

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

February 2001

Another Lewis & Clark presentation:

In January we were honored to have Marjorie Owens of Sheridan give us another perspective on the travels and trails taken by Lewis and Clark. Armed with numerous slides, Marjorie related many of the things about the trek she learned during a trip taken last June in cooperation with the Oregon History Program at Chemeketa Community College. The group she was with followed a part of the trail.

The sixty one members and guests present at this meeting were rewarded with a multimedia show which included details of some of the problems the entourage endured. For example, during the month of July, the group only progressed 25 miles. They had no way to preserve food, so some was wasted. This was an excellent presentation by Marjorie and was captured on tape for posterity. If you missed it, come and view it at the museum sometime. Thanks for your efforts, Marjorie !

From President Shirley

Welcome to the year 2001. So many nice things are going on with the Yamhill County Historical Society: the wiring was completed in the barn, we have a new shop vacuum and have begun to attack the antique cobwebs. Following the death of Dorothy Miller we have received a beautiful bedroom suite. It is on display upstairs in the Log Museum.

New doors will be in place soon in the front of the Church. These were badly needed for security reasons. Betty White is donating them in memory of her late husband John. Plans are being made for the October 2001 Harvest Festival. A new 4th grade Oregon History School Program is under consideration.

The audio-visual program now has a VCR and monitor in place and several tapes available for viewing. Discussions concerning remodeling or construction of an addition to the Church are taking place. The possibility of having a program similar to the "Antique Road show" where the public is invited to bring in their prized possessions to be appraised is being considered for next year. The newsletter continues to be a wonderful source of communication with the membership. Volunteers are continuing to sort through Ruth Stoller items to be filed. It was suggested that we develop a "Family Display" from our files of pictures and information to be placed on one of our large bulletin boards. The changing displays throughout the museum add "Something New" to be seen. Outside groups continue to request time to visit the museum.

All of this is wonderful but it does require a lot of volunteers. At the present time we are lucky to have about 15 to 20 people who can be counted on to help with historical projects. During this year I am hoping all of our members can make an effort to help out with the museum or bring in at least one new member. There is something for everyone to do. I know you've heard this before, but it continues to be a problem. We need your help to solve it. Thought for the day: We may not have it all together but together we have it all!! See you at the museum—Shirley

Board Highlights:

The January meeting of the Board was attended by eleven members and officers. Treasurer Secretary Betty Brown discussed the Putnam Fund. There were some questions asked about fund levels that Betty was unable to answer without help from our consultant, so a motion was made and approved to table the report pending additional information.

Membership/Financial Secretary Lila Jackson reported ten renewals. We send out about 222 newsletters with 14 complimentary to Libraries, Cities and other local museums. We will be changing the numbers on our labels to reflect the final dues payable date.

Correspondence Secretary Marjorie Owens reported sending Harvest Festival thank you notes out as well as a card to the Miller relatives. \$50 will be put in the petty cash fund for more correspondence.

Volunteer Chair Maxine Williams reported that we need more Sunday volunteers (any takers out there?)

A proposal was presented for a program to visit 4th grade classrooms in the county with a one hour presentation on local history. Three programs were suggested: Pre-electricity Pioneers, Local Indians, and the Oregon Trail. These would be presented for \$25 each, with \$5 going to the Society. This proposal received approval by the Board: plans are underway to get this program ready for the Fall of this year.

Eleanor Mitchell has presented a copy of the book "Oregon Bear Man" to our Library.

Under old business the wiring in the Barn has been completed, and inmates from the county's work release program will be replacing items moved during the wiring project. Videos are now on the shelf at the museum ready to view. The outside sprinklers have been drained for the season. Morgan Maghee will fix the door on the Log Building, which makes a grating noise. Dan was directed to order 500 copies of our updated brochure.

The memorial service for Dorothy Miller will be held at 1:30 on January 27th in Portland.

Concept Paper: Dan presented a concept plan for an addition to the Museum. The next (and hardest) step is to raise the \$55,000 to \$80,000 need to implement it. The Lafayette City Building Inspector has indicated the proposal is reasonable and meeting various codes can be done. Members are asked to bring forward ideas on how this money could be raised. The plan basically calls for the demolition of the entire existing addition to the Church structure and replacement with an addition which will retain the existing architecture, while increasing our display floor space considerably.

Barbara Hinman suggested we make an effort to return the personal photos in the Gillam collection to the families. The Board approved this effort, and asked Barbara to work with others in doing this.

Shirley Venhaus will check into implementing a Treasures or Trash Show. On February 3rd quilts will be registered at the log building.

Respectfully, Submitted, Shirley McDaniel, Secretary

OFFICERS - 2001

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Newsletter

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MUSEUM HOURS

Sept 1 to May 31:
Sat-Sun 1 to 4 PM
or
By Appointment

605 Market Street
Lafayette Oregon
Phone: 864-2308

ANNUAL DUES

\$10.00 Individual
\$17.00 Family
\$125.00 Life

Mail to:

Financial Secty
2430 North Baker
McMinnville OR
97128

Monthly Meeting and Potluck

Our meeting this month will be on February 13th at 6:30 p.m. at the Seventh Day Adventist Church, on Old Sheridan Highway in McMinnville. Our program will feature Pat Harding, who will discuss her Grandfather, Walter Powell, a well-known pioneer in the area.

Please join us and bring a guest; we always have good food, good fellowship and a good time. Be prepared for at least one of Shirley's infamous jokes, and please bring potluck fare and your own tableware.

Documents Donated

Member Ruth Banke submitted a small boxful of papers she received from Morris Majors when he was a county commissioner. How he received them remains a mystery. Contained inside are an abstract for lots in the Oak Park Addition to McMinnville, a Stock Certificate for the Ferdon & Vurpillat Oil Land Syndicate of Sante Fe Springs (1922), pages from a family Bible on births, marriages and deaths dating between 1805 and 1922 for the Priser family of Newberg along with many other old documents. A tax receipt for the aforementioned Lots in McMinnville for the year 1921 indicates total property taxes for the year to be \$26.07. Some of these documents date back to the Nineteenth century. The name John W. Priser may not mean much to most of us, but a reader somewhere out there may sit up and take notice. The abstract will be filed with the rest of our abstracts and we may start a file in the Ruth Stoller Library on the Priser name.

Some of the documents not related to Yamhill County history may eventually hit eBay or our monthly auction block. Thanks, Ruth

Dorothy Miller Passes Away:

We were saddened to receive news of the loss of one of our biggest supporters and benefactors, Dorothy Miller. Born July 1, 1907, Dorothy died December 30, 2000. She married Verl Miller who preceded her in death several years ago. She was active in the Presbyterian Church and also with the Loaves and Fishes Program. She is shown in the picture on the left against the backdrop of our Log Building, under construction in 1994. She and her husband were the primary donors to this building



She attended college in her youth and became a worker with the Albertina Kerr Social Center in Portland. Betty White attended services for Dorothy on January 27th, and mentioned to the congregation how much our Society appreciated Dorothy's willingness to help our cause. Donations go to the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Portland or our Historical Society.

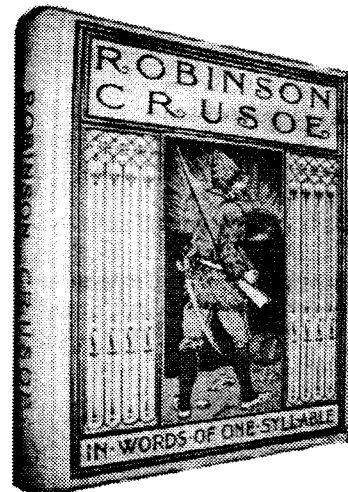


Book Auction Successful

Auctioneer Dan Linscheid was as surprised as anyone when the eighteen old books listed in last month's newsletter brought in a total of \$140 at oral auction during our last meeting. Bidding was hot and heavy, ranging from \$2 to \$17 per book.

Many comments were heard from the audience during this activity indicating some of these books were read quite some time ago, and the memories returned to days gone by. Look for more auctions in the future.

We thank the attendees for their active participation in purchasing these books. If we've somehow mistakenly auctioned off a rare edition of a book having a value of say, \$80,000 or so, we hope the buyer won't forget the Yamhill County Historical Society in his or her will. At our February meeting we will try this again, only this time



we are offering 7 bundles of the **Amity Standard**, dating from 1951 to 1954.

Each bundle contains 10 copies of mostly non-consecutive issues. These are all duplicates and not needed by the museum, but who knows.... some lucky person may have a special interest in some or all of these.

Darling Smith's name is one that has intrigued us for some time. Finally, a story in the March 6, 1989 McMinnville News-Register by Barbara Smith Bodeen, better acquaints us with this important family of Yamhill County.

Darling was the son of Andrew D. Smith and Polly Porter Smith. This couple lived in the State of New York and were married on September 21, 1817. Their children were: Elizabeth, born in 1818, William in 1820, Andrew in 1822, Darling in 1824, Ezra in 1826, Jane in 1827, Riley in 1829, Almond in 1831 and Adeline in 1835. They lost William and Ezra as infants and would lose Riley, Almond and Adeline after coming to Oregon. Riley drowned in the Yamhill Locks.

Andrew and Polly were not happy with their situation in New York and dreamt of a place where they could have a better life; a nice home, green pastures, fat cattle and friendly neighbors. They saw a chance for this when Dr. Elija White happened by their church expounding on the wonders of the Oregon Territories. Dr. White had been in Oregon with the Jason Lee Mission but had been discharged for improper conduct. Dr. White hurried back to Washington D.C. and was able to secure the position of "Sub-Indian Agent for the Oregon Territories." He was encouraged to gather a group of emigrants to take with him to settle the area.

Andrew's family was excited about the promises of this new land and prepared to join Dr. White. They would be the first emigrant train to cross the great plains to the Willamette Valley. They began their trip in the spring of 1842, a full year before the "First Great Emigration Train of 1843" which brought so many of our early pioneers to Yamhill County. There were about 20 wagons and over 100 people. Three wagons and nine of these people were the Smith family.

While the trip went smoothly, rumors of Indian atrocities frightened the emigrants. Word was that the Ogallala Sioux were on the war path and were torturously killing any whites that passed through their lands. Dr. White hired Thomas Fitzpatrick to guide them on to the Willamette Valley. He was known for being able to deal with the Indians. Another fortunate event was having F.X. Matthieu, who could speak the Sioux language, join the train. He, with six French-Canadian trappers were on their way to Oregon.

The only trouble they had was near Independence Rock where 5000 (sounds like a lot but apparently correct) Indians descended on their camp. They went from tent to tent looking in at the occupants. Dressed in little more than war paint they were scouting out the young women of the train. They gathered around the Smith camp. Andrew, near panic, send young Andrew to get Mr. Matthieu. Well, the Indians had their eye on Elizabeth and/or Jane as an appropriate gift to their great War Chief. Matthieu had to break the news to Andrew and Polly and then the fun began as they explained that the girls were not for sale. The Indians reportedly did not understand since the

White man was always buying Indian women for wives. The wagon train left before dawn the next morning to put this trouble behind them.

Passing through the Sioux country, up the North Platte and the Sweetwater to the Green River was with difficulty but without serious Indian problems. Fitzpatrick and Matthieu were able to get them through in good shape. However, the wagons were not holding up and most of them were cut in half to become carts. Finally, at Fort Hall the carts were abandoned and the party proceeded on foot with their goods on pack animals.

We are not sure what the Smiths did for the next few years but they were soon located in the present Dayton area. Andrew, Andrew Jr. and Darling Smith filed their claims in 1846. They soon had a log cabin on good land that included about half of the present city of Dayton. Their closest neighbors were Francis Fletcher, James O'Neil, Amos Cook, Joseph McLaughlin, Louis Labonte and George Gay; all among the earliest settlers in the area.

There weren't many people in the area to chose from but wonderful lifelong marriages were made. Upon arriving in Oregon none of the Smith children were married. Elizabeth was 24 and was soon courted by Francis Fletcher. They were married on December 28, 1843 and raised five children. It was almost two years later that Pleasant Armstrong began courting Jane Smith. They were married October 30, 1845 in Southern Oregon. Pleasant was killed in the Indian wars of 1854 in Southern Oregon. This left Jane Smith Armstrong alone as they had no children. After that two of her nephews tried to help her farm the land. However, she soon had to mortgage and eventually sell the place. It was known as "The Armstrong Farm" and is now owned by Ray and Barbara Kauer.

Then in 1847, new neighbors moved in next to the Smith's. It was General Joel Palmer, his wife and their eight children. Polly Smith was ecstatic having these close neighbors. They were to become best friends. Joel Palmer built a sawmill and hired Andrew Smith (the younger) to help him. Soon a new romance was in the works and Andrew married Joel Palmer's daughter, Sarah Elizabeth, on June 28, 1848.

It was about this time that Palmer and Smith decided, with the mill and new people coming, to plat a town with both contributing property. They decided to name the town Dayton, probably after a town with the same name in Catteraugus count, New York.

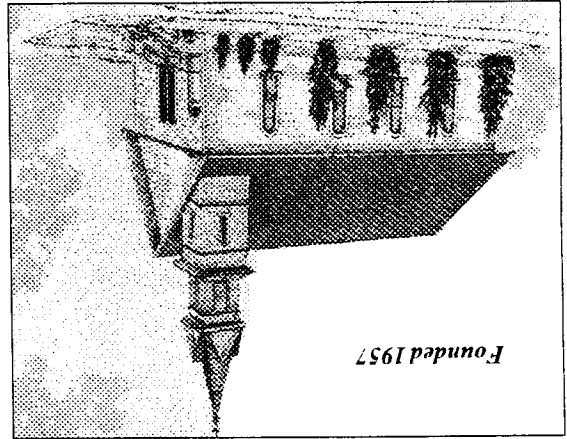
Son after, Darling Smith married Ellen Texanna Gerrish on November 27, 1851. Their child Pleasant Smith was born in 1853. Pleasant was the father of Perry C. Smith. Perry and his wife Gertrude Brown Smith had one daughter, Barbara Smith Bodeen.

The exciting part of this story is how those early pioneers became fast friends and were able to support and help each other. Then as they intermarried the blood lines of these early heroes worked their way down in many of our present families.



Dated Material - Address Correction Requested

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YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January 2001 Calendar of Events

Tuesday, February 13, 5:00 PM

Board of Directors - Seventh Day Adventist Church, McMinnville

Tuesday February 13, 6:30 PM

General Meeting & Potluck Dinner- Seventh Day Adventist Church, McMinnville

Bring your Own Table Service - Guests Always Welcome

(See page 2 for details)