

Preservation at the Museum

Why do we try to preserve artifacts? They have been given into our keeping by people who trust us to take care of them. They are pictures into the past, how people lived, what they wore, what things they had to make life easier, etc.

Who gave us these artifacts? Do we know anything about them or where they came from? Was it part of Yamhill County history? Does the artifact tell us about life in "the old days?" Is it something that would be of interest to the general public?

What is the item, some times it's hard to know. Is it something special, one of a kind? Do we have many of the same objects already? What condition is it in? If it's falling apart, moldy, badly damaged, do we really want it?

We put textiles and photos into appropriate boxes and sleeves to keep them safe. We have taken care of some of the light and temperature problems, but still need to do more. These old items need consistent temperature and humidity; and little or no light to keep them from deteriorating any more than they already have.

How do we take care of these artifacts? Well, we put proper ID on them to start with (we are currently in the process of doing just that, textiles are finally done).. We clean the item, and take its photo. We then put it, for example a textile or photo, into a protective box with appropriate ID on the box. We wear cotton gloves when we handle these items to protect them from snags and oils on our hands. These artifacts can't last forever; but with the proper care they can last a good long time for many people to enjoy or study.

We want to take the best care of the treasures that have been entrusted to us. Sometimes that means not putting them out on display because they are too fragile. It means not leaving a dress, for example, on a mannequin for a long period of time. To do so would be to put too much stress on the dress. According to the Oregon Historical Society and other museums, 3 months is the most a stable dress should hang from a mannequin. Most of our adult dresses are not stable and so are not strong enough to be put on a mannequin for even that long of a period of time. Unless, of course, we don't care how long they last.

Now that the textiles are boxed and identified (and the bug problems is settled) we can start doing more displays. However, because so many of our artifacts are fragile, not everything is going to be able to be displayed. These fragile things may be displayed later when we figure out a safe way to do so. In the meantime, our whites and children's clothes are in the best condition to be displayed.

We are also putting our bibles and photo albums in protected covers; that's nearly finished also. Submitted by Kathy Peck

NEW MUSEUM SITE UP-DATE:

As of March with the Steering Committee recommendation, the Board agreed to hire architect Don Stastny from the firm StastnyBrun Architects, Inc. Portland to work with the group to design a "site plan" for the new location. This will take into consideration future plans which may include building a separate blacksmith shop, bringing in a school house, where to place a working green house, and a separate building for exhibiting farm equipment. There are two other important items, a windmill and an outhouse. We are in the process of setting up meetings with the Spirit Mountain Tribes to tell the story of their heritage with exhibit space. It will be necessary for us to have water storage to meet the fire department codes. We would like to combine this in a water feature for something that would be visually appealing. Most important is the placing of the multiple use structure that will contain our collections, have space for the genealogical members and materials, school programs, a large community meeting room, work rooms, storage and major display areas. Add to this the parking spaces required for a project of this size. All of us working on this realize that we have never attempted to plan something like this and need all the professional help we can get.

Different groups have expressed an interest to help with some of the above items. The Retired Teacher's Assn. could work on the school house, Master Gardeners the greenhouse and etc. This could be an on-going relationship which would be beneficial to all parties.

Early in this planning the committee with the approval of the board hired Glenn & Judith Mason who are a consultant team with Cultural Images from Portland. They assessed all of our needs and recommended a plan to proceed with this project. If anyone would like to see the results of this assessment we would be glad to make it available. One of the recommendations was to consult an architect. Don Stastny comes highly recommended as one who works well with smaller museums. He is a good listener even when we aren't sure what we are talking about. He will be an asset to the success of this new endeavor.

Tuesday, March 29th from 9:00 a.m. to noon a meeting is scheduled at the Log Museum. This will be a time for bringing together our ideas so the architect can complete a site plan. There will be two other opportunities to discuss and finalize this. Even then changes can still be made. It is necessary to have an idea of what we are doing for the purpose of presentation to the public and grant writing.

Both the Steering Committee and the Historical Board would like to include every member and anyone interested in this project as part of this. We invite you to attend the meetings, make us aware of any problems or suggestions of needs. Contact any board member for times and locations.

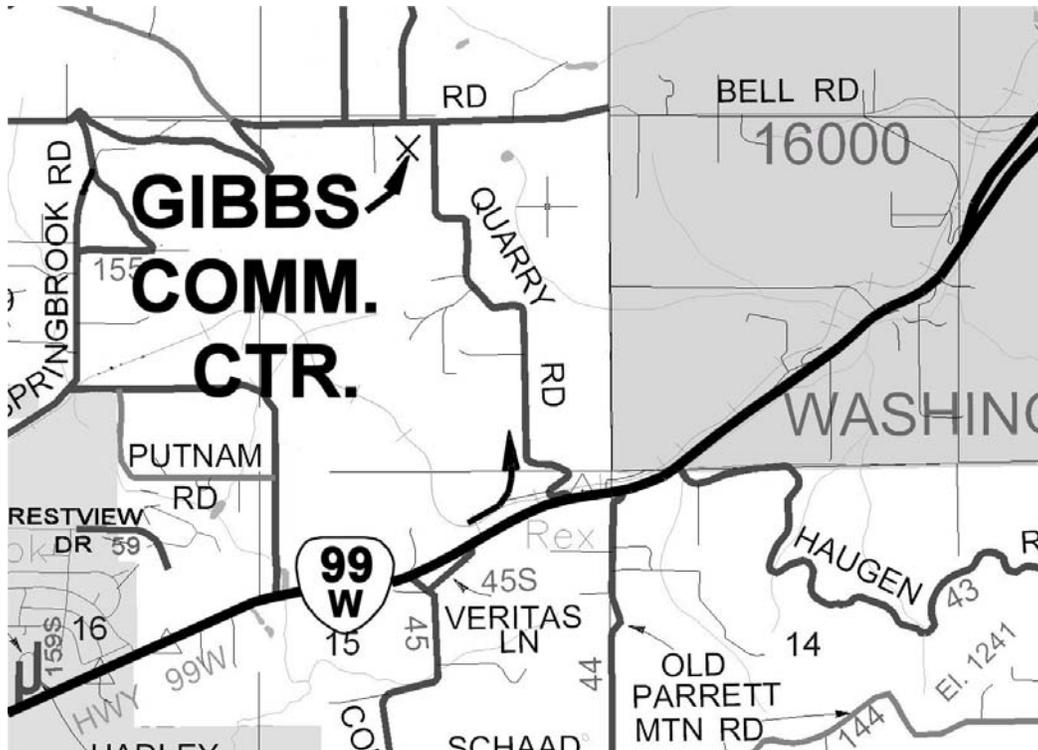
Naming the new site is a consideration. We have had a museum from the beginning but maybe now is the time to look to the future and see what purpose the Historical Society has in mind and reflect it in the name. For your consideration: Yamhill County Heritage Center, Yamhill County Historical Center. By using the word "Center" instead of "Museum" are we showing there is more purpose to this site than just storing artifacts? We hope to show the people of Yamhill County that we will be a major part of the future and will be involved in the process of preservation and education for generations to come with exhibits and programs for all. Why shouldn't our name reflect this and not give the public the impression that all we are is a storage place for collections? Your help in this process would be appreciated. Give us a call, write a letter and be a part of this name consideration.

The Board and Steering Committee are committed to building a solid center with something to interest everyone and with changing exhibits to bring them back again and again. Our goal is to provide exhibits and activities to show not only the pioneer life of Yamhill County but anything that has affected the lives of those who have lived and now live in the county. The Historical Society has already established an excellent record of preserving the collections and organizing and making available the Research Library. Now we have the opportunity to increase the scope of our services by adding space and people who are willing to work together to accomplish this. We have been given the new site and now we must go forward to complete this plan.

At this time the Steering Committee consists of: Shirley Venhaus, Dan Linscheid, Frank Dummer, Gloria Lutz, Katherine Huit, Ken Williams, Ray Kauer, Colin Armstrong, Dan Vega, Mary Post, Troy Haworth, Johnny Edwards and Roelie Goddik. We are hoping Elaine LaBonte may soon join us and also representatives from other Yamhill County towns and groups.

I hope this gives you a better understanding of the responsibility we feel in carrying out this project and will join us and support us in this effort.

Sincerely, Shirley



Directions to our April meeting: (refer to above map): Driving northeasterly on Hwy. 99W from Newberg, go to the top of Rex Hill. Near the highest point, you will see Quarry Road off to the left. From the left turn refuge, turn left onto Quarry Road and follow it to its terminus with Bell Road, a little over a mile. Gibbs community center is to your left, with parking nearby.

Our Youngest Volunteer celebrates his 18th Birthday

Kyle Swift, dedicated volunteer at our Museum, was the center of attention on March 16th, surrounded by those in the Wednesday workgroup. Kyle has been volunteering since last summer, attending with his grandmother, Marj Owens. He has endeared himself to the volunteers by digging in, doing some of the most laborious and tedious work. Lately he has been straightening up in the barn, cleaning and organizing.



Joining in the celebration, from left to right, were: Jean Sartor, Kathy Peck, Joanne Watts, Annita Linscheid, Kyle, Neva French, Marj Owens and Louise Heindl.

Kyle recalls visiting and working at our museum with his grandmother many times as he was growing up. He really enjoys working with the group, and his sense of humor sometimes causes suspension of all work efforts.

Kyle wants to become a rocket scientist for NASA after attending M.I.T., once he graduates from high school. ☺