

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MUSEUM, Lafayette, Oregon since 1969
 Open Saturdays and Sundays, 2 - 4 pm
 (except by appointment: 472-4547; 864-2589)

NOVEMBER

NEWS

1990

MEETING At NOON, MONDAY, November 12, 12 o'clock, at the Community Christian Church, 2831 N. Newby, McMinnville. Meal is potluck, and bring your own table service. Visitors always welcome. Program will be presented by Dr. Kenneth Holmes, retired professor from W.O.S.C., who also spent several years in the history department at Linfield College.

Our program is one you will not want to miss! Dr. Holmes was active in our Historical Society in its earlier years, and many of you will remember him well. He has edited and compiled a set of books, the Covered Wagon Women: Diaries and Letters from the Western Trails, 1840-1890. These are fascinating accounts of the wonderful and terrible experiences of these remarkable pioneer women, which will probably be his subject. Bring your family, and invite others!

You will note that we are meeting Monday noon this month, and very likely next month, also. Our speaker this month, like many of us, does not like to drive at night. We hope that this will not inconvenience some, but it is impossible to accomodate each individual.

After a problem with the Museum office heater last month, we want to make sure all who work there know about a fire extinguisher. A note will be left on the desk, so be sure to look for it and read it the next time you are on duty.

The mailing list will be reviewed after the first of the year. To keep the Newsletter coming, pay your dues to Mary Ogden, P.O. Box 273, Amity, OR, 97101. \$5. per year, per individual membership.

THE HANNA FAMILY

(We continue the story of the Hanna family from Jennie Hefty's manuscript of "Memories of Oregon from 1873".)

In the beautiful fertile Willamette Valley of the Oregon country to which these pioneers of the 1840's came, life had very little of the intense excitement and adventure characteristic of the writings of so many narrators of pioneer life. These people came to make homes in this land "flowering with milk and honey", as the men who came back to the East described it to the many men who were eager to take the long trip to a land where they could make a home for their families in a mild climate.

My grandfather, Stuart Hanna, worked on the Erie Canal. He was born in 1799 and crossed the plains with his wife and one little son in 1848. With him came his oldest son who as old as his wife, my grandmother, who was grandfather's fourth wife. No divorces, but each of the three wives had died, and each had left a son. William, the oldest, crossed to Oregon. Then there was Stuart, Jr., who must have visited Oregon when I was a small child as I seem to remember seeing and hearing of a very especially dear Uncle Stuart. My mother and her sister, Ella, impressed my childish mind with a strange sadness about poor Stuart, and I wondered if he had been disappointed in love and had died of grief, or if he had died of "Consumption", the sickness so dreaded and incurable then that people spoke of it only in whispers. When I asked about Uncle Stuart only vague remarks were made, so a sensitive child did not press the question.

Stuart Hanna must have started the western trek from Pennsylvania where his first son, William, was born; where he found his second wife and where Stuart, Jr. was born I do not know. But his third wife may have died in Illinois. She left the son named James. This wife had a very close friend whose baby boy was born the same day as James. She took James and nursed him as her own child. After a few years Stuart Hanna, still in Illinois, met a young girl, Mary Clark, who was at least twenty years younger than he. She was being badly used by a stepmother, and he felt sorry for her. Of course he fell in love with the tall, vivacious blue-eyed and red-haired girl, so they married. Grandmother always called him Father. They had one boy, Frank. Mary was carrying another child who was born in Oregon, named Mary. Before taking the trail to Oregon, Stuart Hanna went to get his boy, James, who then must have been about five years old. The woman who had kept him since his birth entreated Grandfather to let her keep James, and at last told him to take either her boy or James, she loved them equally. Grandfather left for Oregon without him. When James was a young man he came to visit his father. He became devoted to his father's young family and seemed grieved that his father had left him. The foster parents had been kind to him and he had much better educational advantages than the Oregon children had. He had a very happy married life as a successful farmer near Hiawatha, Kansas and retired to live in Hiawatha. He was able to visit, with his wife, his relatives in Oregon many times, and with one of his daughters in California.

(to be continued)

R.S.