

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Date: Tuesday September 11, 1984 6:00 p.m.
Location: Wortman Park (west end off McDaniel Lane in sheltered area)
Potluck: Bring your own service
No meeting scheduled- just an informal gathering to kick off the new year.

Museum News

We have been quite busy at the museum with visitors from many states. The Heritage Days celebration at Lafayette with breakfast at the park on Sunday and a parade was well attended. Many other activities were going on about town. We kept open house from noon until 5:00 p.m.

Articles are still coming in. Our two red cross quilts were taken to Portland for a get-together of Red Cross quilts from around the nation. We have the only two in the west.

Mr. George Walker has written a book "A Slice of Country Life". his boyhood days at Buell from 1902 to 1915, when his parents owned the store at Buell. When the book is off the press later this year in volume, we will have a few to sell. We have a new supply of Dundee books and still have many copies of Schools of Old Yamhill. We are also gathering a good collection of biographical histories of many county families. If you have a family history, please make a copy for us. Many visitors have been asking about our cemetery records also.

Old photos are valuable, as are family photo albums. So many are not identified. When you have a spare moment, go through your photos and make sure they are marked.

We are to have a busy year ahead. Our building needs paint. A big job. See you at the picnic. Call 472-7935 for appointment anytime.

ROMA SITTON

EXCERPTS FROM REMINISCENCES OF JAMES M. SHARP

(One of the neglected sources of early Oregon history is the Folklore file at the Oregon State Library. These "Oregon Folklore Studies" were part of the Federal Writers' Project of the W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration) of the 1930's. They dealt with everyday life and manners on the frontier and were based on interviews with older people. Several years ago I went through them and copied those that had direct ties with Yamhill County. One of them included some reminiscences of James M. Sharp. The Sharp family had spent its first winter in Oregon in the Chehalem Valley. One of the daughters married Obadiah Bean, a brother of Napoleon and James R. Bean, both of whom had donation land claims in Yamhill Co.. One of the Sharp sons married Nancy Rowland, daughter of John Rowland and granddaughter of Jeremiah Rowland. James Sharp was eight years old when the family crossed the plains in 1852. He wrote:)

My father at this time was fifty-five years of age. Low of stature, stout built, he was in the prime of life. My mother was forty-four years of age, and the mother of seven children. (After five months on the road), we crossed the Clackamas River, arrived at Oregon City, and crossed the Willamette River, thence continued westerly into the Chehalem Valley, and arrived at Mr. George Nelson's place on the 16th of October.

~~Mr. Nelson's house was built on a gently rising ground, and as we drove so slowly up the hill, the sun was about to sink behind the western mountains. Mother, and most of us children, were walking. Father had not been feeling well for some days, and was riding in the wagon. As we pulled up alongside the front gateway, a woman came out and asked, "Isn't there a sick man in the wagon?" and learning there was had us come into the house. She put father into bed, where they kept him for about two weeks. We think now he must have had typhoid fever. "Uncle George" and "Aunt Peggy", as the Nelson's were known far and wide, were well advanced in years, and had been living in Oregon since 1844. Their house was a large double affair, with a roofed-over section between.~~

As soon as father was able to move, we secured a house not far from Mr. Nelson's, from a Mr. Morris, into which we moved November 2, 1852. (Mr. Morris lived just to the east of the Nelson's and was the grandfather of the Bryan children who have many descendents in this area.) It was a structure built of small logs, about twelve by sixteen feet. I believe it had a fireplace, because we could hardly have survived a cold winter otherwise. There was a loft or attic, reached by a ladder, and here was the boys' dormitory during the winter. In this small building the nine of us spent the time from November 2, '52 to February 21, '53. There was a snowfall of about two feet during most of this period. Our food was a steady diet of boiled wheat, which was bought at \$5.00 per bushel, or about 8¢ per pound. Strong and wholesome food, but rather monotonous. (continued next month)