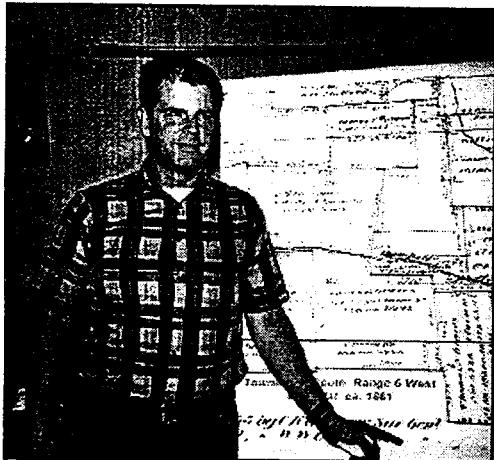


# The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

October 1997



*B. White photo*  
Speaker Dan Linscheid points to an original donation land claim during an expansion of the township survey grid system.

## OLD TOWNSHIP MARKERS PROVIDE A HIT PROGRAM

Yamhill County Surveyor and YCHS member Dan Linscheid provided the audience with an easy to understand explanation of the Public Land Survey required by the 1850 Oregon Donation Land Claim Act. It is from the township corner monuments established by this original survey that all subsequent divisions of real estate throughout the Northwest are referenced. As County Surveyor, part of Dan's responsibility is locating and maintaining these markers to preserve the integrity of past and future land descriptions.

Among the several artifacts he brought along was a piece of tree bark "grow over" found on the forest floor showing an impression of the original surveyor's township corner bearing tree inscription made almost 150 years ago. Also among the "finds" were such items as a bottle and a spoon, both of which had served as corner markers for individual donation land claims.

A well prepared and delivered program by a professional who certainly appears to enjoy his work.

## HERITAGE RECYCLING REPORT AND PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

If anyone was keeping track of the time spent getting ready and during the event itself, the garage sale certainly added up to a lot of hours. Consider the time spent. Consider bringing in the articles, sorting, pricing and otherwise preparing the items for sale; then the part of setting up the actual sale and add all day Saturday for the event itself and a following clean up; multiply this by the number of people involved and divide by the total amount of sales and it may not equal minimum wage, but it does come to a sale total of \$2041.91 plus \$531.00 from the quilt raffle which will provide funds to pay for much needed sidewalks connecting our three museum buildings! The end justifies the means. The weather cooperated for both the set up and sale days. Bids are already in for the new walks and a contractor has been selected. I love it when a plan comes together! My deepest thanks to all who helped on the project.

Other new items you will soon see at the museum will be fire extinguishers, First aid kits and a telephone in the front office of the church. Something I hope you will not see any longer are the tell-tale signs of unwanted visitors in the upstairs of the log museum.

We will be asking volunteers to keep track of hours spent on activities in and out of the museum. Sheets will be available and kept in the church museum office. These hours are very important for use in grants and other aspects of a volunteer organization.

The oral history program is picking up steam. The workshop held by chairperson Kathleen Mitchell was not well attended but it has produced results. Appointments have been made and people are being interviewed. Our efforts seem small but what we do accomplish will be of great value and importance in the future.

**We are in serious need of volunteers to keep the museum open on weekends.** You will work with an experienced volunteer until you are comfortable with it. Usually it is only for one day per month - more if you like. This is a very serious situation. **We cannot expect our good and faithful members to continue giving more than what they already have. We must have help!** Volunteering at the museum is interesting, you meet wonderful people and it can be fun. What other place allows you to enjoy a museum of your very own for four hours?. Please contact Maxine Williams (472-4547) or myself (472-7328)

Finally, why not invite a friend to the next meeting? See you there.

.....Shirley



*B. White photo*  
YCHS President Shirley Venhaus conducting a final inspection prior to opening the August 23rd Heritage Recycling sale.

*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*

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472-7328

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**Newsletter**

John White  
665-5376

**Publicity**

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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



B. White Photo

Lois Brooks working at the recent  
Heritage Recycling sale.

**OUR MISS BROOKS**

Those of us who can remember this old radio and television series will recall the lead character, Miss Constance Brooks, was a school teacher who involved herself in just about everything which took place around her. So it is with our Miss Lois Brooks. When there's a job to be done, Lois will be there to pitch in, and as a former teacher, she perfectly teams with Twila Byrnes (*see September '97 WEST SIDE*) in conducting tours of school children through the museum.

Before retiring to the town of Yamhill, her teaching career took Lois to some of the more remote sections of Southeastern Oregon as well as native fishing villages in Alaska. This "one room schoolhouse" expertise undoubtedly accounts for her ability to communicate so well with the broad range of young students visiting the museum. In addition to serving the Yamhill County Historical Society as its president during 1992-93, Lois may be found at the museum on at least one Sunday each month, a practice begun jointly with the late Roma Sitton some years ago.

Unlike Mr. Conklin, the harried school principal of the old radio and TV program, we are quite pleased to have the services of our Miss Brooks.

**NEW MEMBERS**

We welcome the following new members and look forward to greeting them at the next general meeting and/or the upcoming 'Harvest Festival'

Marjorie Bowman - McMinnville\*

Marcia Anne Brown - McMinnville

Scott and Mark Fery - St. Joseph

Dwight Johnson - McMinnville

Merrilee Johnson - St. Joseph

Alex Magness - Placerville California

Marcia Mikesh - McMinnville\*

Robert Powell - Oregon City

Christine Skelly - Wilsonville

\* Joined this past July. The editor apologizes for the oversight.

**'HARVEST FESTIVAL'**

Saturday October 25th from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM the YCHS will be hosting visitors with an open house at the museum complex. The purpose of this program is to acquaint the public with our activities and recruit a few new members. There will be demonstrations of several homespun crafts, refreshments and possibly a bit of toe-tapping old time fiddle music. The telephone committee is already at work to inform members how they can help with preparations, but the important thing is to bring in visitors. Load up your car with friends or neighbors and head for Lafayette on the 25th.

**NO YAMHILL ART WINNER AT FAIR**

The \$15.00 cash prize offered by the YCHS for the best art work depicting Yamhill County history or heritage to be entered at the County Fair went unclaimed this year due to lack of entries.

**OCTOBER MEETING AND  
POTLUCK DINNER**

The Community Christian Church, 2831 North Newby Street in McMinnville will be the venue for the YCHS October 14th meeting. Following a potluck dinner at 6:30 PM, the program will be provided by Dorothy Guinness who will speak of her ancestors, the Wortman family, and early days of the Yamhill County Historical Society. In addition to potluck fare and table service, why not share what promises to be an interesting evening with a guest?

**QUILT DRAWING WINNER**

Using an old rotary churn borrowed from the museum to shuffle drawing tickets, YCHS President Shirley Venhaus extracted the winner at 4:00 PM August 23rd during the Heritage Recycling sale. The lucky person was Marian Rogers of Cook Washington. Her husband's family has well established roots in the Lafayette/McMinnville area and she purchased her winning ticket during a recent museum visit to donate several vintage dresses.

Also our most sincere thanks go to Marge Bergan's quilting group for donating their handiwork to the YCHS for this drawing and in particular all those loyal supporters who purchased the other 530 tickets.

We are saddened to report the passing of **Ron Brentano**, the contact between the Oregon Historical Society and local groups throughout the state. Ron worked with the YCHS on several projects through the years, but is perhaps best remembered by most for his annual Century Farm presentations.

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

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF YAMHILL COUNTY COURTHOUSES

By Dan Linscheid

*The previous issue recounted the Lafayette era as county seat from 1846 to 1888. In November of 1887 a county wide election was held that resulted in relocation of the county government and a new courthouse being constructed.*



YCHS Photo

1919 War Memorial dedication in front of first McMinnville courthouse erected during 1888-89

### PART II - The Move to McMinnville

McMinnville was the selected site, and in April of 1888, Hiram Tucker deeded a 200' x 180' lot in McMinnville for the new courthouse, and the board accordingly ordered that "said grounds be and the same are selected and adopted as the site and grounds for a courthouse and county building".

The Contract for the new building was let to Pauly Jail Building and Manufacturing Co., for \$45,000 in the same month. Sebastian Brutscher, one of the county commissioners at the time, protested the partial payment to the contractor for construction activities during the fall 1888, using fairly heated words in voting against the county judge and the other commissioner. He strongly believed the actions taken to build the new structure and relocate to McMinnville were illegal, and made several journal entries to this effect during this period. Final construction costs, including a jail, approached \$62,000. The new courthouse covered an area of 9,000 square feet and was 121 feet high.

Being sensitive to the local furor regarding the matter, the board of commissioners published a notice on December 1, 1888 that "on Monday the 7th of January, 1889, that all records, files, books, papers and documents of every nature, kind and description belonging to said Yamhill County now on file and kept in the various offices and in custody of the various officers of said county in Lafayette and all of the office furniture, fixtures, implements and moveable property belonging to said county shall be removed from their present place of keeping to the new County Seat in the town of McMinnville".

The old courthouse in Lafayette was donated to the Evangelical Church and was used as a seminary school until 1900, thereafter serving as manufacturing plant for a broom factory. This brick structure was still in good condition when it was torn down in 1922.

The relocation of the county seat must have not gone too smoothly, since the board paid J.W. Booth \$28 for guarding the records stored in the Braly Bank building. T.J. Harris, county sheriff at the time, was allowed \$125 for moving "records & c" from Lafayette to McMinnville. The first official session of the board of commissioners in the new courthouse was on January 9, 1889. A certain amount of dignity and decorum being required for the newly occupied building, the board in March allowed the sheriff to purchase chandeliers and fixtures. These cost a whopping \$153.75. The first full time janitor / groundskeeper was J.H. Clubine. He was to "keep the Court Rooms and all halls clean and tidy, and the wood boxes for all offices and Court Rooms filled with wood, as well as mow the lawns and keep the grounds in as good condition as possible, for which he is to receive \$10 per month."

By 1890 water was being supplied the courthouse by the McMinnville Water works, and electric lights were furnished by 1892. In the early 1890's the water and light bill ran between \$10 and \$13 per month.

Many county residents can still vividly recall this courthouse. By the mid 1950's, water leaks in the roof and resultant dry rot threatened the building's structural integrity, and caused electrical problems. Maintenance costs for the building were reaching new highs, and the people approved a bond for construction of the present structure in 1959. The existing courthouse was completed and occupied in 1964.



B. White photo

Present Yamhill County Courthouse situated on the same McMinnville site as one built in 1888, with only the War Memorial remaining as a reminder.

### BRICKS FROM OLD LAFAYETTE COURTHOUSE TO GO ON SALE OCTOBER 25th

Salvaged original bricks manufactured in 1859 and used in the construction of the Yamhill County courthouse at Lafayette, along with a copy of the foregoing article, will go on sale at the YCHS

Harvest Festival set for October 25th. The price for this little slice of Yamhill County history will be a very modest \$5.00 each. Needless to say, the supply is limited.

Since 1960

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Lafayette OR 97127  
P. O. Box 484

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## YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### *October 1997 Calendar of Events*

**Tuesday, October 14th, 5:00 PM**

Board of Directors - Community Christian Church - McMinnville

**Tuesday October 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)*

**Saturday October 25th, 10:00 AM to 4:00PM**

'Harvest Festival' - YCHS Museum Complex - Lafayette

#### ***Worth Putting on your Agenda:***

*George Fox University in Newberg presents its bi-annual Hoover Symposium Saturday October 4th at 8:30 AM in the Kershner Lecture Hall. The topic will be CONSERVATION and CONSUMPTION IN THE AMERICAN WEST. Admission is complementary. (A \$7.50 luncheon is also scheduled but regrettably we did not receive the information in time to meet the reservation deadline)*