

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

April 2006

A New Museum Complex

Our March general meeting program was given by Shirley Venhaus and Colin Armstrong. Using a powerpoint presentation to guide them, they gave some history of our organization, a report on the state of our current facilities and the expansion of our collections, including the largest expansion of all, the agricultural equipment donated by Ray and Barbara Kauer.

Ray and Barbara also donated the 5 acre parcel lying at the southeast corner of the intersection of Highway 18 and Durham Lane, not to mention the 60' x 60' storage building which was erected over a year ago.

Given the expanded plan, the facilities will need to be phased in over a number of years. The first goal will be to install the necessary infrastructure (subsurface & septic drains & field, power, water, roads, etc.) before construction of the large structure to hold the agricultural equipment.

The McPhillips family is considering donating an additional acreage to allow a better balance between facilities, parking, future development and a possible small field to demonstrate farm equipment. We should have word on this within a month or so.

The need for money in most not-for-profit organizations is a major consideration, and ours is no exception. Our volunteers and those who donate additional funding have helped improve our collections and facilities to date, but we will need a major influx of cash to even begin the site prep work. This initial effort has been roughly estimated to cost between \$300,000 and \$400,000, although that figure could drop substantially if we can get donations from vendors and some volunteers to help with the manual labor.

Your board and the building steering committee remain steadfastly behind the concept of a new museum facility. Shirley and Colin allowed the attendees a peek at some of the ideas of what this may look like. They will soon be visiting various cities and civic clubs, attempting to gain more support for our goals county-wide.

Board Meeting highlights

The board met March 14th, 2006, with all directors and officers present. The matter of a major restorative effort on the exterior of the log building was discussed, and a \$6,000 progress payment has been paid. Ken Williams has agreed to serve as our Treasurer until the first of next year, and he was appointed by the board. Shirley will meet with Sam Shogren, a grant writer, on 3/17 to discuss grant possibilities for our new facilities. We will have a table at the McMinnville LDS church Family History Fair on April 8th, from 10:00 am till 3:00 p.m. The subject of moving our board meeting dates to another day of the week was discussed, which may allow Jerry Hart, attorney, to attend.

Dear Members,

How many of you have ever tried to wash the outside of your house? I mean every inch of the exterior. Now let's say the house is made of logs which do not always fit quite right so that when you spray it, water gets inside. Someone with a walkie talkie is inside to notify the sprayer of a leak when it occurs. Well, that is what is happening to the Log Museum!!! First a layer of old finish, dirt, dust and rotten wood was removed. Suddenly there were the beautiful logs many of us remember when the building was first built. This was only the beginning as now each log, bruise, crack and hole is carefully examined and tended to by hand. The thinking will need repaired. Have any of you ever examined or counted the number of logs in this building? Each one will be sanded and cared for. Lastly a coat of sealer and finish will be put on each log. This will require approximately six weeks to complete. Danny Fox, his company known as "Log Renovation" with a crew of dedicated, hard working people have taken on this job.

Now, let's remember that this is not just a home but a building that houses precious artifacts, fabrics, photos, file cabinets, storage units and etc.. What do you do with all of this when all items must be removed at least 2 to 4 feet from the wall and covered with plastic? Well, that is exactly what you do. You move everything and cover it with plastic. The Wednesday Work Group weren't asked if they would help, they just pitched in and did the job. They were also there every day to open up the building and help watch for leaks and prevent any damage.

Do you continue to remain open on Sat. in case someone shows up who want to do research in the library? Of course you do and if there is a way to carry on, Marjorie and crew will be there. We would welcome everyone to come and see this work in progress and be proud of those who have worked so hard to complete this renovation. We owe thanks to the Miller Foundation for providing the funds to restore this building. Thank you to everyone who has worked on this and will continue to do so until it is finished. I'm sure it is a case where the "End Justifies the Means"!!!

Following the completion, all items will need to be returned to their proper places. Please take the time to visit your museum. Shirley

OFFICERS - 2006

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472-7328

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Annita Linscheid
843-2625

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472-6562

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843-2069

Volunteer Coordinator

(vacant)

Newsletter

Dan Linscheid
843-2625

Car Pool Coordinator

Joanne Watts
835-5893

Librarian

Jean Sartor
472-6312

MUSEUM HOURS:

Sept. thru June:

Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

or

By Appointment

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Lafayette Oregon
Phone: 864-2308
Email: yamhillhistory@
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YCHS

Dues Changeover

As you probably know, July is our changeover to an annual dues renewal for all paying members. Once we get through this transition year, this renewal system will be easier for everyone to remember and deal with. Renewals will always be due in July and new members will have their dues prorated to July 1st.. Reminders will be mailed with the May newsletters annually.

Our membership chair will provide you with a personal status notification within the next several months. Our goal is to have every member paid up to July 2007 by July 2006. We acknowledge that we may encounter a few bumps in the road, and beg for your patience during this transition.

George Gay DAR Memorial Field Trip

May 10th between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. will see a DAR field trip which will begin at the Hopewell church & cemetery. Lorna Grauer, third great-granddaughter of George Gay, will lead tours to the memorial along Wallace Road. The tours will be provided via carpooling, given the limited parking along the highway at the marker. You are invited to join! Casual comfortable clothing, walking shoes, a brown bag lunch and beverage, and perhaps a folding chair will help you have an enjoyable and memorable outing. Arrangements are being made to use the church in case of bad weather.

Many current DAR members have ancestors buried at this cemetery, which is an important part of our Oregon Trail pioneering history. Call Mary Jo Capps at 503-434-5794 or email her at mjo@madcapps.com for your questions or more information.

Bob's Corner

The Crystal Dawn Smith Rilee Foundation will memorialize a park in honor of Robert C. Rilee at the curve on Parrett Mountain Road just above Crystal's home on 4/15/2006 at 1:00 p.m. Bring your favorite side dish or salad. Drinks, meats, utensils and other amenities will be provided. Balloons and treats for the kids! Please RSVP 503-625-9650 or 625-6690 to let them know you plan on attending.

Log Building Maintenance

Danny J. Fox and his crew are doing an excellent job restoring the original luster and color to our log building. This is a slow process, using a variety of chemicals, a pressure washer, hand sanding and ultimately, re-thinking of the holes and cracks discovered during the restorative process.

Danny and his employees look like spacemen when they apply stripper and pressure wash the logs. After this step, citric acid is applied, which is when you can really start seeing the difference. Although it does not do justice, the photo below shows the before (on the right) and after (left) on our log building.



This restoration process is required for most buildings of this type, and should be repeated periodically. Our maintenance was long overdue.

It's Danny's strict adherence to a proven process, top quality materials, hard working employees and attention to details that allows his business to stand out in a crowded field.

Garage Sale

Please note the dates of our Garage Sale: June 29th & 30th and July 1st and 2nd. We will be giving additional information on this in future editions of this newsletter. Anyone who has items to donate call Colin or Millie at 472-6489 or Shirley at 434-0567.

Dues: April thru June

Family members paying dues for April should pay \$25 +\$6.25, for May they should pay \$25 +\$4.10, for June, payment would be \$25 +2.00, to take renewals up to July 2007. For individual members, this works out to \$15 +\$3.75 for April, for May, \$15 + \$2.50, and for June, \$15 +1.25. These are all prorated to establish an annual dues renewal date of July 1. Thank you for continuing to support us.

By Jim Lockett

Old Lafayette lore tells of a curse put upon the town. A young man accused of a crime was to be hung from the old oak tree in the town square. The young man's mother was beside herself, for she was sure her son had been falsely accused. She stood in the square and put a curse on the town. If they hanged her son, she warned, the town would burn to the ground three times. Old-timers will remember the three fires.

While Lafayette felt the curse, other Yamhill County villages had the same experience. The real curse was wood construction, wood-fired cooking stoves, kerosene lamps, well-oiled floors and little understanding of fire safety. McMinnville had several bad fires in the 1880s. Gradually, it began replacing burned-out wood structures with brick ones. Samuel Cozine's son, Pleasant, was among those helping rebuild McMinnville's downtown. He recommended brick.

Fires still gutted brick buildings, because they featured wood frameworks and well-oiled floors. But brick tended to stop them from spreading to other buildings and taking an entire downtown or even an entire town. And by then, there were several brick plants in the area.

The Dayton Herald reported the first curse felt in Lafayette, in the summer of 1904, this way: "On Friday evening the first of this month, the people of Dayton and vicinity were aroused by the clanging of fire bells at Lafayette. A large crowd was soon rushing in any possible way to fight the fire. They found 10 buildings destroyed and five more in the direct line of fire. "A few minutes later, the fire leaped across the main street to the building owned by H.D. Begun and occupied by Edwards Bros. Jr. for store purposes. Willing hands - men, women, boys and girls of all sizes and ages - carried goods out of the burning building. When the flames jumped the street, the thick foliage of the maple trees served as a protection to the Olds Hotel property and the widow Carey's house. The brick building occupied by J. L. Vickery, merchant, and the saloon, were not damaged, with the exception of some broken glass. Sixteen buildings were destroyed. Fire Number 1 had laid the town to waste."

Yamhill experienced a great fire in 1902. Earl Mann - who happened to be passing the large merchandise store of Messner and Volheim - discovered the interior of the building in flames and sounded the alarm. The fire department responded promptly, as well as all citizens of the town and surrounding community. The store was beyond help, though, and soon the fire spread. Several buildings along Main Street were destroyed.

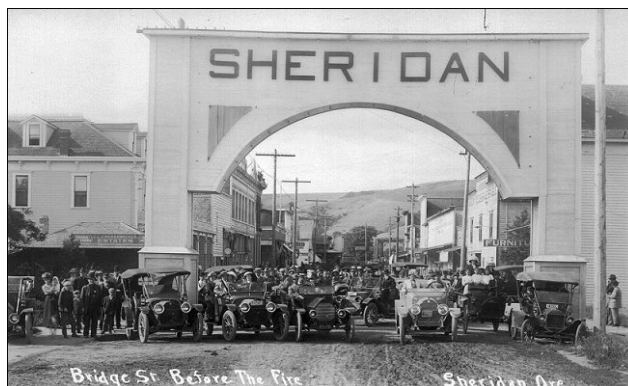
Dayton had a disastrous fire in 1906 and Willamina followed in 1919 and again in 1923. Much of their business districts were destroyed.

However, Sheridan probably suffered the greatest loss of any town in the county. Actually, over a 46-year span between 1888 and 1934, Sheridan's business district was destroyed by fire on four different occasions.

Due to wood construction, most communities experienced at least one major fire. But few have suffered as many as Sheridan. The first of four incidents occurred on Jan. 12, 1888, on the east side of South Bridge Street. A warehouse attached to Worthington's broke out in flame. The fire quickly spread to all the structures in the block between First Street (now Harney) and the river.

Following this event, the city council authorized a two-brigade volunteer fire department and purchased two horse-drawn carts with 800 feet of fire hose. It felt the city was now ready for any fire.

However, fire nearly wiped out the entire town in July 1913. A cook was attempting to refill a kerosene grill



while it was still lighted. A little spill and his restaurant was ablaze. The fire soon spread through the entire block. By the time the volunteer fire department arrived, flames were already leaping across the street. As hose was laid out, flying embers burned holes in it, rendering it unusable. The tide didn't begin to turn until the McMinnville and Willamina fire departments arrived. By then, 56 buildings had been destroyed, with losses approaching the then-princely sum of \$310,000.

The final fire in the series came in 1934, destroying the business section on the north bank of the river. The interesting thing is how the community responded each time by rebuilding its town, and each time making it better than before.

Today, we have building codes that provide greater protection. Sometimes we resent those codes, but they protect us from fires like the devastating Sheridan infernos. We also have first-class fire departments whose personnel are well-trained in fire control. Thanks to lessons learned from the past, we are much safer.



After the 1913 fire—photo courtesy of Dick Jordan

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES Effective May 31, 2002

□ Individual	\$15
□ Family	\$25
□ Friend	\$50+
□ Supporter	\$100+
□ Community Builder	\$250+
□ Community Benefactor	\$500+

Please make checks payable to the Yamhill County Historical Society. Annual membership gifts are tax deductible.

Members receive the Westside newsletter and access to our research library free of charge. We are an all volunteer organization, and are constantly on the lookout for new helpers. If you can assist us in any way, financially or with your time or talents, it will be greatly appreciated. If you are not sure if you have paid your membership dues, please contact Kathy Peck at 472-6562, or check your mailing label, which should show this information also. (The month and year indicate your "paid through" period according to our records.)

Please check the insert from the December newsletter for info on the transition to an annual renewal date of July. (And don't hesitate to ask if you have questions)

Calendar of Events

Board of Directors: 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 11th. Our next regular monthly meeting will be held 6:30 p.m., same day, both at the Seventh Day Adventist Church in McMinnville.

Our program this month will be Connie Zimbrick Graves, on "The making of Native American baskets".

- ▶ 4/15, 1:00 p.m., Bob's Corner dedication (see inside for details)
- ▶ 5/10, 11:00 to 2:00 DAR field trip (see inside for details)
- ▶ 6/29, 30 & 7/1, 2—Garage Sale (see inside for details)
- ▶ 8/13, 1:00-4:00 Watt Family Threshing Bee (more details to follow)

New Members/Renewals: We welcome renewing members **Mary Jo Capps, Charlotte Filer, Barbara Chavez, Cynthia Oliver, Kenneth & Patricia Myers, Katherine Huit, Jerold Lynch, Maria Schwalb** and new members **Marilyn Crouser and Jennifer Blosser.**

Thanks for supporting our organization. We invite you to attend our meetings, visit our museum and become more involved in our local