your own service  
Program: History of the McMinnville area

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### MUSEUM NEWS

At our last meeting Mr. Keith Padgett of the Taylor Publishing Co. discussed with us the possibility of publishing the History of Yamhill County. This book would contain individual family histories. Many people are in favor of picking up our family history from 1880 to date. I think it's a good idea.

We just received a wedding dress and plush cape to display. The rental house is still for rent. We have put an ad in the newspaper and have received quite a few calls. We also need to repair some eaves that leak.

If you would like to order a copy of SCHOOLS OF OLD YAMHILL, just give me a call at 472-7935. The cost of the book is \$11.00 postpaid. Otherwise stop in at many Yamhill County locations for your copy- MCMINNVILLE, The Book End, Chamber of Commerce, The Book Shop. NEWBERG: The Gray Mouse Bookstore. SHERIDAN: Sheridan Drug. YAMHILL: Hardware store.

Remember to come visit us at the museum on weekends from 1:00 to 4:00!

ROMA SITTON

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### THE RICHARD WILLIAMS FAMILY

The first white family to cross the mountains for the sole purpose of acquiring land and settling in Oregon came in 1840 but soon moved on to California. The following year two families with small children arrived in the Willamette Valley by way of the overland route from Missouri. One of these families left for California in 1844, leaving the other as the premier pioneer family of Oregon. This was the Richard Williams family who arrived in the fall of 1841 and immediately settled on land, which some ten years later they would file on as their

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The Richard Williams family (con't)  
donation land claim. The land they acquired was on the Tuality Plains in present day Washington County. In later years at least two of the Williams' daughters lived and died in Yamhill County, and some of the children of a third were Carlton residents. Today there are still at least two great-grandchildren of Richard and Keziah Williams living in our county--Maud Reed Smith of Newberg and Glenn Brooks of Lafayette.

Richard Williams was born in South Carolina in 1796, the son of Benjamin and Winnie Williams. The family moved to Barren County, Kentucky where Richard married Keziah Nichols on November 15, 1816. Keziah was born on January 30, 1800 in Virginia. According to one account the Richard Williams family moved "from Kentucky to Indiana, from there to Missouri, and with their family of seven children crossed the plains to the far West in 1841". The account states further that two of the children were married and brought their families to Oregon in 1843.

There has always been some confusion among historians as to just how many children Richard and Keziah brought with them to Oregon. Since the two oldest children stayed in Missouri and came to Oregon in 1843, we can only account for six children on the trail in 1841. The oldest was Winifred, born October or November of 1825. She married Isaiah (Zade) Kelsey on June 1, 1841 when the overland party reached the Platte River. Asa Williams born on March 22, 1827 in Missouri was fourteen years old when the family started on their westward journey. Martha (Patsey) born in 1829 or 1830 was only about twelve years old. Samuel born in 1833 would have been eight years and Nathan was about five in the summer of 1841. The youngest Williams' child was Sarah Ann born May 5, 1841. It is difficult to believe that forty-one year old Keziah started the journey with a week-old baby in her arms!

When the 1841 migration left Missouri the "would-be" settlers were all destined for California. They traveled with a northwest bound Catholic missionary party who had hired an old mountain man as their guide. The missionaries traveled with carts and a wagon. The settlers had wagons drawn either by oxen or mule teams.

The group traveled together until August 11, when they were about fifty miles south of Ft. Hall. Here, instead of going to California, part of the party decided to follow the guide as far as Ft. Hall and continue on to Oregon. A decision that was probably made by some because of the lack of a guide to lead those bound for California. The Oregon group had to abandon their wagons at Ft. Hall and acquire Indian ponies to ride and pack their goods. They were able to attach themselves to a Hudson Bay Brigade led by Francis Ermantiger and bound for the Columbia. There were two families with the Oregon-bound emigrants--Richard Williams and Samuel Kelsey. The Kelseys had three small children.

(to be continued)