

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

January 1997

LOIS BROOKS TELLS OF A DIFFERENT CULTURE

Speaker for the December 10th Yamhill County Historical Society potluck and membership meeting was Past President Lois Brooks, who taught at native schools in Alaska for nineteen years. She began by describing arrival at Aleknagik, a village of about two hundred located in the Kuskokwim lakes region. From the beginning Lois found herself uncovering ways to bridge gaps between modern American life and the ancient heritage and beliefs of her pupils. There was both humor and pathos when she related the manner in which the children interpreted such things as Halloween and Santa Claus. After thirteen years at Aleknagik came a transfer to Togiak, a fishing village on the shore of Bristol Bay. Here challenges for a teacher were a bit more conventional as the community received greater exposure to the world outside.

To complement her remarks Lois presented a number of hand crafted items accumulated during her Alaskan stay. In addition, several in the audience were invited to attempt manipulation of an "Eskimo Yo-Yo". None succeeded. From start to finish, a delightful program.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! 1997 is going to be an exiting and interesting year for the Society and the Museum with fund raisers, improvements, repairs, new landscaping, sidewalks, computers, changes, excellent monthly meetings & programs, new members and a group of people willing to give their time and effort. We are on our way to a great year!!!

The YCHS Officers and Board of Directors welcome the new members: Betty Baltzell - Recording Secretary and John White - Director.

Volunteer Chairman Maxine Williams requests that anyone who works at the museum or is involved in museum activities to please keep track of their hours. This information is important when we apply for grants and other record keeping. If it is just your regular day at

the museum, Maxine will have that, but many of you donate hours that we are not aware of.

The museum will be listed in the next phone book. Thanks to Delores Roberison we have an answering machine to take messages. The phone is located in the back of the church so is not convenient for incoming calls but people not familiar with our museum can get information from the recording. The number is 864-2308. We want to thank Morgan Maghee for donating his labor when he replaced the floor in the church bathroom. Morgan was one of those responsible for building the Miller Log Museum.

This is such a busy time of the year. It is so nice to be with friends and family and sometimes just some peace and quiet. See you at the January general meeting. Bring a friend..

...Shirley



WESTERLOOK OWNERS HONORED

Unable to attend the Historic House Tour homeowners appreciation ceremony in November, the owners of Westerlook received their certificate at the YCHS December 10th gathering. Locally known variously as the 'Ladd Home' after builder Charles Ladd or the 'Linke Estate' in favor of later occupant Emanuel Linke, the home is now owned by Peter and Marilyn Schultz. Shown with the Schultz' at the extreme left of the photo is Leona Staebler, longtime housekeeper for the Linke family.

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 - 1997

President

Shirley Venhaus
472-7328

VP Program

Barbara Knutson
843-2069

Secretary

Betty Baltzell
472-7746

Treasurer

Don Crawford
434-9843

Financial Secretary

Lila Jackson
472-8510

Corres. Secretary

Delores Robertson
538-0767

Board of Directors

James Vincent
472-7239

John White
665-5376

Ed Roghair
472-6909

Robert Kuykendall
662-2254

Historian

Jim Lockett
472-5005

Librarian

Olive Johnson
472-6070

Newsletter

John White
665-5376

Publicity

Elaine Rohse
472-6827

MUSEUM HOURS

June 1 to Aug 31:
Wed-Sun 1 to 4 PM

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

ANNUAL DUES

\$7.50 per person

Mail to:

Financial Secty
2430 North Baker
McMinnville OR

97128

LINSCHIED RECEIVES HONOR

Yamhill County Surveyor and YCHS member Dan Linscheid was selected 'Surveyor of the Year' by the Oregon Association of County Engineers and Surveyors at their recent Eugene convention. Among his counterparts, Dan is a recognized leader in the field of location, restoration and electronic recording of original pioneer land grant monuments. We congratulate him not only upon receiving this honor, but also for the important local historic data resulting from his work.

WHAT HAVE YOU?

Although the first planning meeting for next summer's sale of pre-owned treasures is still more than two months away, it is not too soon to think about rounding up items for donation. To be accepted, material should be in a clean and serviceable condition having no serious shortcomings. With the exception of vintage apparel, and possibly jeans or sweat-shirts, clothing will not be offered at this sale. Now then, what's in YOUR attic?

NEW MEMBER

We welcome Dora H. Bansen of Dayton and look forward to meeting her in person at the January meeting.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Owing to circumstances beyond their control, the committee will be postponing announcement of their selection until the February 11th 1997 membership meeting.

QUILT DRAWING

Although ticket sales have been good so far, it is important to keep plugging away. A good way to do this is display at organization meetings. Why not arrange with project coordinator Marge Bergan (472-5319) to show this masterpiece at YOUR next club gathering?

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT



Opal Lahley at the organ

When crediting all those who helped make the house tour such a success, we overlooked Opal Lahley who played the old church organ as part of the festivities in addition to tour guides Eleanor Mitchell at the Laughlin House and Bernice Brown at Westerlook. Also apparently slipping through the cracks was Ticor Title's ad in the tour guide. Our sincere apologies are extended for these oversights.

**FORESTER TO ADDRESS
JANUARY MEETING**

YCHS member George Williams will present a program entitled "Interesting Trees" for the Society's potluck and general meeting to be held Tuesday January 14th at 6:30 PM in the McMinnville Community Christian Church - 2831 NE Newby St. Retired from a career with the U.S. Forest Service, George now heads up the Heritage Tree program for Yamhill County and may be counted upon to spin an entertaining yarn or two based upon his wealth of experience. Why not bring a guest as well?

SEEN AN OLD BARN LATELY?

Our recently completed historic house tour brought inquiries concerning the possibility of a circuit to view barns (a growing pastime it seems). Also Ben Austin, an amateur photographer, has asked the YCHS to work with him in locating and researching old barns in the county. Even those that have fallen or are completely gone might be of interest if they had some historic significance during their better days. Mr. Austin wants to contact the owners in the near future for interviews and permission to include photos of their barns in a book he plans to publish about two or three years hence.

We are considering the possibility of conducting a barn tour to coincide with publication of the book. Working on a self-guided basis tourgoers would pick up an information booklet and head out at their convenience. Quite possibly something like this could provide YCHS with a continuing program requiring minimal effort beyond initial set-up.

All of this is in the future if it does indeed happen at all. At the moment, we need to know of possible sites to determine feasibility for the project. Please contact (Shirley 472-7328) if you know of suitable candidate barns.

**TICOR
TITLE
INSURANCE**

829 N Highway
99W
McMinnville

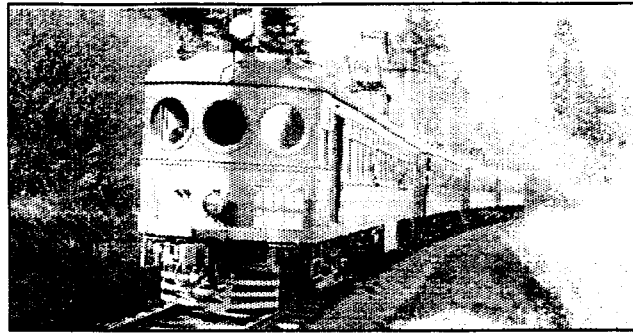
472-6101

Remember, A Red Dot on Your Address Label Means Your Dues are Due

THE RED ELECTRIC - AHEAD OF ITS TIME?

By John White

Recently local government officials expressed interest in exploring the possibility of providing commuter rail service between Portland and the more populated areas of the County. While the reasons for contemplating such a plan are a product of today's needs, the service itself would be nothing new. Eighty three years ago this month "Red Electrics" began operation over the same routes that are being discussed today.



"East Side Local" Southern Pacific Red Electric #359 westbound between Rex and Springbrook.

In an effort to counter growing competition for regional passenger service, the Southern Pacific Railroad began electrification of its secondary Willamette Valley routes in 1912. Noisy smoke belching steam engines and outdated chair cars were replaced with more comfortable smoother riding electric powered coaches. The term "Red Electric" was derived from the barn red paint applied to units operating on the west side of the Willamette which was intended to distinguish them from counterparts of a dull green hue traversing tracks on the opposite side of the river

Service for Yamhill County began during January 1914 amid speech-making at each community along the line and of a magnitude usually reserved for elections or Fourth of July celebrations. There were actually two routes that composed what was termed "the Yamhill Loop" with both originating at Portland's Union Station. The so-called East Side run headed out via Lake Oswego, Tualatin and Sherwood before entering Yamhill County through the Chehalem Gap at Rex. From there the line continued on through Newberg and Dundee to St. Joseph along the same road bed used by Willamette & Pacific today. The West Side portion of the loop left Portland by way of Beaverton and the Tualatin Valley before branching southward at Forest Grove through Yamhill and Carlton to connect with the East Side run at St. Joseph. A single line continued from St. Joseph south through McMinnville, Whiteson and Amity before terminating at Corvallis. Service was extended to Sheridan and Willamina via steam locomotive over the Southern Pacific's short line connecting at Whiteson.

Fares were generally modest, although they did increase occasionally after World War I. A sampling of rates shows a round trip from either Amity or Yamhill to McMinnville cost 45¢ while Newberg to Portland and return was \$1.40.

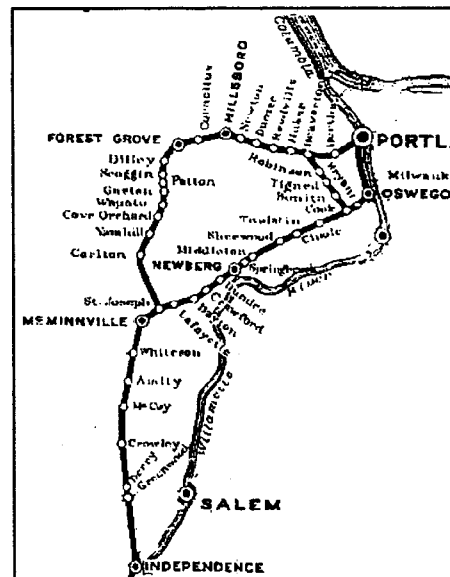
With a modern rail network linking communities in the county together as well as providing them state of the art service to metropolitan Portland, the future appeared secure for Southern Pacific's passenger operations west of

the Willamette River. By 1920 however fare revenues had begun a steady decline. Proliferation of automobiles and continuing improvements to the roads upon which they operated were taking their toll. Over the next few years Red Electric service was increasingly curtailed until eventually discontinued during 1929. By the end of that year nearly all traces of the overhead power lines had

been removed and much of the electric rolling stock transferred to other Southern Pacific interurban lines in the San Francisco and Los Angeles areas.

Southern Pacific itself contributed at least in some part to demise of the Red Electric by initiating its own highway motor coach service during 1927. In turn, this bus operation was taken over in the 1930's by Greyhound Stage Lines, a company in which the Southern Pacific was a principal investor.

About all that remains of the Red Electric in the county today is a rather dilapidated concrete substation alongside the tracks at Dundee that once transferred 1500 volts to its overhead wires. Whether or not a new interurban rail system might provide a viable solution for today's congested highways is unknown, but it would be an ironic twist indeed should the automobile, largely responsible for the Red Electric's removal, be the cause of its eventual reincarnation.



Red Electric routes taken from a 1922 S.P. time table.

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
January 1997 Calendar of Events

Tuesday, January 14th, 5:00 PM

Board of Directors - Community Christian Church - McMinnville

Tuesday January 14th, 6:30 PM

Potluck Dinner - Community Christian Church - McMinnville
2831 North Newby Street

Bring Your Own Table Service Guests Always Welcome
(See page 2 for Program Details)