

# The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

Summer 2005

## The Willamina Brick plant

When Charlene Brown sets her mind on researching for a new book, it's full steam ahead! She has done it again with her newly released "Brickburg, The Story of the Willamina Oregon Brick Plant", and she selected many of the best historical tidbits on the plant to share with us at our May meeting, which was held in Willamina. There was a proposal to change the name of the town to Brickburg, given its reputation for making fine bricks, but it fell through.



Between 1907 and 1974 this was the largest non-timber industry in the area. The business started in 1892 in Newberg, initiated by C.J. and O.K. Edwards, sons of Jesse Edwards, who was one of the founders of Newberg. They soon found a good source of raw materials just north of Willamina, and for years transported clay to Newberg for firing.

In 1907 the move was made to the opposite end of the county, and the railroad line was extended from Sheridan westerly to town, with a spur running to the plant up Willamina creek. The basic brick making process changed little over the years, becoming more mechanized and having larger capacities. Moving clay from the pit to the storage bins was changed from mules and wagons at first, later by truck. These bins would hold enough clay to allow production to continue through the winter, when the material could not be mined from the pits.

After being ground up, sifted and sorted by color, conveyor belts moved the fine dust to the "Mixer". This worker selected the various combinations of materials to give the desired result, and the mix was next moved by conveyor to an adjacent building to be combined with water. After being cut into strips and bricks or tile using wires, they moved next to the kiln, which fired them between 1200 and 2100 degrees. They were held at the higher temperature for 24 hours, and then allowed to cool for 4 or 5 days, when they could be moved for packing and shipment.

There were ups and downs for the business, including the 1918 bankruptcy and closure until reopening in 1923, and a 1938 fire which destroyed all but one (wooden) building. By 1974, with stricter government safety and mining regulations, a decision was made to shut down operations. In 1976, the 82 year old brick plant was torn down by the new owner, Willamina Lumber.

## Board Meeting Highlights

**At the May meeting**, -Carol Reid reported that we have enough volunteers for our Friday Museum openings through the summer— we had 45 guests at our Mothers Day Tea— we've had three tours by groups over as many weeks—the Board declined involvement in any legal action concerning the possible damage to the Lafayette Pioneer cemetery, since it took place prior to our ownership—membership renewals will be based on a calendar year (or some variant) instead of having to process renewals each month— by-laws changes have been proposed and will be discussed at a future meeting. **At the June meeting**, - a meeting was scheduled at the museum to discuss the membership renewal transition—an admission fee was established at the museum, signs to be posted post haste—motion activated security cameras will soon be installed in our three facilities—YCHS will participate in parades in Dayton (7/29) and Lafayette (8/13), with Joanne Watts organizing this—Harvest festival was scheduled for October 15th—purchase of Past Perfect museum software was authorized—presentations on the proposed museum will begin later this year and will take about a year to complete. For details on any of the above, see posted minutes in the museum.

## Bob Kuykendall passes on

Too late for inclusion in our last newsletter, we noted the passing of Rev. Bob Kuykendall, one of the few remaining founding members of our society. He was the Grandson of N.K. Sitton, an 1843 pioneer of the county. Bob will be sorely missed and our thoughts go out to his wife Shirley.

**Recent Accessions**—**Elma Shuck**, a signature quilt from her school days—**Lisa Baggia**, Jail house bar windows from old Lafayette jail—**Ellen Allen**, 20 embroidered quilt blocks w/signatures—**Bill Ramax**, old pamphlets and phone directory—**Trappist Abbey**—Vestment robe and accessories, **Nancy Hollenbeck**, quilt from Sidney Smith family (1840's), **Janis Sander**, Applique Quilt—strawberries (1855), **Carl & Donna Caswell**, school house (Muddy Valley/Eagle Point #14) - **Joanne Watts**, The History of Polk County.

**Tea Party success:** The May 7th Mothers Day Tea party was attended by 45 guests. All guests received a prize of one sort or another. **Gloria Lutz, Louise Heindl, Annita Linscheid, Kathy Peck** and **Carol Reid** donated handmade tarts, scones, cakes and cookies. The Wednesday prior to the party was a flurry of activity, as the Wednesday workgroup transformed the log cabin into a tea parlor with a pink and green color scheme. Over \$400 was raised for preservation of our artifacts! Along with those mentioned above, **Joanne Watts, Neva French, Julia Amen, Lorna Grauer, Jean Sartor, Farrel Fuerst, Marjorie Owens** and one of An-nita's Grandsons and 2 of his cousins served the attendees.

*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*

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**MUSEUM HOURS****July thru August:**

Fri. 1 to 4 p.m.  
Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

or

By Appointment

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Lafayette Oregon

Phone: 864-2308

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YCHS

**Museum Visitations**

Once again Paul Studebaker brought an Abacus group to visit the Museum—4 young men and 2 young women. They were so polite and so appreciative, that showing them through the three buildings was a real pleasure.

Paul has been working with Abacus (a rehabilitation program of Yamhill County Mental Health), for 14 years, and has been to our museum several times in the past. Friday, April 22 was a beautiful day for this tour.

Museum tours in May and June were as interesting and entertaining for the four guides as for the visitors. On May 2nd a group of 27 head start teachers from around the county spent 2½ hours (1) learning the history of the church from Twila Byrnes, (2) looking at the exhibits, (3) eating sack lunches (which were provided for us too), and (4) listening to Marjorie Owens tell about the Yamhill Locks and the Lafayette Gypsy's curse. They were an enthusiastic bunch hard to keep in tow. Kyle Swift ran errands.

The following Monday, May 9th, students from the Life Christian Academy, about 25 children grades two through twelve, plus several adults, visited. Patsey Miller took them through the log building, Twila Byrnes was the church guide Ed Roghair and Fred Hisaw showed them the barn.

Next, Friday the 13th, a Good Sam group, the Trail Busters, arrived in the afternoon. The members were from Nehalem, Madras, Monmouth, and Yamhill. Dyanne Shaver, the RV Good Sam State Director, was with them. We almost always learn something from our visitors, and this time Fred and Ed found out the use of one item in the barn they'd been unable to identify. Alva Seward (Yamhill) said it's a contraption to hold apig's head still while a ring is inserted in its nose.

June 2nd was a very full day as three classes walked from Washcer School (and skipped or ran back); the first group of mixed kindergarten and 4th graders arriving at 8:30 a.m. with their teachers Katherine Elstrom (K) and Julie Schaffer (4th), along with other adult helpers.

As this group was leaving, the second group (also kindergarten and 4th grade), arrived with 4th grade teacher Brenna Coed. After they left we had a relaxing break for lunch before the third class, all kindergarten with their teacher Raye Van Den Bosh, appeared. These three classes were well organized and well behaved, so it was a fun day. All the children thanked us when they left, even the tiny boy who wanted to close his eyes when he came down the log building stairs so he wouldn't see that "scary bear".

On June 3rd, Carol Bacon brought her 4th graders from St. James Catholic School in McMinnville at 9:30 a.m.—14 students accompanied by two mothers. Carol has been bringing her students for many, many years (she and Ruth Stoller were close friends); but this was her last year as she is retiring. We will miss her and hope whoever follows her will keep up the tradition.

During some of these tours others driving by saw the buildings open and asked to join us. We had folks from Kentucky, California and Utah among local people join us. Lois Brooks

**2005 Watts Family Threshing Bee**

This annual event is set for Sunday, August 21st, from 1 to 4 p.m. at 16600 S.W. Christensen Road, McMinnville. For more information, call 503-835-5893 or 503-835-1393. This year they will not host a big potluck—just deserts, towards the end. They are also adding a tractor parade.



**Father Martinus**

Martinus Cawley is an avid historian, as well as a kind and enthusiastic gentleman, and we felt honored this month to have him submit the article on the facing page.



**St. Michael's Roman Catholic Parrish**

Established in 1860 and still active today at 4820 S.W. Hebo Road, Grand Ronde.

Father Adrien Croquet ("Crockett"), the Grand Ronde missionary (1860-98), was born near Waterloo, Belgium in 1818, just three years after Napoleon's defeat there. At age 12 he saw Catholic Belgium win independence from Protestant Netherlands, and so he grew up in a milieu very different from pluralist America. Though delighted when Protestants offered to help build him a church, he was puzzled to learn that they would expect him to share the building with other denominations. Ecumenism was hardly known in those days, but a few decades later a nephew of his, Cardinal Désiré Mercier, would creatively pioneer rapprochement with the Anglican Church, and Fr Crockett's own courtesy and culture made for harmony with all but the most prejudiced.

His early years as a priest were spent serving the shabbiest hamlets of his native parish. When nearing the age for promotion to higher offices, he read of the Rocky Mountain missionary, Fr de Smet, and so he enlisted at the newly founded American College in Louvain to learn English and prepare to serve in Oregon. After a year's apprenticeship in Oregon City, a veteran missionary guided him around Oregon's Indian reservations and Archbishop Blanchet assigned him to those of Siletz and Grand Ronde, and also the Whites of adjacent areas.

The Native leadership at Siletz and Grand Ronde included some half-breeds from Canada, who shared the early trappers' Catholic heritage and now warmly welcomed him in their midst. He was also welcomed by the largely garrisons of the two forts and by the Indian Agent at Grand Ronde, but not by the one at Siletz, who saw fit to hold the two priests at bay while he tried to give a minister friend of his a chance to get in first. Moreover, some White employees, being loose in their morals, were keen to exclude preachers of any kind.

Catholic Worship at Siletz: 1860-1926 Apart from this reluctance among the White personnel, the very inaccessibility of Siletz gave Fr Crockett little opportunity to visit his sympathizers there. He did, however, try to meet them each summer on his trips down to coast. In 1872 he got his Grand Ronde choir to sing a Mass under a spreading tree on the shore of Devil's Lake, and by 1879 the authorities were allowing him to make quiet visits to Siletz proper. By 1890 they were actively calling for a priest, and Fr Crockett, then in his 70s, encouraged Fr Felix Bucher to make frequent visits from his base in Corvallis.

When an epidemic struck at Siletz, Fr Felix took up residence there, and the famous George Harney became his right-hand man. Moreover, Archbishop Gross put him into contact with an old friend of his from his days in Savannah, Georgia, the wealthy heiress, Katharine Drexel, who wanted her late father's fortune to go to missions to Indians and Blacks. The Pope persuaded her to found a new religious community and to team up with the powerful Archbishop of Philadelphia and so make sure that the wealth was bestowed as efficiently as possible to that end. She named the church Guadalupe, after the Mexican shrine most dear to the Aztec peasants.

Around the turn of the century, a dizzying series of events forced Fr Felix to reside at Grand Ronde and eventually to leave Siletz to other priests. The most memorable of these was a French-Canadian, Fr Charles Raymond, who had done outstanding work throughout Yamhill County in from 1908 to 1915. Appointed to Newport about 1923, he promptly moved his residence to Siletz and promptly won the hearts of the parishioners. He was no preacher, but a magnificent singer and very gifted with hammer and nails. He enlisted his artist friend, Emil Jacques, to decorate the church and the high school auditorium.

This was the epoch of the T-model Ford and a new highway was opening up the coast for recreation. Fr Raymond conjured up a dream village where his Siletz parishioners could fraternize and build mutually helpful friendships with the cream of Portland parishioners he had served in earlier years.

So he bought up 80 acres slightly north of D River, got it platted as "Raymond Town" (later called Ocean Lake, and now just part of Lincoln City). At the heart of it he personally built the original St August Church (now called St Augustine's), which he dedicated on the last Saturday of May, 1925, amid much singing and fun. Unfortunately this dream was very soon brought to an abrupt end, due in part to the less imaginative policies of a new Archbishop.

Successive Catholic Churches at Grand Ronde Agency: Fr Crockett's preliminary tour brought him to the Grand Ronde Agency in June, 1860, where the Canadian half-breed, Louis Nep-pusing, lent his house as a rendez-vous for meeting his future flock. Louis was the prestigious leader of the Umpquas, upon whom Joel Palmer had relied entirely to reconcile the belligerent groups and win their consent to settle into the reservations.

The Agents in charge in Fr Crockett's first years were sympathetic and promptly built him a cabin in which to live and to receive his flock. By October, 1862, they had also proved a church, measuring 45' x 20'. Though the Indians had welcomed him from the first, he generally baptized only the children that were brought to him and adults in danger of death, since the marital arrangements of many adults were at odds with Church Law. Happily, a 50-year-old Santiam Calapooia named Louise Sailas took an eager lead, and with her help, by his second Christmas Fr Crockett had 18 adults ready for Communion at Midnight Mass. They spent the earlier part of the night in his cabin -- chatting, praying, and practicing the Chinook hymn

In the early 1870s, thanks to a Catholic Agent, a school was set up, run by Sisters and complete with a chapel in which to train a new generation in the life of prayer, but, like so many creative ideas on both reservation, this too was marked by many disappointments.

Just after Easter, 1883, Archbishop Seghers opened a handsome new church, built by the Indians themselves. It measured approximately 30' wide, 30' high and 70' long. The bay nearest the entry held a choir loft, and the two furthest bays were a two-story combination of sacristy, office and living quarters for the priest. Unfortunately its tall structure stood broadside to the prevalent winds, and it soon needed sturdy outside bracing. In 1938 it was replaced by the present structure, which had previously served as a mess hall at a CCC camp.

Early Mass Sites for Catholics of Yamhill County Early in 1848 some Irish Catholics moved from St Paul to settle in Muddy Valley, and Archbishop Blanchet, grateful for their services at his mill, wrote them a charter for a church of St Patrick there, to measure 30' x 20'. The California Gold Rush promptly put this on hold, but soon a priest from Portland started visiting and saying Mass in their homes. When the eldest of them, Barney Murray, saw death approaching, he got his son-in-law, James Coleman, to deed two acres to the Church, and he was duly buried there in November, 1859. Shortly after that, Fr Crockett arrived and resumed the Masses, and by June, 1861, his fervent flock had built him a church. After each monthly visits to St Pat's, Fr Crockett rode on and took the ferry to St Paul, stopping for news in Lafayette and for another Mass on one or other nearby farm. One of his stations still stands, and the corner of Breyman Orchards Road and the Old Highway. Another stood in the NE of the Trappist Abbey forest land, and is marked by a little shrine.

An old Catholic tradition might well have prompted himself Fr Crockett to build a shrine \* atop Spirit Mountain, which the local Natives had long honored as a place for deepening one's orientation in life. He did, in fact, guide Archbishop Blanchet to the summit one time, but they could take no action since it was government land. Across the Willamette, however, a similar sacredness has been perpetuated on the butte that has become Mt Angel Abbey.

# 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, August 9th in the Log Building. Our next regular monthly meeting will be held 6:30 p.m., September 13th at the Trinity Lutheran Church, Sheridan. Our program will be presented by **Daryl Jones** on the Agee family, early Sheridan pioneers.

- ▶ July 29, Dayton Parade (YCHS float)
- ▶ August 7, Summer Picnic @ Shirley V's
- ▶ August 13, Lafayette Parade (our float)
- ▶ August 21, Watts Threshing Bee
- ▶ Oct. 15, Harvest Festival at Museum
- ▶ Nov. 12, Quilt show/Tea party, "

**New Members/Renewals:** We welcome new members **Janice Tebow, Don Porter, Louise Gray, Lester and Evelyn Herring, Ralph Neely** and renewing members **Ruth McKibben, and Jean Sartor**, and the **Allen County Public Library**. Thanks for supporting our organization. We invite you to attend our meetings, visit our museum and become more involved in our local history!