

# YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

Date: TUESDAY JANUARY 8, 1985 12:00 Noon  
Location: Lafayette Youth and Senior Center, Lafayette, Oregon  
Potluck: Bring your own service

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### Museum News

I hope each of you had a nice Holiday season. I had an enjoyable time with my family with dinner and a gift exchange.

We have a new addition to the museum. A writing desk from Mr. Beales that had belonged to Pete Olds who lived in Lafayette. He was a famous band leader as well as a Lafayette civic leader.

We have a meeting at the Lafayette Senior Center on Jan. 14th that will deal with the care of old photographs. Slides will be shown on preparing for photo storage. If you need an appointment for the museum call anytime. 472-7935

ROMA SITTON

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### OFFICERS

President: Doris White  
Vice-Pres.: Tom Bunn  
Secretary: Mildred Renne  
Treasurer: Mike Boundy  
Fin. Sec.: Evelyn Nieman

Directors: Ed Roghair  
Harvey Stoller  
Laurence Schreiber  
Austin Bowen

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HISTORY NOTES

In between other activities, even as a young man I was interested in gold mining. I have prospected in the past 50 years in almost every section of Oregon where gold had been, or appeared that it might be, found. I have panned every river and creek in the state where I thought there was a remote possibility of making worthwhile findings. In recent years I have operated small mines with more or less success. I am at present beginning the operation of a mine in Clackamas County, near the Marion County line. The sample essay looks good, and in spite of many former disappointments in similar enterprises, I have every hope that this one will turn out prosperously. However, if it doesn't, I shall promptly find another likely-looking hole-in-the-ground, and with a true prospector's unquenchable optimism, my hopes will doubtless rise again.

Perhaps the most widely publicized Oregon gold mine, if there ever was such a mine, is the famous "Blue Bucket". I have been erroneously credited with knowing a great deal about this mysterious, lost mine. As a matter of fact, in common with many other persons, I have been tremendously interested in the historic "Blue Bucket"; have gathered a considerable amount of data concerning it; and have journeyed to the region where it was supposed to have been located. I might even go so far as to say that I am satisfied in my own mind that I have been to within a few furlongs of the actual spot where it was. However, until the elusive "Blue Bucket" is actually and indisputably rediscovered, one man's story is as good as another's. Here's mine:

The Blue Bucket mine got its name from the fact that a wagon train which is supposed to have stumbled onto the rich gold deposit, was made up of a string of wagons the bodies of which were painted blue. In those days wagons had no hub nuts to hold a wheel in place on the axle. Wheels were held on the axle by what was called a lynch pin, which was merely a pin, or bolt, that slipped through a hole in the axle outside the hub of the wheel. Between the hub and pin was a washer which rubbed on the hub. To prevent wear, it was necessary to constantly daub the axle, at the point of friction, with tar, which the immigrants carried in buckets that hung on a hook at the rear of the wagon. The tar buckets of this particular wagon train were also painted blue. The train made a "dry camp" (no water in sight) one night on a meadow in a valley between two ridges of hills. Needing water for their horses, members of the train set out on foot, each in a different direction, to attempt to locate a small creek or pond nearby. Each carried one of the blue tar buckets, in which to carry water if any were found. One member came upon a wet oozy spot, where it appeared water was near the surface of the ground. He dug down, using the bucket as a spade, and upon raising the bucket found it filled with wet dirt containing nuggets of gold. And that was how the Blue Bucket mine was discovered.

I was privileged once to see a diary said to have been kept by a man whose name, I believe, was Warren. The man was member of the "Blue Bucket" train. In the diary he kept a day by day log of the train's progress. By a series of calculations, based upon the mileages and directions given in the diary, I was able to reach a position which must have been in the vicinity of the fabulous mine. To further convince me that I actually did find the mine's exact location, in my search I one day stumbled onto a weathered portion of a wagon box, with unmistakable traces of blue paint still visible on its bleached boards. That the wagon box was of the wagon-train era, was evidenced by the fact that it was built like a scow, or flat boat, and was caulked with rags, fragments of which were still intact. Emigrant wagons were constructed in such manner to permit them to ford streams handily without damaging their contents.

Well, there's my story of the "Blue Bucket" mine. Many think the mine never existed. I think it did, however, I realize that my story would carry far more conviction were I able to exhibit a few buckets of gold taken from it--regardless the color of the buckets.