

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

December 2004

Indian Women

Even though Jim Lockett was not feeling quite up to par, he gave an excellent presentation at our November meeting on Indian women. It was not until Eleanor Roosevelt admitted to having part Indian blood in her lineage that Jim's grandma admitted to the family that she was part Cherokee.

Jim spoke about Thera, wife of the relocated Umpqua Chief, Hasaba, as discussed by J. C. Cooper, in his book "The Romance of the Yamhills". Their home was one mile south of Bellevue. After their second daughter was born, Hasaba said "No more kids". These American Indian natives claimed that in pioneer times they could walk right up to deer and other animals, so keeping food on the table was not difficult.

Jim also discussed Sacajawea, Shoshone Indian, who, with babe-in-arms, made the trek with her husband Charbonneau and the Corps of Discovery (Lewis & Clark). Her young son became the adopted son of Lewis, and no one has been able to track this strong woman down after the return to St. Louis. After her son grew up and attended college in Europe, he returned to Oregon as a trapper in the John Day area.

Also mentioned was Marie Dorian, wife of Pierre, a half-breed, who served as an interpreter for the Hunt expedition of 1911. Pierre was the son of another Dorian, the one who served in similar manner for the Lewis and Clark expedition. Pierre and Marie had two children. He wanted to come out west and she begged to come along. At first he said no, but after discussing the matter with Hunt, he relented. Hunt took off to Walla Walla, and she was left alone with her two children, aged five and seven. She set out to find her husband, who had been trapping on the Snake when the party was attacked by Indians, but she discovered he was killed in the attack. The snow in the Blue mountains was too deep to allow passage, so she hunkered down for three months, surviving in part on horse meat.

With the first melt, she wrapped the boys in horsehide and started crawling down the mountain. Cayuse Indians found and rescued the three of them. Squaw creek, in Umatilla County, is named for her, by the Cayuse tribe. Her fortitude and steadfastness in the face of sorrow and troubles made her famous after her return to civilization, and she was written about by Jane Kirkpatrick. She married twice after this, losing a third son to another Indian battle. She moved to the Gervais area with her third husband, John Toupin, who was a respected resident in the French Canadian settlement. In her later years she would take troubled children in who had been turned over to the church, even though she never belonged to a church. She died in Gervais on September 5, 1850.

Jim also discussed the wives of French Canadian trappers, mentioning among others wives of John McLoughlin, and Louis LaBonte. One byproduct of marrying native American women was the protection it brought from various encounters, as well as business and language benefits. While Mountain men were known for their promiscuity, the French Canadian men were very true to their wives. These ladies were very smart, and knew many ways to get things done!

Thanks Jim, for another great presentation.

From our President

Dear Friends,

The picture shows the reason I did not have a "Letter from the Pres" last month. You will see my Granddaughter Tara, husband Nathan and our new great granddaughter Madilynn. Madilynn was born Oct. 10th. I was able to fly out to see them when she was about 7



days old. She is so tiny and such a pleasure.

I look forward to seeing you at the "Victorian Christmas Tea Party". The ladies have worked hard and long and this should be a wonderful event.

Changes and improvements at the Museum: the large glass case and the sleigh in the church have some interesting exhibits for your pleasure. The room in the front of the church has been changed to a very pleasant reading area with shelves of books, a library table and chairs. The old wooden pew that was once in the Log building is now in the front of the church. What a great place to sit and rest for a moment. The building itself has a fresh coat of paint, a new window in the back stoop, new shingles on the steeple and it is now bird proof. The Log Museum has new exhibits upstairs plus the storage shelves for the quilts, linens and photos. The Research Library continues to improve with easier access and space to work. Thanks to our Librarian and Marjorie for their efforts in this area. Stop in and have a look around. Remember the hours are 10 to 4 on Saturday. Maybe you would enjoy volunteering with the Wednesday work group or Saturday. It is a fun place to be.

Sincerely, Shirley

The Yamhill County Historical Society is a nonprofit tax exempt educational and public service corporation established to protect, preserve and share the history and heritage of Yamhill County

<p><u>OFFICERS - 2004</u></p> <p><u>President</u> Shirley Venhaus 472-7328</p> <p><u>VP/Program</u> Barbara Knutson 843-2069</p> <p><u>Secretary</u> Annita Linscheid 843-2625</p> <p><u>Treasurer</u> Carol Reid 472-9631</p> <p><u>Membership Secretary</u> Kathy Peck 472-6562</p> <p><u>Corresponding Secretary</u> Marjorie Owens 843-3081</p> <p><u>Board of Directors</u> Eileen Lewis 835-7531 Francis Dummer 864-2637 Dan Linscheid 843-2625 Shirley McDaniel 662-3528</p> <p><u>Volunteer Coordinators</u> Carol Reid & Annita Linscheid 472-9631</p> <p><u>Newsletter</u> Dan Linscheid 843 -2625</p> <p><u>Car Pool Coordinator</u> Joanne Watts 835 -5893</p> <p><u>Librarian</u> Jean Sartor</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A Visitation</p> <p>We were delighted to see one of our own Historical Society members, Lee Hartzell, among a group of senior citizens from Parkland Village, McMinnville, visiting the Musuem Wednesday, November 17.</p> <p>She, among several others using canes, determinedly climbed the stairs in the Log Building, as no one wanted to miss seeing all the artifacts. Thanks to Annita Linscheid's assistance, all made it down safely.</p> <p>These folks were not only very interested, but very knowledgeable. The Helvies, who had just celebrated their 70th anniversary, came, and Mrs. Helvie was pleased to hear that the old Hutchcroft school is still in good condition, as she attended classes there when a girl. We have the original stove from that school on display in the barn.</p> <p>Another lady was happy to be back in the church as she'd gone to Sunday school there when small. We missed Ed Roghair and hope Peggy is feeling better. Kyle Swift filled in for Ed. Twila and Lois</p>	<p>From the Tea Committee: To all the volunteers who really put their hearts into making this Victorian Tea possible:</p> <p>Annita Linscheid, Joanne Watts, Marjorie Owens, Louise Heidi, Farrel Fuerst, Kyle Swift and Dan Linscheid</p> <p>To the ladies who helped with the baking: Gloria Lutz, Louise Heidi, Nancy Mahi and Debbie B. (last name withheld by request)</p> <p>To those who loaned us tables, decorations, linens, nuts, tea pots, dishes, baking equipment, and tours: Shirley McDaniel, Neva French, Maxine Williams, Lois Brooks, Rosemary Vertregt, Eleanor Mitchell, Joanne Wafts, Louise Heidi, Eileen Lewis, Nancy Thornton, Twyla Byrnes and Jean Sartor</p> <p>If we've missed anyone's name, please forgive us!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THANK YOU ALL Kathy Peck & Carol Reid</p>
<p><u>MUSEUM HOURS</u></p> <p>November 13 - May 31: Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. or By Appointment (Friday openings after May 31st depends on finding volunteers) 605 Market Street Lafayette Oregon Phone: 864-2308 Email: yamhillhistory@onlinemac.com</p> <p>© 2004 YCHS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Board Meeting Highlights</p> <p>Note: due to space limitations, this months highlights are drastically edited.</p> <p>The Treasurers report disclosed a starting balance of \$5,466.29, deposits of \$8,613.68 and expenses of \$8,863.01. Carol will look into a bill for property taxes we received. Frank, Carol, Shirley M. & Ken Williams will work on next years budget. Marjorie dealt with 21 pieces of correspondence. Kathy Peck reported sales of 11 tickets for the Victorian tea to be held Dec. 11th. Carol Reid mentioned that even though we're only open on Saturdays now, we are still short on volunteers. Kathy and Annita gave the Preservation report: textiles are now nearly completely indexed, sorted and stored in archival boxes. The water in the Church bathroom was temporarily shut off: Shirley is looking into getting a plumber to fix the drain problem. We received the final payment of \$6,010 for the painting of the Church. Shirley gave a report on the Building Steering Committee. Shirley gave an update on the status of the oral histories program, and after discussion it was decided to end that program and have a final report by December 31st. Shirley McDaniel offered to take care of the Memorial book and thank you notes. Shirley mentioned the Oregon Cultural Trust and how it can benefit our society. The Board decided that Jean Sartor no longer needs to submit requests for book purchases to the Board for approval. Carol Reid discussed a headstone that local law enforcement folks discovered. She is still trying to find out more on this before a decision is made regarding what to do with it. Respectfully, Annita Linscheid</p>	<p>Uncle John Baker Shaped Oregon Government, Justice And Education By Jim Lockett</p> <p>"Baker Creek," "Baker Creek Road," "Baker Street," "Baker Field" are all familiar places to anyone living in McMinnville, Oregon. This story is about John Gordon Baker, 1818-1887. We'll see why the town fathers chose this historic name to honor a significant personality from the past.</p> <p>John Gorden Baker (everybody called him "Uncle John") was born in Madison County, Kentucky. When he was nineteen, he moved to Missouri where he married Catherine Blevins. It was five years later when he and his family, like many others, had "Oregon Fever" so decided to join the '43 emigration to the Pacific shores. Chances are, their neighbors, such as the Newbys and Hembrees, were part of this decision since they came out together. (Catherine also had family on that first wagon train-Alexander Blevins.)</p> <p>The Baker's experiences were similar to those of other emigrants. He praised Dr. Whitman, crossed rivers, cursed the dust, and worried about Indians. Late in his life he reported: "there was no sickness to speak of; no accidents worthy of mention; no suffering for food whatever as the party was liberally supplied; and no difficulties whatever with the roving bands of Indians." What a report! Especially, when we know: that Baker was deathly sick the last part of the trip; Joel Hembree fell off</p>

By Jim Lockett

the wagon tongue and was killed; Newby and several others almost drowned crossing the swollen Platte River and there had been two murders and one hanging! At least the part about the Indians not being a problem was correct.

Baker tells of building boats at Fort Walla Walla (now called Walula) to carry emigrants down the river. "With whip saw and ax they tediously made lumber to fashion good serviceable boats" - then, they were able to make it to the Cascades where Dr. McLaughlin was waiting, with larger boats, to pick them up.

After the six-month journey across the plains, the Bakers were anxious to claim their land and get settled. However, John, having been seriously ill during the last part of the trip, remained with his family at Fort Vancouver most of that winter, under the care of Drs. Barkley and McLoughlin. He reported receiving excellent care at no cost to himself and his family.

Establishing a home.

When John recovered significantly, they went directly to Yamhill County. There, he laid out his donation land claim, built a cabin and broke the ground for his first crop of wheat. His claim was 640 acres-from Twelfth street in McMinnville, to one mile north, and from McDonald Lane to one mile west. The John Gordon Bakers were the first emigrants to settle between the "two Yamhills" (rivers), making them the first residents of McMinnville, Oregon.

What were some of the problems the emigrants faced as they entered the Willamette valley to stake their claim? They wanted land that was relatively clear and well drained; timber close by for cabins and be near established trails or water ways. Over thirty families claimed land that first year. They needed to know about boundaries, their neighbors claims and be able to recognize good soil conditions for farming. Thanks to the Provisional Government's action in the spring of '43, boundaries were easily established, and it was hard to pick a "poor" piece of land in the Willamette Valley.

It was Catherine and John Baker who had the William T. Newby family as guests in their home while W.T. built a cabin. These pioneers were well acquainted with each other after spending six months on the trail. They were ready to give whatever help was needed as families "scurried to find their place in this new land."

Apparently, Baker had some stock because one of his cows was stolen by Indians. Early biographers report that he "raised a company of volunteers and pursuing the ravagers gained a decisive victory over them, killing two of the miscreants and removing from the others any further desire to brave the white man's wrath." W. T. Newby reports that three Indians stole a cow from Mr. Baker, so he raised

a group of volunteers to help get the animal back. They were: W.T. Newby, A.J. Hembree, J.J.Hembree, A. Hembree, J.T. Hembree, John Penington, N.K. Sitten, A.S. Hendrix and Elijah Millican.

They followed the Indians for twenty miles, killed one, wounded another, and took one prisoner. (There was no report on the fate of the cow.) This was called a "decisive victory" and was the usual "justice" meted out to Indians. The foregoing Indian "problem" was the only serious encounter reported in the upper Willamette valley. By the time the white settlers arrived, a rather advanced social culture of "Yamhill Indians" had been decimated by diseases (measles, smallpox, syphilis, etc.) brought by the early white explorers and fur traders. Thus, there were few Indians left in the valley to cause problems.

Community leader

The highly respected John G. Baker was the first Sheriff of Yamhill County under the Provisional Government and on into the Territorial Government for a total of six years. He was serving before the court house or jail was built in Lafayette, so court was held in a home or outdoors. One story tells of when the first jury was impanelled to try a serious crime, Sheriff Baker asked Judge A. A. Skinner where he should take the jury to deliberate. The Judge, with a touch of humor born out of working with farm animals, replied: "Stake out the foreman, and I guess the others will stay around." Another time, a man named McCormack was tried, found guilty and sentenced to three years imprisonment for an infamous crime. There being no jails or penitentiaries in the territory, the Judge remanded the convict to the care of Sheriff Baker and told him to take care of the prisoner until the county Commissioners came up with provisions for imprisonment. The Judge gave private instructions that if the Commissioners did not act, Baker could let the prisoner take "French leave." The Commissioners took no action so the convict was allowed to escape!

One of John Baker's public service responsibilities was being a director on the McMinnville School Board for several years. He was serious about quality education for the area's children. He also enjoyed sports. At his request, the Baker family donated land to the school district to be used as a playing field for as long as the land was used for sports. Baker Field, for many years, was the McMinnville High School football field (located south of 17th street).

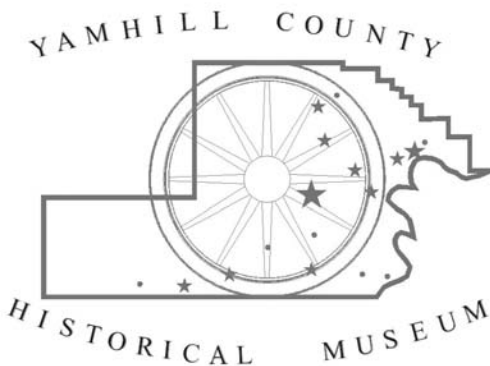
John Baker died March 4, 1887. He was survived by his wife, Catherine, three sons, William, Morgan and Aville, and one daughter, Mary. Pallbearers, at his funeral were: J. W. Garrison, N. K. Sitton, D. S. Holman, A. J. Baker, W. C. Hembree and Samuel Cozine; all emigrants turned pioneers coming to Oregon the same year, 1843.

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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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 Carol Reid at 472-9631, or **check your mailing label, which should show this information also.** (The month and year indicate your "paid through" period according to our records.) If you see a colored notice inside your newsletter, you're at the end of your membership term!

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Calendar of Events

Board of Directors: 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 14th. Our next **regular monthly meeting** will be held Tuesday, December 14th at 6:30 p.m. Both meetings will be held at the Seventh Day Adventist Church, McMinnville. Our program will be a panel discussion on our long range plans, including Shirley Venhaus, Francis Dummer and Dan Linscheid. **Elections to follow.**

NOTE: Please watch your mail for info concerning the Cultural Trust... this process can save you money on your taxes and benefit our society, or any other non-profit group you decide on. We've been working with and benefiting from this group for several years.