

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

Summer 2002

Board Highlights

The meeting was held April 9th at the Amity Elementary School. The subject of dues was brought up again, with a final determination made to delete the word sustaining and restructure them as shown on the back page of this newsletter. The **Treasurer's report** was accepted (March income \$1042, expenses \$1568, net difference \$526. Lila Jackson reported two new life members, four renewals and one loss of member... Mr. Berg. **Correspondence** Secretary Marjorie Owens reported one inquiry and wrote three correspondences. **Volunteer Chair** Eileen Lewis reports Kathy Peck will be working 20 hours per week at the Museum under a Green Thumb project.

Under **Old Business**, Shirley will purchase a copy of the Oregon Burial Site Guide for our library. Dan will check on surveys / property markers at the northwest corner of our property to see if the fence is correctly placed along our westerly line. Barbara Doyle and Joanne Watts are finalizing plans for "Treasures in the Attic". Shirley and Eileen will attend the Oregon Heritage Conference in Newport on May 9th—11th. **New Business:** Ways to increase revenues were discussed, as follows: 1.) Admission charge—not approved at this time, 2.) Dues increase—see above, 3.) Copy machine charges—all copies are to be charged at \$0.25 henceforth, 4.) Donation jars/boxes will have bigger signs, and revenues will be collected daily from these, 5.) Welcome Wagon needs flyers from YCHS, 6.) Ask members to "talk up" the Museum to get more visitors and members. 7.) Invite community groups to hold meetings in the Log Building, suggesting donations of \$2 per invitee, 8.) Continue articles in the newsletter reminding members that this is a volunteer organization and that operational costs continue to rise, 9.) Seek additional funding to pay for the second half of printing costs of "Old Yamhill", 10.) Change by-laws to include term limits, and seek accountant, lawyer, college professor, community big-wig, business owner, and/or politician for board membership. The Board rejected this one. 11.) Collaboration with the two colleges in our area (we already do this to a certain extent). 12.) Rotate exhibits in the museum (this is done but could be performed more frequently) 13.) Request donations for archival materials to help preserve organic items such as papers, photos, leather and wood. Some materials are available for this, but money is still an obstacle. Bids have been received for dehumidifiers and visqueen for under the Church building... we may pursue a grant from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde for this, prepared by three of our members. The Nomadic Teacher presentation was given 10 times in March, returning \$70 to YCHS. We received a donation of \$132 from First Federal. Shipping on all books sales (if required) will henceforth be fixed at \$4 each.. Our Museum gutters will be cleaned based on a bid of \$175. It was noted that the Oriental Garden restaurant, Wilco Farmers, Arby's, Kraemers Garden & Pet, and Monrovia each donated items for our non-raffle.

From Our President:

MONEY: It seems to be the top subject of all our conversations. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the Defense Dept. had to have a bake sale to declare a war? Maybe that is a little far fetched but it would be nice for the Historical Society to be able to get on with its work without the constant question, "Where will we get the Funds?" Therefore we are sorry to have to raise the membership dues. The single membership will be \$15 and the family will be \$25. All other memberships can be found on the back of the newsletter. We hope not to have to raise these dues for quite some time. This dues change will become effective **May 31, 2002**. Thanks to Frank Dummer for obtaining the donation of trees & plants from the Monrovia Nursery for the "give-away" at our General Meeting. Great Fun!!!. It was nice to see Jean Novotny from the McMinnville Job & Career Center & Kathleen Peck at our General Meeting. Kathleen Peck will be working & training at the Museum for the next few months. This is made possible by the "Green Thumb Program". Eileen Lewis and I will be attending the "Oregon's Heritage Conference" in Newport on May 9-11. We will be attending several good workshops and informative meetings. I hope to see you at the picnic as well as at the special presentation given by Al Le Page on **August 13th**. Have a wonderful summer. Sincerely Shirley.

"Last October" by Arlie Holt

At our April General meeting in Amity, two completely unrelated events which occurred last October were discussed by Arlie Holt, Polk County Historian, and former Dallas High School English teacher. First he discussed more discoveries in the ongoing tale of the documents of James Layton Collins, who came to Oregon in an 1846 wagon train. Arlie recently received 35 bankers boxes full of papers, pictures, letters, books and a diary. This was followed by four steamer trunks; from these items, over 3000 letters were saved, including one written by Helen Keller to James. Arlie has stewardship of these items, and is still itemizing them. Next, Arlie discussed a documentary recently produced by a London film making company focusing on singer Johnnie Ray, who was born in 1927 in Dallas.

Johnnie died in 1990, but his popularity in England is still very high, and the London firm contacted Arlie to help in coordinating their filming efforts in Oregon. The filming efforts included re-enactments of some of the more important events in Johnnie's life as he grew up in Dallas. At least three homes in Dallas were claimed to be his birthplace, and the true birthplace was eventually determined. The video was shown in England on March 31st. Arlie recalls meeting Johnnie when he was in High School. Arlie was assisted in some of his efforts by one of his former students, Nancy (Linscheid) Noble, who was also present at the meeting. Many thanks to our Polk County compatriots for all their hard work, and for putting on a great presentation!

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 - 2002

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MUSEUM HOURS

September 1 - May 31:
Sat-Sun 1 to 4 PM

June 1—August 30:
Fri-Sat-Sun 1 to 4 PM
or
By Appointment

605 Market Street
Lafayette Oregon
Phone: 864-2308

Websites: YCHS is at
http://
sites.onlinemac.com/
history & historic
photo gallery is at

Special Presentation Scheduled

August 13th of this year will see a very special presentation for our society. In mid-August of 1826, Alexander Roderick McLeod passed through the Yamhill valley on his way back from the central Oregon coast. He and Peter Skene Ogden were Chief Fur Traders for Hudson's Bay Company. Mr. Ogden's travels took him easterly and southerly, while Mr. McLeod went south and west from Fort Vancouver.

Al Le Page, Executive Director of the National Coast Trail Association, will give a two hour presentation focusing on the trails and experiences of Mr. McLeod's trip through Yamhill County 176 years ago, almost to the day. Al has a one hour slide show, which will be followed up with another half-hour of general discussion and wrapping up with a question and answer period. Please mark this one on your calendar. This presentation will take place at **7:00 p.m. at the Yamhill County Public Works Auditorium**. This will not be a potluck meeting, but we may have some light refreshments for our audience during a brief break. If you are at all interested in early history of Yamhill County, be sure to attend this presentation. The information below is from Al's webpage, at <http://www.coasttrails.org>:

It's 1826 and a Chief Trader of the Hudson's Bay Company -- Alexander Roderick McLeod -- is leading the first expedition to ever explore the central Oregon coast! There are mountains to climb, long beaches to travel, deep rivers to cross, rocky headlands to surmount, lush forests to push through, trapping to be done, and encounters with tribal members to trade for furs, food, and canoes. Join Al LePage, executive director of the National Coast Trail Association, as Hudson's Bay Company officer "Alexander McLeod", as he takes you back in time from the gates of Fort Vancouver to the tribal village site on the Siuslaw River at Florence. His colorful slides of the historic route and stories of this expedition, promise to be both entertaining and informative. Each presentation will take place when LePage is actually retracing the 150-mile expedition himself by bike, horse, kayak, and on foot -- and at the same approximate calendar date McLeod was in the local area! He knows whereof he speaks!



Above: Leah, owner of the Antique Gallery, & customer

Treasures in the Attic

Bring your treasures to "Treasures in the Attic", an antiques appraisal event at the museum on 29 June from 10 am to 3 pm. Leah and several other dealers and/or appraisers will answer your questions - a la "The Antiques Road Show". The cost is \$4 per item or three items for \$10, with three being the maximum number of items per person. Large items must be left in your vehicle until your time with the appraiser.

Because all proceeds benefit the Yamhill County Historical Society, we'd like to see a large crowd. So share this information with friends and acquaintances and invite them to this event. All the appraisers have volunteered their services at no charge to the society. We thank them; we hope you will thank them. For more information, call Joanne at 503-835-5893.

Scheduled Events—Summer, 2002

- June 29—Treasures in the Attic (at the Museum, 10 am to 3 pm)
 - August 3—Annual Picnic (Amity Park—Potluck)
 - August 13—Coast Trails Presentation (Yamhill County PW Auditorium—7 pm)
- NOTE: this newsletter will be your final notice of these events unless you attend our meetings.**

Homeschoolers Visit

Historical Society member Ruth Andreas brought her home schooling group (some from as far away as Mt. Angel, Salem, Sublimity) to the museum on 19 April for a Nomadic Teacher presentation. 31 children (ages 3 to approx .13) plus parents heard stories from Barbara Doyle and got to see and touch 'lots of stuff' about the food, clothing shelter and tools of the local Native Americans.

Oral Book Auction at May meeting:

We have about two dozen old books to auction at our next meeting and they will be on display before the meeting. Included will be the one we tried to auction last month, by J.C. Cooper, but got our wires crossed. Some were donated by Lois Brooks, some by Victoria Charbonier, and some came from the back room in the Museum. All proceeds go toward our general fund.

Dona Elvira Apperson Fellows' story represents the ruggedness and resourcefulness of the early pioneer woman. She is not a bona fide Yamhill County pioneer, but has a story we want to tell. Some of her family settled in McMinnville and she lived here for a short time in the 1880's and 1890's. There are, of course, Appersons still in the McMinnville area. Elvira was Jim Apperson's and Patsey Apperson Miller's great-great aunt. Patsey remembers seeing and talking to her.

Ten-year-old Elvira Apperson was the fifth of nine living children making the trip across the prairie with their parents, Beverly and Jane Tubbs Apperson. Beverly was born in Virginia and Jane in Tennessee. They were married in Missouri in 1830, having met after their respective families moved there. Seventeen years later, they finally succumbed to Oregon Fever and joined a wagon train west.

It was not long before Beverly came down with mountain fever and died. He was a strong, healthy, good humored man so the whole train was shocked at the news of his sudden death. The Apperson's had two wagons so Jane had the men make a coffin out of one. After a short service, they buried Beverly in the middle of the trail. This would allow the wagons and stock to pack the earth and hide the scent from wolves. This also prevented the Indians from robbing the grave for clothes.

Emigrant mother meets challenge

Jane then abandoned the running gear, ox yoke and some of their outfit. She finished the trip with one wagon and her nine children-the youngest just a baby. They were Sarah, Matilda Jane, Harriet Rebecca, John T., Dona Elvira, Albert J. (known as A.J. who was Letha Apperson's grandfather-in-law), Susan, Jacob and Milton.

Jane decided to take the new Barlow Trail when they reached The Dalles. The trail had just been scouted out by Sam Barlow and Joel Palmer and was hardly wide enough for the wagons. They found a "fierce road," but made it through to Portland, which was not much of a town in 1847; a few shanty's, a small sawmill and a dock or two. However, it was fast becoming a port for ships sailing to California and other points.

Jane Apperson had no money. She had nine hungry children to feed, no "food stamps or welfare and no jobs for women in the sawmill." Being a typically resourceful pioneer mother, she "took in washing!" She visited the ships coming in, gathered their laundry and soon had more washing than she could handle. Jane couldn't cope with the physical labor so, as soon as possible, she started a boarding house which was located on Second street between Washington and Stark in Portland.

Still there was not enough money! What to do? An older daughter, Sarah, was married at 15 and went south to the gold fields. Jacob took a claim near Dayton, Oregon. John T. set out on his own, worked in Oregon City and eventually became a riverboat captain. With three of the children gone lighten her burden but one more would really help. So, she decided to have Elvira get married! Elvira told her story to Fred Lockett*

Elvira's story

"In 1851 Mother was pretty hard run to earn enough money for us to live on, so when a man named Julius Thomas, a cook in a restaurant, offered to marry me, Mother thought I had better take him, so I did. He was 44 and I was 14. Back in 1851 we had slavery of Negroes in the South, and we had slavery of wives all over the United States, and saloons wherever there were enough people to make running one pay. What could a girl of 14 do to protect herself from a man of 44, particularly if he drank most of the time, as my husband did? I still shudder when I think of the years of my girlhood, when I had to live with that husband. When he was drunk he often wanted to kill me, and he used to beat me until I thought I couldn't stand it. One time he came to my mother's house, where I had taken refuge. I locked the door. He tried to climb in at the window, but I held it down. This enraged him so, he took out his pistol and shot at me. The bullet passed just above my head. The glass fell on me and scared me so I dropped to the floor. He looked in, saw me lying on the floor, and, thinking he had killed me, put the end of the pistol barrel into his mouth and pulled the trigger and I was a widow."

Elvira finds a new life

During this time, John T. Apperson became a riverboat pilot between Oregon City and Portland. This route expanded up the Willamette so his business prospered. Working with him on the boat, the Clinton, was his brother, A.J., and an engineer named Edwin Fellows. John introduced Edwin to his sister, Elvira. He was the first man she ever felt good about so, at 20, she became Mrs. Edwin Fellows. They had no children of their own but adopted a boy and a girl.

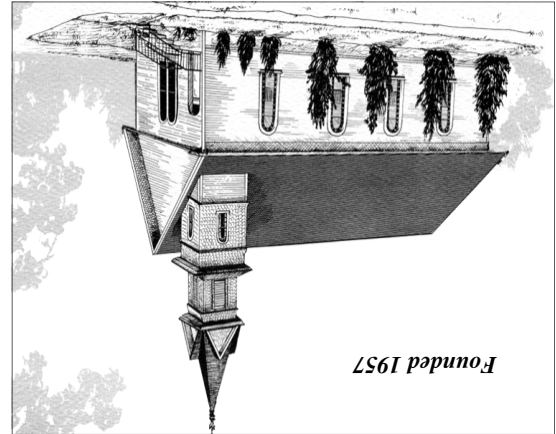
Soon, John Apperson and Edwin Fellows decided to go into business for themselves. They were on the Clinton when it caught fire and burned in 1861. They bought the burned boat and two others-the Yamhill and the St. Clair. They rebuilt the Clinton and began hauling freight and passengers between McMinnville and Portland. Usually, they stopped at Dayton but during the winter they could go up the river as far as McMinnville. It was a lucrative business. Soon they added a new shallow draft boat that had just been launched. It was called the "Unio." During the Civil War, businesses in Oregon were prone to not show favorites. However, one night Edwin and John decided to add an "n" to the name of the boat and show their colors-UNION! Evidently, that was a success as they did well from then on.

Edwin Fellows died in 1891. He was sorely missed by Elvira who lived on to age 93, passing away in her favorite town, Portland, in 1930.

*The Lockett Files, "Conversations with Pioneer Women," by Fred Lockett, Compiled and Edited by Mike Helm.



Dated Material - Address Correction Requested



YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 P.O. Box 484
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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 Lila Jackson at 472-8510. Alternatively, check your mailing label, which should show this information also.

**YAMHILL COUNTY
 HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Meeting Notice

Board of Directors - May 14th, 5:00 pm

Monthly Meeting & Potluck—May 14th, 6:30

Both at Yamhill County Public Works Building, 2060 Lafayette Ave., McMinnville

Our April Program will feature a historic overview of the Polk-Yamhill County Line... it's origin, survey(s), problems and recent discoveries, presented by the County Surveyors of the two counties, John Nemecek and Dan Linscheid, respectively. We also have a number of books to auction, which will be on display for you to review prior to the auction. Please join us for dinner; bring potluck fare and your own eating utensils.

We Hope to See you There!