

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

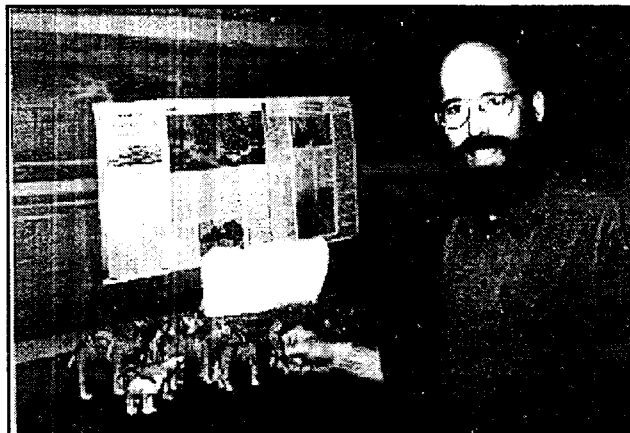
February 1998

DIRECTORS & MUSEUM PERSONNEL MEET WITH CONSULTANT

As mentioned in last month's issue, expansion of our museum facilities to three buildings plus the expectation of another housing the ESD covered wagon is changing the way we present our society to the community. Also, over the past several months a slow but steady increase has been occurring in the number of visitors signing in at the museums. With the combination of these factors it was becoming clear to the Board of Directors that a full review of our museum operations aimed at developing overall plans for both the near and long term is now in order. Since we are an all volunteer organization with none of us having any formal experience in museum management, it was decided to contact the Oregon Historical Society and take advantage of their Affiliate Society Program. Subsequently a meeting was held with OHS Field Services Coordinator Rick Read on January 15th at the Miller Log Museum.

First Rick took an informal walk-through all the buildings to get an overview of our facilities and the collections. Following this, the group, consisting of directors, officers and key museum personnel, sat down to a discussion lasting well over two hours. At the outset Rick explained his role and outlined a number of specific resources that are available to us. From there the conference turned to organization and management matters. This resulted in a consensus that a full self evaluation from the ground up should be conducted and from this develop specific museum policies and responsibilities. The ultimate goal being the best possible utilization of our facilities and presentation to the public.

In preparation for the group's first work session, Rick will be supplying a number references related to collections preservation and management, grant applications, etc. Also Don Crawford has already set about contacting other all-volunteer museums to learn how they operate and Dan Linscheid will try to arrange for a local coordinator to insure nothing is overlooked or gets too far off



J. White Photo

Rick Read of the Oregon Historical Society examines a display during his survey of the YCHS facilities.

track during planning. At first glance it all seems a bit complicated, but its really only a matter of taking a good common sense look at what we have, where we're going and how we get there.

Membership input is certainly part of the process. Anyone having ideas or comments about museum displays, management of specific collections, procedures, etc. should contact one of the officers or directors listed on page 2. We are presently at sort of a crossroads and just exactly which direction we take from here is up to all of us.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Friends,

Mission statements, policies and procedures and board of directors responsibilities: These were just a few of the items discussed at the special meeting held at the Miller Log Museum January 15th. Thanks to Rick Read of the Oregon Historical Society for spending time with us. There will be a lot of thought and time given to the direction, purpose and priorities of the Yamhill County Historical; Society.

It is nice to see that the broken sidewalk has been repaired. I continue to really enjoy our new sidewalks.

I was contacted by the County Commissioners concerning the pauper cemetery located next to the Masonic cemetery in McMinnville. They are searching for any information. The County seems to have just discovered that they own it and are responsible for its care. If any of you recall anything about this cemetery, please write the information down and I will relay this

to the County.

The historic Joel Palmer House restaurant is now open in Dayton. Perhaps some of you have already visited this new business. How does "Slippery Jack Wild Mushroom Soup" or "Warm Banana Chocolate Bread Pudding with Caramel Sauce" sound?

With the mailman's motto about snow, wind, etc. the Society's January meeting was well attended..

Happy Valentine's Day

.....Shirley

Just a Thought.....

If your children are grown and comfortably settled, you might remember that preserving and enhancing their heritage is a meaningful way to recognize their achievement, as well as to express your own pride. Please consider including the Yamhill County Historical Society in your will.

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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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

MEET THE THE ROGHAIRS

J White Photo

Ed Roghair
(Inclement weather prevented
obtaining a photo of Peggy)

earlier years, the couple joined and became active in the Yamhill County Historical Society, then meeting

Ed and Peggy Roghair have been McMinnville area residents since 1957 when they left their native South Dakota. After getting settled, both took positions at Linfield College; Peggy in the Library and Ed as an electrician. Eventually following up on an interest develop-

in the basement of the Baptist church.

Since joining the YCHS Peggy has been an active volunteer for Society activities and can always be counted upon for kitchen assistance at the potlucks. Beginning in 1984, and for the next 11 years, she produced and mailed the Society's newsletter. This was done in a sort of joint cooperative manner with husband Ed who at the time was publishing the McMinnville Garden Club newsletter.

Coming from a farming family and having an avid interest in machinery from boyhood, Ed was considered a natural to oversee our extensive tool and machinery collections housed in "the barn" when that building was erected - a job he still holds and enjoys. In addition he has also served on the Board of Directors for many years and rarely misses one of their meetings.

Through the years the Roghairs have proved a valuable asset to the Society and we are certain they will continue to be in the future.

COVERED WAGON UPDATE

Wagonmaster Wayne Moore reports two contractors have been contacted for bids to dismantle the building at the fairgrounds now housing the wagon and re-erect it at Lafayette. Also he is preparing some grant applications aimed at obtaining at least part of the funding needed for the project. It's still a long way to the end of the trail and much remains to be done, but progress is being made.

PROGRAM REVIEW UNAVAILABLE

In its most basic form Murphy's Law postulates that "If anything can go wrong, it will". Certainly such was the case regarding efforts to report upon the January 13th program presented by Jerry Smith of Sheridan. Inclement weather prevented the reporter from attending, but an audio tape of the program was located and borrowed solving that problem. However, while preparing this newsletter it was discovered the back-up tape was totally blank and there was insufficient time remaining to come up with any kind of an alternative.

At any rate, a tally of reports received during the course of recent telephone conversations with members who were able to attend indicate Mr. Smith's program on his Conner and Buhl forbears deserves a rating of "two thumbs up".

YCHS ON THE INTERNET

Several months ago Don Crawford set up a web page promoting the Society and offering a number of links to Yamhill County historical and genealogical resources. Cyber oriented members who have not yet done so should check it out and perhaps set a bookmark. The URL is:

www.pnn.com/~donc/ychs/YCHShome.htm

FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING AND POTLUCK DINNER

Once again we'll be meeting at the McMinnville Community Christian Church, 2831 NE Newby Street at 6:30 PM February 10th. Following the potluck dinner John Day of McMinnville will present a program entitled "Clouds - In Picture and Prose" for our entertainment. Guests are always welcome, so bring along a friend or neighbor if you like.

TELEPHONE COORDINATOR

Joanne Watts recently agreed to assume the duties of telephone coordinator for the YCHS. Her job will include contacting members when required as well as coordinating car pools to our monthly meetings. Anyone needing a ride to a Society affair and those willing to pick up a passenger or two for same should call Joanne at:

(503) 835-5893

She'll arrange the rest.

NEW MEMBERS

Joining us over the past month are:
Ben Frum - McMinnville
Ed Savage - Newberg

We extend a hearty welcome and hope to see them at the February meeting in McMinnville.

FROM THE MUSEUM

Olive Johnson reports both historic and genealogical inquiries are on the rise and book sales continue strong. Perhaps the most important news however is that the commode in the Poling Church has been replaced permitting the rest room to again become functional.

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

THE CONTROVERSIAL EVANGELIST L. T. NICHOLS

by John White

Born in Indiana during 1844 and moving to Wisconsin with his parents in 1849, L. T. Nichols⁽¹⁾ displayed an avid interest in religious matters from an early age. By the time he reached his teens he was considered by many to be an expert on the Bible and had already formed several deep convictions based upon its very strict interpretation. Drafted into the Army in 1864, he avoided combat duty with his unit by successfully appealing directly to President Lincoln for conscientious objector status using an extremely scholarly argument constructed largely upon the Sixth Commandment. As a result he was reassigned as a hospital orderly at Fort Madison Wisconsin and earned the deep animosity of his 3rd Wisconsin Infantry comrades. After the war L.T. and his wife Harriet took up farming, near Fond-du-Lac Wisconsin.

It was about this time Nichols came to believe he was divinely decreed to be a teacher of the "True Religion" and began travelling the local area preaching his "Doctrines of Truth" to neighbors. Over the course of the next few years he managed to assemble a small congregation of believers consisting of mainly of his own and Harriet's extended families. In the Spring of 1873 he declared his calling now laid in the far west and with the small flock of faithful turned up at McMinnville where he purchased 340 acres of the original Elbridge Edson D.L.C.⁽²⁾ This he subdivided and sold off in 50 to 80 acre tracts to his followers, retaining only one of the smaller parcels for himself.

Throughout the McMinnville area Nichols began zealously preaching stern adherence to his particularly harsh interpretations of the Bible and met with mild success. At first the meetings were held in the homes of his followers, but the congregation grew until forced to rent school houses or other public buildings, although securing a place to hold services was not an easy task as many in the community believed L.T. to be a religious charlatan and would refuse to rent to him. This problem was solved when property was acquired near Lafayette⁽³⁾ upon which a proper church building was erected and a bit later some small cabins built for use during camp meetings.

The tenets of Nichols' religion were reported to be quite severe and included such beliefs that members should abandon all ornament, personal or otherwise; that education, except study of the Bible, was to be shunned; that property owned by members actually belonged to the Lord; that members must not vote or take part in any government activity as they were already governed by the Lord's Deputy (Nichols); that all musical instruments be thrown aside; and that non-believers in a family, including spouse or children, should be cast out and disowned. There were several other rigorous doctrines as well, but perhaps none stirred as much attention throughout entire community as the "Holy Kiss" introduced in 1878 as part of the regular worship service.

Citing the Scriptures (Romans 16:16), Nichols proclaimed it his duty as the Lord's chosen advocate to "salute the brethren with an holy kiss". L.T. also interpreted the term "brethren" to include sisters of the flock and thus began a controversy that permanently split the congregation. A large number of male members expressed the sentiment that while they often might affectionately kiss their wives, sisters, mothers or daughters, they would not permit another man to do so. For the first time in his career Nichols' had his word seriously challenged by several followers in



YCHS Photo

L.T. Nichols poses with his Bible.

heated debate and surprisingly he retreated, declaring those who wished to receive the "Holy Kiss" would sit on the right side of the church and those declining on the left. "Rex", of the *YAMHILL COUNTY REPORTER*, attended an earlier meeting as an observer and wrote in its June 1 1883 edition: "In practicing the holy kiss, Bro. Nichols was chaste enough with the old and ugly sisters, but the young good looking ones received a vigorous hug, and a lingering kiss that looked altogether too carnal, and in some cases, where the sister was buxom, smacked decidedly of the lascivious".

L.T. held regular camp meetings lasting a week or more at the Lafayette site which were attended almost entirely by female followers. Doctrines preached at these retreats dealt with every aspect of family relations, the practice of which resulted in at least two divorces. J.L. Hembree testified in his action against his wife Maude that she,

among other things, had abandoned their children when they had the whooping cough, refused to touch shirts with buttons on the sleeves and for two years forced the family to do their own cooking or go without. Charles Buckingham related much the same against his wife Adeline, adding that she refused to allow their children to go to school. Both men vehemently blamed Nichols' teachings for their spouse's actions and both were granted uncontested divorces.

Following his death in 1883 Frank Martin's widow found comfort by becoming deeply involved with the group, and it was when her son James learned she was signing over his father's estate to the Lord's Deputy that he picked up a revolver and went looking for Nichols. He was found at the church and took off running when confronted. James Martin fired one shot hitting the preacher in the hip, whereupon several of the faithful chased the shooter down the road as Nichols crawled away. Following treatment for what turned out to be only a flesh wound, L.T. and his wife hurriedly left the next day for California. Ironically James Martin was never charged in the shooting as the only witnesses were true believers who had renounced recognition of secular law and therefore would not testify against him.

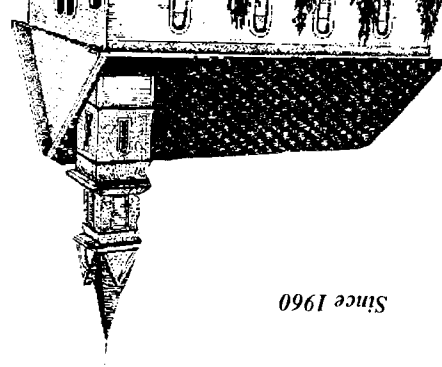
Some of the congregation reunited with Nichols in California to conduct an evangelical Odyssey across the country calling themselves the Megiddo Mission. For a while they even operated a steamboat on the Mississippi from which L.T. preached at every landing. The group finally settled permanently during 1904 near Rochester New York where the sect still exists today. L.J. Nichols died there in 1912 after passing the Megiddo Mission reins to Maude Hembree,⁽⁴⁾ the same lady whose husband divorced her at McMinnville many years before.

(1) Possibly the namesake of his father, Lemuel Truesdale Nichols, he firmly maintained throughout his entire life that his full given name consisted of only the initials "L.T."

(2) Just south and east of where the 99W/Hwy 18 interchange is located today.

(3) About a mile west of Lafayette off Gun Club Road.

(4) Maude (Galloway) Hembree was born in 1853 at Amity Oregon.



Since 1960

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 484
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YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
February 1998 Calendar of Events

Tuesday, February 10th, 5:00 PM

Board of Directors - Community Christian Church - McMinnville

Tuesday February 10th, 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)