

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MUSEUM, Lafayette, OR, since 1969
Hours - Sat & Sun 2 to 4 pm
(or by appt: 662-3788, 864-2589)

APRIL YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1992

MEETING Tuesday EVENING, April 14, at the Zion Lutheran Church,
301 S. River, Newberg.
FOR LUCK at 6:30. Bring own table service. Visitors welcome.

PROGRAM Lewis L. McArthur will tell about Oregon Geographic Names.
He is the author of the book on this subject, is a lifelong
member of the state's Advisory Committee on Landmarks, and
has served on the board of geographic names for many years.

From our Society's President:

The YCHS still has 4 twelve-foot church pews to sell and 22 spindles from the stair rail of the old McMinnville Court House. The spindles, which are stored in the museum barn, make nice table legs or whatever and are \$2.00 each. Call Roma Sitton at 472-7935 if you are interested in the church pews.

The museum has been given a tool chest handmade in 1925 and several carpenter's tools. Donald Jole, the donor, is a former resident of Lafayette, and has written a letter dated March 16, which reads in part : "I just wanted to thank the Historical Society for the gracious way in which my father's tool box and old tools, and other equipment, were accepted. I am proud to leave them under your care, and for posterity."

Thanks again to all the members who have so faithfully helped to keep the museum open and clean all winter -- Roma Sitton, Mariam Blair, Lila Jackson, George and Maxine Williams, Elma Shuck, Edna Robertson, Twila and Harry Byrnes, John and Betty White, and Ed and Peggy Roghair on Sundays; and Ruth Stoller, of course, every Saturday with her helper, Olive Merry Johnson. We owe Olive Merry a special thanks, not only for her work with Ruth, but for taking time to replace the burned-out bulbs in the glass display cases with the new ones purchased by John and Betty White, to whom we also owe special thanks. And thanks to Harvey Stoller for taking care of other light fixtures in the museum.

L.B.

THE SHERIDAN FLUME

(Mrs. Larry Rich wrote this article recently for a class at Western Oregon State College at Monmouth. We are grateful to him for allowing us to use it. It is an interesting history of a western Yamhill County landmark that stood from about 1908 (when it was finished) until it was completely dismantled in 1924.)

Elias Buell was born on July 20, 1797 in Benton, New York. He began his journey to Oregon on May 14, 1847, arriving at Fort Vancouver on November 15th. After wintering there he headed down the valley and settled on a land claim in Polk County near the present town of Buell.

Elias began farming twenty-five acres and put up a blacksmith shop. When gold was discovered in California, Elias headed south on September 14, 1848 and returned in May 1849 with over \$2,000 in gold.

Elias began building a sawmill on Mill Creek in March 1851. This sawmill was washed out by high water on January 2, 1863 and another sawmill was built that same year. The new sawmill was located on the present site of the Mill Creek Recreation Park.

It appears that the ownership of the sawmill changed several times before the turn of the century. In 1904, Elias Yeaton, H. Johnson, and a Mr. Stephens of Lyons, Nebraska came to Portland looking for a new business location. In 1905, they bought the Buell sawmill located 2 1/2 miles south of the Buell Store from a Mr. March. Later that year, Charley Shumway, B. Shumay, and Mr. Letts of Chicago; and E.V. Paul and Fremont Everett from Lyons, Nebraska, came west and bought in with Elias Yeaton & Company. This group formed the Sheridan Lumber Company.

Their plan was to build a large plant. They used the small mill to cut lumber for a planing mill to be built in Sheridan and a flume to carry the lumber to town. This sawmill had a capacity of 100,000 board feet per day and required an operating crew of 25. The mill included a cookhouse, bunkhouse, family houses, blacksmith shop, oil house, office, storage building, and a large barn. The mill was operated entirely by steam.

The lumber was hauled by team and wagon to Sheridan to be sold or shipped by rail. When local people needed lumber, they bought it directly from the mill and hauled it themselves. As production improved at the sawmill and demand increased at the sales yard in Sheridan, it was clear that the transportation system from the mill to the Sheridan yard would have to change. Several alternatives were discussed, including a railroad line and a water flume.

Mr. Walker, who owned the Buell Store, campaigned among all the neighbors for the railroad. He took the position that it would be a real benefit to the community, since hay, grain, livestock and other farm products could all be moved by rail, whereas the flume could be used only for lumber. The lumber company's position was that they had an ample water supply and almost all the materials for the flume construction. The railroad would be much more expensive.

(To be continued.)

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