

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

May 1997

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

With the trees, flowers and bushes in bloom, Yamhill County is a riot of color. I'm enjoying the flowers at the museum. One little bush in front of the barn did its best with a few blossoms. We are so fortunate to have such pleasures while other states are suffering so with floods and disasters.

Something new and wonderful is at the LOG MUSEUM. William Fox Construction finished the kitchen in the utility room. Due to Elma Shuck's generosity, we were able to complete the entire kitchen with cupboards on both sides. Thanks to Twila Byrnes we also have a two burner hot plate. Also a small refrigerator has been donated. Now all we need is a small microwave. Please stop in and see for yourselves. Nice Electric has also installed needed plug-ins for the kitchen and computer area.

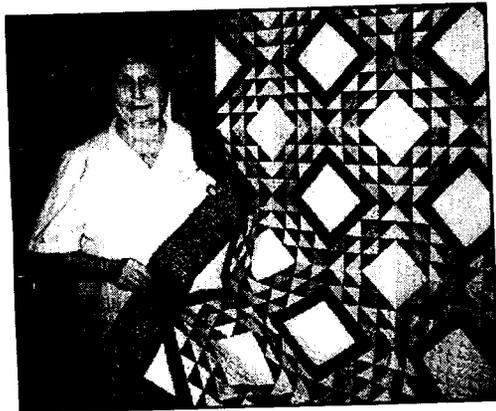
It was my pleasure to meet with Ben Austin this month. Ben is the photographer who will be taking pictures of the old barns in Yamhill County. Ben will be driving the roads of Yamhill looking for subjects and if you can keep him headed in the right direction it would make his job easier. Send us all and any information you may have of possible on the location of old barns. Ben is a new member of YCHS and we welcome him.

I expect to see lots of different faces at the next work day, May 2nd. This issue will not reach you before then, but you were reminded about it in the last newsletter. We will begin to sort through our "Heritage Recycling" donations at that time. Remember to drop off your donations at the museum and if you have large items, call Shirley.

A reminder that our board members are to return the Oregon Historical Society Oral Program List with names of Yamhill families marked. Kathleen Mitchell has asked your help with this.

Until next time, Yours Truly

.....Shirley



YCHS President Shirley Venhaus displays the superb hand made quilt to be raffled by the Society August 23rd. Tickets are available at \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. Get yours now!

DYNAMIC DUO



Elma Shuck (left) and Olive Johnson (right) take a break from their Saturday afternoon duties at the museum.

This month's notable volunteers are Olive Johnson and Elma Shuck. Probably nobody knows more about the museum than these two who put in their time every Saturday year around and are largely responsible for how the museum is organized.

Olive started her museum experience as Ruth Stoller's assistant, so learned the job from her. She also has been copying historic pictures from many years and is a lifetime resident of Yamhill County. She is familiar with much of the county history and early families. She answers letters and sends out orders for museum material. If you want to know anything about Yamhill County history, ask Olive.

Elma is not only a Yamhill County Museum volunteer, but also puts in time at the Thomas McKay Museum in Salem. She is a descendent of one of Yamhill County's early settlers and is familiar with much of the county's history. She has had a lot to do with the organization of the museum and has paid for shelving in both buildings and is contributing generously to the kitchen now being installed in the log building. She has made available a list of all the quilts in the museum's holdings and is responsible for their display. To do all this service to the museum she drives all the way from her home in Woodburn.

We are very fortunate to have these two dedicated volunteers.

.....Maxine Williams

Editor's Note: After this article was written word was received that Elma took a tumble resulting in a hairline pelvic fracture. Although already up and about, a period of recuperation remains ahead during which we're certain she would enjoy hearing from her many friends. The address is:

1167 Princeton Road, Woodburn OR 97071

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**

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472-7328

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Maxine Williams
472-4547

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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

**DANIEL SAWTELLE BIOGRAPHY
AND CIVIL WAR SERVICE TOLD**

Carla Burdon, scheduled speaker for the YCHS April meeting held in Willamina, surprised the group by introducing Professor Peter Buckingham of Linfield College as her surrogate. Prof. Buckingham has been working with the Burdon family to publish the Civil War letters of their great great grandfather, Daniel Sawtelle. His research now completed, Prof. Buckingham offered considerable insight into the man and events behind the eloquent correspondence.

Born during 1838 on a farm in Aroostook County Maine, Daniel was forced to leave school at an early age following the death of his father. He joined the Eighth Maine Volunteers in 1863 and for the next year and a half saw service with that unit from the Battle of Drury's Bluff, through the Siege of Richmond and finally the Appomattox surrender. Following the war he located on a farm in Wisconsin where he married his first wife. Following her death, he remarried and moved on to farms in Minnesota and South Dakota before finally settling near McMinnville in 1895. Sadly, some of his last years were consumed in marginally successful attempts to receive compensation for war injuries received. He passed away in 1932 at his son's home in Willamina.

We are indebted to the Burdon family for preserving Daniel Sawtelle's remarkable letters as well as Prof. Buckingham for his extensive biographical research.

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

An orientation and organization meeting was held April 26th as this issue of the *West Side* went to the printers. Team Coordinator Kathleen Mitchell outlined the program and discussed basic interview techniques. This was followed by a general discussion on how best to build the YCHS oral history tape library. For those wishing to join the team or attend the next meeting, call **Kathleen Mitchell at 472-4982** for complete details.

THE KEY WON'T WORK ANYMORE

As of June 3rd the key used to open the back door of the church building will not work anymore! From that date on we will use the new door at the very back of the building. New keys will be available at the May 13th General Meeting and the May 15th Volunteer Meeting. Also they may be obtained at the museum after those dates. The security system key pad will be located in the same place, and there will be a little longer delay to accommodate coming in through the rear. The old keys may be turned in for credit and recycling. Don't forget to get a new key by June 3rd

The 'West Side' also goes on summer schedule with this issue. Look for the Summer (June-August) edition in early July.

**MAY POTLUCK DINNER
& GENERAL MEETING**

Newberg's Ewing Young School will be the venue for the dinner and meeting set for **6:30 PM May 13th.** A program on the subject of Ewing Young will be presented by Newberg historians Gene and Betty Comfort.

The Ewing Young School is located about **5 miles west of Newberg at the intersection of Dopp Road and the North Valley Road.** Also, the school has asked that we park on the east of the building and enter through the gym to the adjoining multi-purpose room.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members and hope to see them often at YCHS activities:

Ben Austin - Columbia City
Barbara-Ann Doyle - Newberg
Marjorie Owens - Sheridan
Sandra Kay Palmer - Portland
Sharon E. Ryan-Osborn - Portland

YCHS ANNUAL PICNIC

Mark your calendars for **Saturday August 2nd at 12:00 Noon.** The place will be the **Amity City Park** just west of Hwy 99W on Fifth Street (Bellevue-Hopewell Hwy). By special arrangement the weather will be quite comfortable, so in addition to a potluck offering, bring a guest or two for a fun afternoon.

MUSEUM VOLUNTEER ALERT

Volunteer Coordinator Maxine Williams informs us of the need for more people to help at the museum. Our Wednesday through Sunday summer hours will begin June 4th with the log museum being open on those days as well. To help organize this group a meeting of old and new volunteers will be held **10:00 AM Thursday, May 15th at the Log Museum.** Anyone willing to spend one afternoon or more a month to help the Society is urged to attend. Maxine will give a walk-through tour and how-to instructions. This is a wonderful and interesting place to learn about Yamhill County history, but without volunteers we cannot keep it open to the public.

If you are unable to attend but would like information on becoming involved contact **Maxine Williams at 472-4547.**

IN MEMORIAM

Rudolph A. Schaad - 1900-1997
Dorothy M. Schutz - 1913-1997

It with regret we note the recent passing of two Life Members who contributed so very much during their long associations with the Yamhill County Historical Society.

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

THE SHAPE WE'RE IN...AND HOW WE GOT THIS WAY

by John White

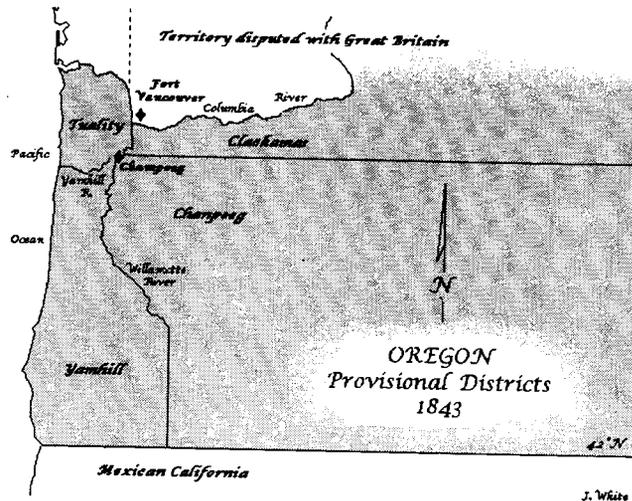
By the early 1840's it was becoming apparent joint sovereignty in effect since 1816 between Great Britain and the United States over the vast Oregon Country would not be renewed when the treaty expired in 1846. Thus it was on July 5th 1843 the second of three bi-annual assemblies was held at Champoeg for the purpose of considering a provisional government for Oregon. Word had already been received that thousands of American migrants were on their way overland, with the first due to arrive in a matter of weeks. It seemed clear to many delegates that established order should be in place to both effect harmonious settlement when the newcomers arrived and demonstrate the region's social and political stability in support of a bid for exclusive U.S. administration. (There were a few less altruistic motives at play, but their stories will keep for a later telling).

Defined as "Oregon Territory", the region included all that lying between the Rocky Mountain summit and Pacific Ocean from Mexican California to the south to Russian Alaska at the north. Of course, some sort of settlement still had to be reached concerning British territorial claims, but assuming eventual division would occur somewhere north of the Columbia River⁽¹⁾, this pro-tem government established four districts for future administrative purposes: Twality, Clackamas, Champoeg and Yamhill. The Yamhill District could be simply defined as embracing all of the country west of the Willamette River which lay to the south of the Yamhill River. (See map at right)

During December 1845 the Provisional Legislature at Oregon City granted a petition submitted by a number of Yamhill Valley residents requesting relocation of the south boundary to a line running westward to the Pacific from a point "at or near the house of George Gay on the west side of the Wallamette [sic] River". The permanence of brick construction⁽²⁾ quite likely accounts for selection of the Gay house as a reference and the Yamhill-Polk boundary was established along a line bisecting the building. Although failing to coincide with the later U.S. Public Land Survey township line by some three quarters of a mile, this original boundary between the two counties remains unchanged to this day.

Joel Perkins platted the town of Lafayette in 1846 and persuaded the Provisional Government to declare it the "shire town", or county seat, for the Yamhill District because of its central location relative to settlement in the area. Situated as it was on the north bank of the Yamhill River, Lafayette was at that time actually in the Twality District. The Legislature corrected the matter by acting upon a petition from area settlers to relocate the boundary northward to a line roughly defined as the watershed between the Yamhill and Twality Valleys.

Yamhill County's access to the sea was cut off with the creation of Tillamook County in 1853. With the western Yamhill County border vaguely established by a "ridge line" along the summit of the Coast Range, the next few sessions the Legislature received a number of petitions aimed at redefining or adjusting boundaries



through the rugged, and as yet unsurveyed, mountains. In 1885 Yamhill and Tillamook Counties effected an exchange so that their common border is more accurately aligned with the Public Land Survey.

Although on a smaller scale, much the same situation existed until 1857 for Yamhill's border with Washington (formerly Twality) County. At this time reference points such as "summit of Chehalem Mountain" and "residence of Philip Thompson" were replaced by defining terms exactly conforming to the Public Land Survey.

In 1862 a large group of settlers living on a narrow strip along the west bank of the Willamette just south of Parrett Mountain petitioned to become "attached to" Clackamas County citing "great disadvantages from the inconvenient distance to their county seat at Lafayette". This revision was approved removing a parcel that now contains Wilsonville and 6 miles of Willamette River bank from Yamhill County. The signature of Robert V. Short is notably missing from the original petition. Short's DLC was included in the defecting area, but he was also Yamhill County Surveyor and Justice of the Peace which required he reside in the county. This forced unemployment situation became quickly resolved however when Short was elected Clackamas County Assessor later the same year.

Since the 1885 realignment with Tillamook County the Yamhill boundaries have remained essentially unchanged...much smaller than the original, but on the other hand, the courthouse is but a short drive away.

(1) The boundary was established at the 49th parallel in 1846.

(2) No trace of the George Gay house remains, but a dilapidated sign on Wallace Road marks the site of what was the region's first brick home.

Editorial: ALL OARS IN THE WATER

At its April 18th meeting, the Board of Directors decided to combine the museum open house scheduled for July 5th with the Heritage Recycling event set for August 23rd. This was done to avoid being spread too thin or relying too much upon the same members for assistance at both. All of which brings us to the point of these comments:

The Society requires revenue for a number of badly needed

improvements. The Heritage Recycling sale is going to be our only fund raiser of the year.. Those who have done it will tell you making a success of a rummage sale requires much time and effort to organize, fix, clean up, price and otherwise get the items ready. In a nutshell, its going to take just about everyone's help from now until August 23rd to pull it off properly. To dip your oar, call 472-7328.

(JW)

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YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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May 1997 Calendar of Events

Friday, May 2nd, 9:00 AM

Completion of Spring Clean-up at the Museums - Lafayette

Friday, May 2nd, 1:00 PM

"Heritage Recycling" Sale Planning Session - Miller Log Museum - Lafayette

Tuesday, May 13th, 5:00 PM

Board of Directors - Ewing Young School - Newberg

Tuesday, May 13th, 6:30 PM

Potluck Dinner - Ewing Young School - Newberg

Bring Your Own Table Service Guests Always Welcome

(See page 2 for Program Details and Directions)

Thursday, May 15th, 10:00 AM

Museum Volunteer Orientation - YCHS Museums - Lafayette

(See Page 2 for More Information)

An Interesting Outing

BARN AGAIN! A traveling exhibit of 55 panels exploring the barn as a cultural and agricultural icon as well as a window to the past will be shown at the **Lincoln County Historical Society in Newport from May 24th through July 11th.**