

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

April 2001

Peter McIntosh—Cheesemaker

With seven streams, gentle rains and such a mild climate, the meadows of Tillamook County flourish so that Holstein, Jersey, and Guernsey herds can produce large amounts of fresh sweet milk. It wasn't until 1894, when a local butter manufacturer by the name of T.F. Townsend hired Peter McIntosh, a Canadian cheese maker, that the fine art of making natural cheddar came to the Tillamook Valley. The dairy herds of Tillamook County graze on bountiful fields and produce nearly 30 million gallons of milk a year, most of which is turned into cheese. Tillamook's cheddar flavor is unchanged at least since 1921, when the association first trademarked the Tillamook brand, and perhaps to the turn of the century when the England-trained cheese-maker convinced hundreds of local dairymen to switch production from their more perishable mainstay, butter. More recently, the Tillamook Cheese Association is considering relocating the bovine end of production to Eastern Oregon and shipping the Milk to Tillamook for processing into cheese. We thank Maynard Dawson for his presentation.

Museum Tour

On Monday, February 19th, a group of 20 young people studying "Museums" at Linfield College, visited our facility. Circumstances prevented their instructor, Joel Marrant, from accompanying the class, but as young adults they did very well on their own. Their allotted time, however, was much too short and we felt rushed to give them a good tour. Until now we were not aware that a "Museum" course was offered at the College and wondered if maybe some of us should enroll. Twila Byrnes, Lois Brooks & Ed Roghair, volunteers.

Member News

Lila reports 3 new members: Bertha Washburn of Sandwich, MA, Sue Welton, Florence, OR and Ruth McKibben of McMinnville. We've also had renewals from Ernestine Shields, Charles Burgess, Anne Goss, Betty Brown, Jim Vincent and Jo McIntire. Also, Elizabeth Baltzell renewed for two years. She will soon be on a trip to Italy.

We were saddened to note the recent passing of member Mary Belle Ramsby of McMinnville, at age 88.

The following Life Members have either passed away or moved, based on the continuing return of newsletters: Mrs. J.Y. Richardson of Portland, OR, and Dorothy Pitkin of Dayton. If you know of an updated address for either of these ladies, please notify Lila.

Board Highlights:

Yamhill County Historical Society - Board Meeting March 13, 2001 - Amity. Roll Call: The meeting was called to order by acting President Shirley McDaniel at 5:00 p.m. with the following eight signing in: Eileen Crawley, Betty Brown, Eileen Lewis, Lila Jackson, Ed Roghair, Francis Dummer, Marine Williams, and Shirley McDaniel.

Minutes of the last meeting were read. Lila Jackson moved to approve the minutes, second by Francis Dummer. Motion passed. Eileen Lewis was concerned about something in the minutes that she maybe was supposed to do, but did not know about. Shirley said it was OK and we could check with Barbara Knutson. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Betty Brown presented written report for the month's activities with income of \$610.02, expenses of \$713.16, leaving a net of -\$103.14.

Francis Dummer moved and Marine seconded a motion to accept the report as presented. Motion passed. Membership/Financial: Lila Jackson reported nine renewals and one new member. We have about 185 members who get the newsletter plus the free ones we send for a total over 200 for the postal permit. Corresponding Secretary: Marjorie Owens was absent.

Volunteer Chair: Maxine Williams wanted to resign. Shirley refused to accept and asked if she would like more help. Marjorie Owens will be asked to help Maxine more. Business Items: Lila reported that the new door for the church will be installed on Saturday, March 17. Shirley turned over to Betty the insurance policy and the renewal bill of \$262 that needs to be paid by March 14. Motion made by Lila, seconded by Eileen Lewis to pay \$40 membership dues to Oregon Museums Association for two-year membership. Motion passed.

Eileen Lewis gave Shirley a flyer about a young girl who would repaint the sign for the barn. Her price would be \$50 - 75 and she would do it in the summer. It will be discussed at the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Shirley McDaniel, presiding for Shirley Venhaus; Eileen Crawley, Sec. Pro tem for Shirley.

New Label Format

Starting last month, this newsletter changed the way it lets members know when their membership fees are due. The old format indicated the Year and Month dues were last paid... while the new one shows the actual date (Year and Month) that the dues are paid through. This change was made in response to popular requests from our membership.

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 - 2001

President
Shirley Venhaus
472-7328

VP/Program
Barbara Knutson
843-2069

Secretary (Joint)
Shirley McDaniel
662-3528
Eileen Crawley
835-3673

Treasurer
Betty Brown
472-7100

Financial Secretary
Lila Jackson
472-8510

Corres. Secretary
Marjorie Owens
843-3081

Board of Directors
Eileen Lewis
835-7531

Ed Roghair
472-6909

Francis Dummer
864-2637

Dan Linscheid
843-2625

Volunteer Coordinator
Maxine Williams
472-4547

Librarian
Olive Merry Johnson
472-6070

Newsletter
Dan Linscheid
843-2625

Car Pool Coordinator
Joanne Watts
835-5893

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 Secretary
2430 North Baker
McMinnville OR
97128

April General Meeting and Potluck

Our April meeting will be held in the Yamhill County Public Works Auditorium, 2060 Lafayette Ave., McMinnville, on April 10th at 6:30 p.m. Our program will feature Sandy Le-Tourneux, Sheridan High School track coach. She will be presenting "Wild Flowers of Oregon". Please invite a guest and join us for great food and fellowship. Please bring potluck fare and your own tableware.

Old Photographs

A collection of negatives, proofs, and some prints have been left in the keeping of the YCHS by the former Gillam Camera Shop and Portrait Studio of McMinnville, Oregon. A project was approved by the YCHS Board on January 9, 2001 to provide the proper care and disposition of these materials. Our museum does not have the means of providing humidity and temperature controlled storage to protect these photographic items on a long term basis. The black and white scenic postcard negatives have been sorted and the appropriate State History Museums are being contacted. The Washington State Museum in Tacoma has already gladly accepted over a hundred of the postcard negatives and there are more to be sent.

The negatives related specifically to Yamhill County locations will be kept in the YHCS files. We have compiled a list of individual and family negatives and/or photos that may be identified and claimed by those with a relationship to the principals. Barbara Hinman will have the envelopes available at the April 10th meeting. There will be a list of names of the principals identified, and you will be asked to sign that list if you claim any of the envelopes. After April 10th, the envelopes not claimed, along with the list, will be available at the Museum. An article will be provided to the News-Register and entered on our internet page outlining availability of these old negatives and photos. Our thanks go out to Barbara, who volunteered to undertake this project.

Correction:

We were made aware of the following correction to the article on Andrew Smith: The elder Andrew Smith's house was across from the P.G. E. substation. The Andrew Smith Jr. home was about where the present Andrew Smith home is, the one that had so much publicity. Pleasant Armstrong and Jane Smith Armstrong had their farm between Amity and Dayton. Jane never lived in Southern Oregon. Thanks go to Barbara Bodeen for this update.

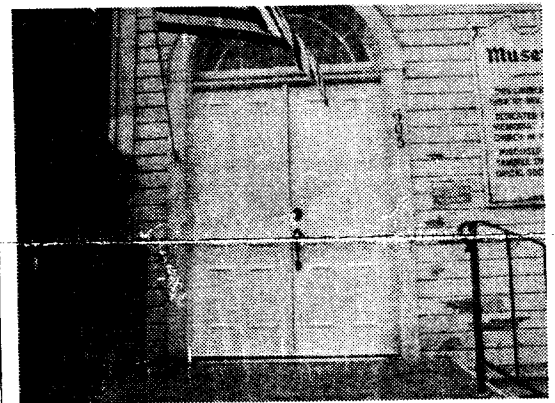
Our **WEBSITE** is at <http://www.onlinemac.com/users/dlin>, but it will be relocating shortly, with an automatic redirection provided to the new site.. Our Old Photo Gallery is at <http://www.co.yamhill.or.us>. Please visit these sites.

Computer Donated:

Answering last month's plea for a computer to be setup in the Museum, Al Chavez of Sherwood has donated a working computer, monitor and printer. This is a fully working system which will be initially installed for use by the public in making copies of our digital databases. Details (copy costs) of how this will be implemented are still being worked out. Al is a descendent of Ewing Young, and he and his wife Barbara share an interest in genealogy. Thanks Al!

New Doors Installed

On March 11th, the new front doors to the Church Museum were installed. The doors are still under construction at this writing, but are fully functional and esthetically pleasing to the eye. The added security will be much appreciated for years to come, given the new hardware, locks, etc. A new threshold was installed, and small adjustments were required to make the doors fit precisely, given the sags of our century-old structure.



The general appearance of the door is in keeping with the architecture of the Church. As can be seen in the above photo, we now need to proceed with our plans to paint the entire structure. These doors are now the newest and best part of the whole building. Our appreciation is again extended to Betty White for her willingness to donate funds for this project.

Missing Books:

We are unable to locate the following books from our Reference Library: "Treasures of the Trunk" by Mary Cross and two volumes on identifying quilts. If you know the whereabouts of these, please help us see to their return as soon as possible.

Missing Cup

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of a Stylized Correlle coffee cup with a picture of a tulip on the side is asked to contact Ed Roghair. It was last seen in Amity at the monthly potluck. This cup is very crucial to the continued peaceful relationship with his wife Peggy.

It is fun to stop to think what Yamhill County might have looked like before any building or farming took place. If we were able to look back at the year 1820, what would we see? We would see rolling hills, the lower lands covered with high grass and probably an Indian village. We might see Indians traveling along the major north-south trails or turning off to go over the Coast Range to the sea. We are fortunate because Lt. Charles Wilkes of the United States Navy explored the Oregon Country and wrote many notes and descriptions of what he saw. He also mapped and collected many specimens of plants and took many artifacts to study.

Lt. Charles Wilkes is seldom mentioned in our history so we need to take a moment to explore his importance to our state and to Yamhill County. In August of 1838, Wilkes set sail from Norfolk, Virginia with 6 ships and 490 sailors, civilians, and scientists. In three years and ten months the men of the Wilkes expedition would prove that there was an Antarctica. They mapped islands and harbors around the world. They gathered so many scientific specimens--plants and animals and shells, rocks and fossils and cultural artifacts--that new museums, including the Smithsonian Institution itself, would have to be built to hold them. They feasted with kings, and fired rockets at cannibals, signed trade treaties and ventured gingerly into International politics, and they showed the U. S. flag everywhere. They traveled around the world on a 87,000 mile voyage and showed the Old World that a new naval power had arrived. It was not an easy trip. The crew was unhappy at being away from home so long. They lost four ships: one, the Peacock, coming over the bar of the Columbia river. They returned to their home port with only 2 ships in June of 1842.

It was in April of 1841 when two of Lt. Wilkes ships arrived in the Pacific Northwest. They were welcomed by the British and the Americans. They rested and explored while waiting for the third ship, the Peacock. Wilkes began what was his most important mission; a series of land and water surveys that resulted in the best map yet produced of the region. The commander believed that the territory would become part of the United States, but he kept his opinion to himself. Even so, his men celebrated the Fourth of July with an ox roast and a "football" game which the skipper started by tossing in the ball and crying, "Sail in, my shipmates!"

The Peacock arrived in mid-July and immediately went aground in the Columbia. Wilkes' great insect collection was lost with the ship. However, he was happy to explore the area. Descriptions of where McMinnville and Lafayette are now located are found in his writings. These help us know how our county looked before the Pioneers came to settle the area. His work was very important in helping the United States lay claim to the land. His writings encouraged settlers to come to the Oregon Country.

The United States of America was 65 years old when Lt. Wilkes made his visit here. Lewis and Clark had been to the Pacific Ocean 36 years before. John Jacob Astor had built a fort at the present site of Astoria.

In 1840 the question of the Oregon Territory becoming English or American was being decided. Our government knew that explorers and settlers in the Oregon country would improve our chances of becoming American. We wanted the Oregon Country to belong to the United States. We wanted the land and the resources to become part of our country. We believe that the description of the Willamette Valley, especially of the Yamhill area, and the promise of free land, were important reasons for people to leave their homes in the East and make the long journey west.

George Gay guided Wilkes throughout the area and gave reports on how life fared in this new frontier. George also entertained the explorer in his new brick house. It is Wilkes' description of the house that gives us insight into how this place looked and how it was made.

Lt. Wilkes wrote of the Yamhill area as follows: "The extent of the country we looked over is from twenty-five to thirty miles, all of which is capable of being brought to the highest state of cultivation. There are in truth few districts like that of the valley we saw." Lt. Wilkes had also heard that the Ewing Young farm was a beautiful place. "When we reached the top (Chehalem Mt), we again had a view of the Fualix Plains (Chehalem Valley), which were highly picturesque. The hills here were covered, as we had found them before, with wall-flowers, lupine, scilla, and quantities of ripe strawberries." Mr. Young had died the year before but his ranch was still there to be admired.

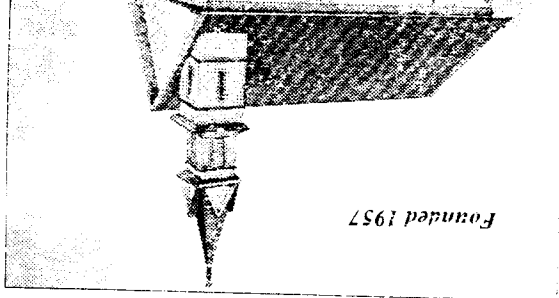
Lt. Charles Wilkes' reports were released to newspapers all over the United States. These and other reports encouraged people to migrate to the Oregon Country. The following year wagons were headed west. In 1843 the largest wagon train known was to carry hundreds of pioneers to the West. Free land and the glowing reports were the big reasons for this movement. The Oregon Trail was traveled by thousands of people. They usually took 6 months to reach Oregon City. Many became sick and died on the way. Those who made it to the Willamette Valley make up our story.

While Lt. Wilkes was in this area, he visited Mr. Louis La Bonte. Louis lived on the Yamhill river just below the present town of Dayton and probably was our first settler. Lt. Wilkes said, "The most perfect picture of content I saw was a French Canadian by the name of La Bonte, on the Yam Hill river, who had been a long time in the service of the Hudson Bay Co. This man was very attentive to us and assisted in getting our horses across the river, which, though but a few rods wide, is yet deep and attended with much difficulty in passing".

Lt. Charles Wilkes was a very powerful influence in our early history. His work was very important in helping us become part of the United States and in the settlement of Yamhill County.

(See Smithsonian Magazine; November 1985 page 49, "Around the world in 1,392 days with the Navy's Wilkes—and his 'scientifics'". by Donald Dale Jackson.)





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YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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April 2001 Calendar of Events

Tuesday, April 10, 5:00 PM

Board of Directors - County Public Works Auditorium

Tuesday April 10, 6:30 PM

General Meeting & Potluck Dinner - County Public Works Auditorium

Bring your Own Table Service - Guests Always Welcome

(See page 2 for details)