

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

December 2005

Preservation—an ongoing challenge

Our November program, presented by Kathy Peck, assisted by Annita Linscheid, focused on good preservation steps for our artifacts. They brought some artifacts from the museums which have deteriorated due to improper storage, handling and environmental change.

They explained what is being done to mitigate such damage. They ask and receive their advise on preservation from conservators all around the world.

All of our fabrics, including quilts, have been carefully processed to minimize future deterioration, photographed and stored in archival boxes. Along the way they were also tagged with an item number, which allows for easy retrieval. All will be entered into a computer database containing important information on the artifact, along with the digital photograph.

All of this work has been performed by the Wednesday workgroup. The attendees were invited to visit and help out on Wednesdays. Marge Owens and Jean Sartor shared what they've learned about our button collection. What was thought to be rust on some of the buttons turned out to be a chemical reaction to other, nearby buttons (a new project to tackle). This was an informative and timely program, and we thank Kathy, Jean, Marge and Annita for their efforts.

Board Meeting Highlights

The Board met at the McMinnville Seventh Day Adventist Church on November 8th, with all officers and board members present. Treasurer Carol Reid reported a beginning balance of \$1,578, expenses of \$2,724, receipts of \$3,604, resulting in a balance of \$2,458. Correspondence Secretary Marge Owens had communicated with six people on various issues. Two of these related to members illnesses—Crystal Riley and Eileen Crawley, both of whom recently had surgery.

We've had five new members recently join, according to Membership Chairperson Kathy Peck. She also says work is progressing on the transition to an annual renewal date of July 1st for all members.

The museum report was given by Marge, who updated the board on the sponsorship of cabinets (5 new with only 3 remaining). Someone has offered to sponsor a trophy case in the church. We need more obit drawers.

Security improvements at our facilities is nearly complete. Only officers, board members and selected volunteers will be entrusted with keys. The covered wagon at the fairgrounds has been formally given to YCHS.

Shirley reported on the building committee. Over 800 brochures have been sent out to date, with another batch to go out soon. We've received over \$3,000 to date in response to this effort. The hiring of a director has been delayed until next year, which will give us time to formulate an employment contract, job description, etc.

UPDATE ON NEW MUSEUM SITE

Most of the Society members have received their information packets concerning the new museum complex. If you haven't, be patient because it is on its way. This is a very ambitious plan and there may be changes as we progress.

If you know of someone who is interested in this project and didn't receive a packet, please contact anyone on the board or the building committee. Also, if you know of a club or organization who would like a presentation, please contact us. I believe we are scheduled to do a presentation for one of our regular monthly meetings.

The volunteers are a very important part of this and appreciate all of your comments or suggestions. Sincerely, The Building Committee (submitted by Shirley V.)

From our President

So many good things happened in 2005. The Church received a beautiful coat of paint or was that 2004? The Ruth Stoller Library continues to grow and become more usable. The ladies hosted two wonderful "Tea Parties". Harvest Festival had fun events for everyone. The Quilt Show received lots of compliments on the displays and demonstrations concerning their care.

Thanks to Marjorie, Jean, Lorna, Julie and everyone who helped with the changing displays. Thanks to Twila, Lois, Shirley, for handling the tours and Ed, Fred & Cliff for working in the Barn. I'm sure I've missed some major events but these are a few.

We've lost some dear members and every day we realize how much we miss them. Work continues on the new Museum Site. We continue to receive donation of items that were an important part of Yamhill County History. ESD has shared with us some wonderful school files and also donated the Covered Wagon to be used in school activities. It will be located at the new site.

All of the above happenings occurred because of volunteer effort. You can see how important all of you are to the well-being of the Society. My granddaughter, Tara, husband Nathan & daughter Madilynn will be here for Thanksgiving. Nathan is in the Marines and just recently returned from Iraq. It truly is a Thanksgiving Blessing.

The holidays are such a busy time for everyone. I wish you all the best and a Happy New Year. Shirley Venhaus

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

OFFICERS - 2005

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Newsletter
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MUSEUM HOURS:

Sept. thru June:
Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
or
By Appointment

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YCHS

Quilt Show Recap

Our November 5th quilt show was at times standing room only. One of these was during the demonstration on the process our volunteers used to clean, fold, store, and index our precious collection of quilts.

The stormy day didn't keep people away, and approximately 100 people visited our facilities and enjoy hot tea and scones.

Guests learned how they can care for their own quilts at home, and expressed appreciation for the care being given our collection.

White gloves were the order of the day for volunteers, and not because this was a formal high-society event. Direct handling of quilts without cotton gloves imparts oils and other particulates from the hands, resulting in a much faster deterioration of the material.

The cozy confines of our museum were a welcome break from the rain and wind outside. A number of books were sold and we also signed up a few new members. The efforts of all the volunteers who made this event a success is greatly appreciated.

Last Yamhill County Covered Bridge

Some of our "Old-timers" may recall the demolition of the last covered bridge in Yamhill County, over 58 years ago. This bridge crossed the north fork of the Yamhill near Fairdale. Built in 1917 for the grand sum of \$900, this was a link in the Old Toll Road running between McMinnville and Tillamook.

Elmer Hurlbut was one of the workers who helped erect the bridge in 1917 was helping build its replacement a short distance downstream in 1947. During the excavation for the new structure, remains of a long lost sawmill were discovered, originally owned by James Fairchild. This mill was one of the first two mills built on the river, according to Eldon Kutch, who was interviewed during the summer of 1947. At that time he was 80 years old, and he reported that the mill had been in operation for three or four years when his family moved to Kutch valley when he was born.

Log drives on the river had buried the remains of the mill, which had been abandoned by 1875. Numerous flood dams allowed large amounts of logs to be transported to St. Joe and Dayton. Farmers along the way threatened lawsuits for damages, and a railroad was constructed by 1912 to the mountains for better log transportation. The county system of bridges today contains over 130 bridges, but covered bridges remain.

Museum Security beefed up

In November the five main exterior walk-in doors were re-keyed using non-reproducible keys and improved deadbolts. This step was taken to enhance our security. Volunteers requiring keys will be asked to sign a form acknowledging the trust being placed in them to protect the multi-million dollar collection in our care.

Keys will be checked out to responsible individuals as needed. If a key is lost or stolen, replacement of all tumblers and keys will cost the society more than \$600, and the responsible party may be asked to assist in paying for this. Silent entry alarms and smoke detectors dial up an alarm company for immediate assistance, as needed. The Board of Directors is very serious about security.

Books purchased

We've purchased a case of Gordon Zimmerman's book, "A Song of Yamhill" to our society, and these will remain at the discounted price to members of \$15, only until the end of this year. After that, the price goes up to \$20 per book. (This will make an excellent Christmas gift) The case Gordon donated to the society has been sold.

ESD files received

The Yamhill County ESD has donated some file cabinets containing school records, including student censuses, dating between 1913 and 1938. A wealth of information is contained in these files and we were glad to get our these into our collection.

New Accessions

Colin & Millie Armstrong received a fascinating panoramic photograph of 1927 McMinnville, which was originally owned by Earl Nott, an attorney who served as our District Attorney at one time. This photo ended up in the estate of Florence Cummins, whose son, Elliott forwarded it on to Colin and Millie. The original is 36" wide by 6" high, and was scanned at high resolution into seven segments, which were then stitched together. This will be placed on our historic photos website by the time you read this, but you'll need to look in the McMinnville section to spot it.

A few weeks ago Rebecca Beales brought in several antique dolls, along with a 1940's toy electric stove and an antique electric toaster. These are not your basic Barbie dolls or the 1960's oven.... They are much older. These are from the Margaret Wood Estate.

We also received a Sanborn Fire Map of Newberg dating to 1929, donated by Jules Drabkin. This was recovered during the Union Block building remodel in 1999.

A pretty blue team sweater, dating to 1935 from Newberg, was also donated. Before we could get more information from him, and the background on this sweater, the donor escaped. He visits our museum on occasion, so we hope to track down more info on this, and the lady who wore it way back when.

Jacob Hawn was born January 13, 1804 in Ontario County New York. As a young man, he was an inventive, competent builder who had a special interest in gristmills. He apprenticed with a millwright and became a highly successful builder of mills. His specialty was waterpower but he was able to erect animal-powered mills as well. His talents proved to be a godsend to the new Oregon country economy.

Jacob married Elizabeth Pearson on November 1833 in Newark, New Jersey. She was 14 years old and Jacob was 29. Since his work was spread out over the country, their children were born in different states. His first child, Laura, was born in 1835 in Wisconsin, Alonzo in 1837 in Missouri, Jasper in Texas in 1840 and Newton back in Missouri in 1843. His other four children were born in Yamhill County, Oregon.

Even though Jacob had been helping to build mills all over the Midwest and now owned part of a gristmill in Missouri, he was drawn to the West. By now Elizabeth was a strong 25-year-old lady who was able to provide great comfort and support to her husband. In this mood of success, they decided to "hook their wagons" to the trains on the Oregon Trail. Selling their part in the mill, they loaded up their wagons, including a pair of millstones, and set out in the middle of May 1843, part of the Great Migration. It is interesting to note that their baby, Newton, was only one month old when this trip started.

Jacob's supply wagon upset in the Burnt river near Farewell Bend and many of his tools were lost. However, they found the heavier tools that sank, plus the millstones, and saved them to take on to the Willamette valley. Arriving at Dr. Marcus Whitman's mission, they rested a few days and repaired their wagons. Dr. Whitman noticed the millstones and asked Jacob if he was a millwright. Jacob of course was and asked if he could be of any help. Whitman had a small hand-powered grinder that was very slow. He let everybody use it but only for a short time, so all would have a chance to grind some wheat. The stones were big enough so that Jacob could fashion them into good, even though small, millstones. He then devised a sweep that a horse could pull around working the stones and thus increasing the output of the mill several fold.

The Hawn's arrived in Oregon City early in the fall of 1843, hungry, wet and unsure of their future in this rain soaked land. However, Dr. John McLaughlin was aware of Jacob's arrival and rushed to Oregon City to meet this man. Dr. McLaughlin had ordered the machinery for his gristmill sometime earlier and had it in storage. However, he had not found a man that could build his mill. Glad to find Jacob, he hired him to build the mill on the river, using the waterpower of the falls. He put the family up in good quarters and provided food and clothing to see them through the winter. In the winter of 1843 and the year 1844, Jacob not only built McLaughlin's grist mill but also a water powered sawmill on an island in the Willamette, also helping build a bridge out to the sawmill.

Both mills were very successful and would have made McLoughlin wealthy if the presiding political parties had not wrestled control of the land from him.

Jacob soon staked out his claim in Yamhill County, a nice spot in Moores Valley. It was there in 1846 that he and Elizabeth had Mellisa.

Soon after, however, he grew tired of farming and moved to Lafayette where he started a mill and a hotel. It is unsure whether this mill burned down or if there was not enough "fall" in the river to provide power. It was his first failure. His hotel was a great success. He called it the Lafayette House but most people called it Hawn's Tavern. That may be the real reason for its great success. He, like many others, made the expected trip to the Gold Fields in California where he was able to amass some wealth. However, he had left his wife in charge of the "Tavern" and she had put more money away than he had prospected. That was the usual story for those Lafayette families.

Joel Perkins, the founder of Lafayette and outstanding businessman married Jacob's daughter, Laura, when she was 14 years old. This gave him another 1/2 section of land to claim. He had taken Laura and a company of men to California to gather supplies, animals and goods to sell in Oregon. On the way home, they stopped to rest on the Rouge River for a few days. Joel's friend, John Malone and Joel's wife Laura had become romantically involved on the trip and decided they needed to make an escape. However, John, in a drunken stupor shot Joel.

The pair were arrested and put in the Jackson County Jail where Malone confessed the whole crime but did not implicate Laura. He finally hung himself to escape further shame. Laura was released since there was no evidence of her involvement. Laura was pregnant on this trip and the family is not sure who the father was. However, Laura did enter a second marriage for a short time and finally on to a third marriage that seemed stable, producing a strong family. The above tragic event has always been a bitter pill for the Hawn and Perkins families to swallow.

Jacob Hawn was now ready to get out of the Hotel business and get back to his real love, building mills. He sold his Hotel to Tucker Scott, Abigail Scott Duniway's father, and went looking for work. He soon had more work than he needed. He constructed Newby's mill in McMinnville, the Jarvis grist mill, Derry mill near Rickreall, mills on the Long Tom River, a grist mill near Carlton, one on Ramsey Creek, also one on Willamina Creek and a mill on the Fort Yamhill Reservation. You can see that he was a busy man. Jacob Hawn died in 1860 as his youngest child of eight was just five years old. Even with his great building ability he didn't leave his family with much. His wife Elizabeth and family moved to The Dalles to be near her boys who had taken jobs to help support their mother.



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!

Calendar of Events

Board of Directors: 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, December 13th. 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 will be presented by **Lois Brooks on teaching in Alaska.**

New Members/Renewals: We welcome renewing members **Doris Cruickshank, William Messner, Jeanette Christensen, Diane Kroll, James Vincent, Joanne Watts, Lila & Frank Myers, Virginia Johnson, Johnny Edwards,** and new members **Dian Rinks, Brian & Gin Pelletier, Steven Chownyk, Barbara Mitchell, Susan Park, Bryan Joyce and Tim Marsh.** Thanks for supporting our organization. We invite you to attend our meetings, visit our museum and become more involved in our local history!