

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

December 2006

Donation Land Claims in Oregon

Our December meeting program was presented by our own Dan Linscheid, who also serves as our county surveyor. A lot of history was covered, including basic Oregon history, the specifics of Donation Land Claims, the steps involved in establishing a D.L.C. and some thoughts on how to research these claims.

The size and shape of these donations varied, based on the date of the 1850 Organic act or amendments made by congress in later years. Also, the requirements of the claimant varied under the act of 1850 and the later amendments. Of the 7,329 Donation Land Claims approved in Oregon, less than 400 were in Yamhill County.

All claims in southern Oregon are square or rectangular in shape, so as to conform to the rectangular subdivision of land, i.e., Townships, Ranges, sections and aliquot parts of sections.

Dan also discussed several other ways property was transferred out of government ownership, namely homestead, outright purchase and properties granted to railroads in an effort to fund the development of rails across the country.

The audience asked numerous questions about these claims. Dan also posed a few pop quizzes during his presentation, most of which were answered correctly (does Mr. Herring have some background in surveying?).

For those who missed the meeting, survey field notes as well as township plats of all Oregon sectionalized lands as well as Donation Land Claim notes can be found at <http://www.aocweb.org/blm%5For/>. You will need to know the Donation Land Claim number assigned by the General Land Office to retrieve any records of specific donation claims.

Dan put together a nice powerpoint presentation on this subject, and it was well received. Thanks, Dan, for your efforts and information to help our researchers with DLCs.

Officer Elections Slated

At our December meeting, the following positions will be filled, terms to begin January, 1, 2007: President, (currently held by Shirley Venhaus), Treasurer (currently Ken Williams), Secretary (currently Annita Linscheid), Membership Secretary (currently Kathy Peck), Corresponding Secretary (currently Marjorie Owens) and the Director position currently held by Eileen Lewis.

A nominating committee was appointed to find candidates for these offices. The committed includes Barbara Knutson, Louise Heindl, Joanne Watts, Elaine Rhose and Pat Williams. Frank Dummer serves as chair.

If you wish to submit names of prospective candidates for any or all of these positions, please contact a member of the committee or attend our next meeting to make nominations from the floor.

Goodbye 2006, Hello 2007,

Where did the time go? Then you think, "Did we accomplish anything in 2006"? Well, let's see: Orville Bernard agrees to donate his Indian Artifact collection to the Society, We hosted some wonderful Tea Parties, We had some great General Meeting programs, A volunteer has agreed to video these programs & are now available at the museum, We participated in the county "River Awareness Project", We received the Covered Wagon from ESD, Applied for and received money from First Federal & Prudential to purchase an enclosed trailer to transport the wagon, (by-the-way the wagon will be in this year's Christmas Parade), We had the second garage sale, this time at the new site and cleared \$,10,000 for the building fund, We signed papers to receive an additional 7 acres to the new building site, Workshops with the architect to discuss the design of the new site, Decision to phase the project with well and septic this year, Another successful "Serve Day" with George Fox, Attorney Jerry Hart agreed to assist the society with legal matters, Items from a pioneer blacksmith shop were moved to the building on site, The Log Museum building received a total, major, exterior refurbishing, the exhibits inside the museum have been rearranged to better display specific items and rooms to make it a pleasure for members and visitors, changing exhibits make it a fun to come back again, The Research Library continues to grow and be more accessible, The Genealogical Society now shares space at our museum, (great addition), Better preservation practices now encourages people to donate their precious artifacts. As a result of this we have received many personal donations from pioneer families,

With lots of work and cooperation from the members your membership dues are now due July first. Add to this dozens of meetings and unknown hours by volunteers and you have a pretty successful year.

Now, what about 2007?? With increased activity and donations we become more aware of the need for a larger facility, The society has opted to hold the Harvest Festival (AKA Heritage Days) to coincide with Lafayette's annual celebration Sept. 8th, We will publish a cook book with recipes and information based on favorite family recipes, Hopefully the picnic will be at Nancy's,

The third annual garage sale (already receiving donations), The covered wagon making many trips to schools, The construction of a 50,000 square foot Agriculture Building on the new site with increased community awareness, Reconstruction of the Dist. # 14 school house on site, With all these activities we are anticipating an increase in membership. Add to this all the unknowns and I would say we have an interesting and exciting year coming up.

With regret to report the loss of many dear members. I might add to this that my term as president ends this Dec. If I may say so I would love to be your President once again. Please consider this. Thank you. Shirley Venhaus.

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 - 2006President

Shirley Venhaus
472-7328

Vice President

Lorna Grauer
843-3251

Secretary

Annita Linscheid
843-2625

Treasurer

Ken Williams
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Membership Secretary

Kathy Peck
472-6562

CorrespondingSecretary

Marjorie Owens
843-3081

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Eileen Lewis
835-7531

Gloria Lutz
472-7563

Shirley McDaniel
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Dan Linscheid
843-2625

Program Director

Barbara Knutson
843-2069

Volunteer Coordinator

Louise Heindl
662-4218

Newsletter

Dan Linscheid

Car Pool Coordinator

Joanne Watts 835
-5893

Librarian

Jean Sartor
472-6312

MUSEUM**WINTER HOURS:**

*Sept thru May:
Saturdays. 10 a.m. to 4
p.m. or by appointment*

605 Market Street
Lafayette Oregon

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YCHS

Phone: 864-2308

Did you know that if you make a cash gift to the Yamhill County Historical Society, you can make a subsequent matching gift to the Oregon Cultural Trust and receive a 100 percent tax credit for your gift to the Trust? It's as simple as one, two, three! First, make a contribution to us. Second, make a matching gift to the Oregon Cultural Trust. Third, claim your tax credit — up to \$500 for individuals, \$1000 for couples filing jointly or \$2,500 for corporations — when you file your Oregon State income tax returns. To find out more about this important program visit www.culturaltrust.org or call the Trust at 503 986 0088. Submitted by Shirley V.

Jim Lockett will be missed

We lost Jim a little over a month ago, but we will miss him for a long time. Jim was a faithful member of our organization, and submitted newsletter articles nearly every month.

At the time of his passing, Jim had a busy schedule of presentations to make during late October and November. A passionate researcher and historian, Jim wrote several books on local history. He also wrote historical articles for the News-Register.

Our hearts go out to his wife Reita and their three daughters and their families.

**Yamhill County Genealogical Society Moves Holdings**

The Ruth Stoller Research Room has become a researcher's one stop delight since the Yamhill County Historical Society and the Yamhill County Genealogical Society has partnered under an official Memorandum of Understanding. In October the YCGS moved their research holdings from the Sheridan Library into the log cabin. This move makes the resources of 478 books; 52 microfilm; 19 microfiche and 74 compact disks available to visiting researchers. The YCGS has also set up a microfilm reader for patron use.

The Yamhill County Genealogical Society sincerely appreciates the YCHS Board's generous offer of the space provided.



Nancy Mahi (left) and Carol Reid are rightly proud of the new Genealogy Library location... In our Log Building! Great addition!

With sadness we note....

The loss of two of our members, Bessie Cornie and Gary Booth. Our thoughts are with their loved ones during this time of loss.

Board Meeting Highlights

The board met November 14th, with all officers and directors present. Ken reported a balance of \$12,835.27 after accounting for all receipts and expenses. Shirley Venhaus suggested reinstating the life membership status, which will be given future consideration. A member requested permission to remove a quilt from our collection for presentation at a meeting of the county quilters group. It was suggested that the group meet in our facilities instead. We will be testing the bearskin rug for possible arsenic, which was used until the 1970s in taxidermy. The genealogy society has completed their move into the log building. The board approved an expenditure of up to \$150 to help offset author Jane Kirkpatrics' presentation in January at the McMinnville Library.

The board approved the part-time hiring of Katherine Huit as Director for the new museum project. A plaque will be placed on the covered wagon stating that it was donated to our society by the ESD. Lorna reported she has several people interested in placing advertisements in the cookbook as well as several recipes. The furnace in the church building needed immediate repairs, and was fixed by Websters Heating. The board decided to join in with the city of Lafayette during their Heritage Days festivities instead of holding our own Harvest Festival next year. A member-submitted article for the newsletter was handed out and discussed. The board, upon review of the submission, declined to ask the editor to put it in the newsletter.

By Dan Linscheid

While it does not lie in Yamhill County, Fort Yamhill has an important place in our history. While many of the soldiers stationed at the fort over the years complained about the drudgery of military life in the rainy Oregon Coast range, certain events stood out, some even being covered by the Portland Oregonian Weekly Times.

A report issued in 1866 by Lt. William J. Shipley indicated that there was no cemetery at the fort, and "no records on the Post Hospital showing that (a) soldier ever died there".

Notwithstanding this report, Fort Surgeon Glisan told of the return of a body of a soldier who had drowned in the area. As bad as this event must have been on morale, two murders occurred within three months in the fall of 1856.

On September 23, 1856, John Meecham of Co. C, 1st Dragoons, was beaten to death by Charles Stotzer, a soldier from Co. F, 4th Infantry. The defendant hired attorneys James Nesmith and R.P. Boise to represent him. He was indicted for second degree murder and the trial began in Dallas the following month. On November 29, 1856, he was found guilty of manslaughter and was sentenced to 10 years hard labor in the Oregon Territorial Penitentiary. As part of his sentence, he was also fined five dollars and all court costs.

On December 19th of the same year, Captain A. Smith, reported a second murder to Major Mackall, the Assistant Adjutant General in Benecia, California. In his report Captain Smith said, "last private Michael Turner of Co. C, 1st Dragoons, stabbed private Connor of Co. F, 4th Infantry, and caused his almost immediate death."

"I sent Turner the following morning with the necessary witnesses to the office of the Justice of the peace in Polk county with the view of having him committed to the civil authority for trial. The Justice, after hearing the testimony, decided that the prisoner was acting in self-defense and would not commit him. Turner was returned to this Post, kept in irons, that I might get further legal advise in regard to the propriety of setting him at liberty without trial. I know of no charge that I can prefer against him—adequate to the seriousness of this offence—that a military court can take cognizance of."

Doctor Glisan described the weapon as a butcher knife. Captain Smith was replaced by Bvt. Capt. O.H.P. Taylor on February 10, 1857. Another death was implied in a report to the U.S. Adjutant General in Washington, D.C.

Captain Taylor enclosed "a report of the proceeds of effects on William Justice late private C Troop, 1st Drags & of John Connor late of F Comp 4th Inftry, together with receipts of Laundress and Paymaster."

Same companies involved, different victims and suspects, the crimes occurring within 90 days of each other. This certainly did not speak to friendly competition between different commands at the fort.

About a year later, Doctor Glisan told of another death: "Today the mortal remains of Corporal Borland, G Company, 4th Infantry were brought to the garrison.

"He was drowned on the 15th instant, while attempting to swim across Mill Creek. He was carrying the mail at the time from Portland, via this post, to Fort Hoskins. The mule floating down the stream for a considerable distance, found its way out and the 'mail' was recovered." To this day no one knows why Dr. Glisan placed quotation marks around the word mail. This report was the subject of an article in the Sheridan Sun on June 8, 1939.

In the Sun article, the victims name was given as Borland, while the original Portland Oregonian story spelled the name Bartholomew. The Sun also stated that the accident occurred on December 11th, 1857, at Buell Ford.

Lt. Phil Sheridan was instrumental in recovering the body, which, according to the Sun, was taken to the Fort for burial. One can surmise the article in the Sun was based upon a W.P.A. report on this incident, now on file in the Oregon State Archives.

On June 5, 1858, Corporal Francis Smith left the fort for a temporary assignment in Portland. He died the following day. The Multnomah county coroner, not knowing how to proceed, requested instructions from Colonel Morris, commanding officer at Fort Vancouver. The Colonel advised the coroner that a private would be dispatched to retrieve the personal effects of the deceased, and that the U.S. Army Quartermaster would reimburse the county for necessary costs incurred in the funeral.

The soldier assigned to the fort for the longest period of time was fortunate to ever arrive there. William Y. Deere was a member of a Pacific railroad expedition in 1855, which was seeking a return route for a line from California to the Columbia river. An illness near what is now known as Mt. Lassen resulted in his being left in earthen shelter, and he was instructed, upon his return to health, to report to Fort Reading. Upon learning of this, Lieutenant Sheridan, already traveling north with several soldiers, located the ailing man and talked him into joining their group. However, Mr. Deere had not recovered yet, and the prognosis was not good, so one of the soldiers volunteered to remain with him until he died.

A Lt. Hood, upon being relieved by Sheridan, returned via this same route and found the volunteer and Mr. Deere, and brought them to the fort. In his memoirs, Sheridan said, "The sick man, whom I had expected never to see again, afterward became the hospital steward at Fort Yamhill, Oregon, when I was stationed there." After serving at the fort for six years, he was transferred to Fort Vancouver, but was returned to Fort Siletz in three months. That fort was being abandoned, and eventually Deere returned to Fort Yamhill, serving nearly eight years there. He was listed as the agency physician years later, when Ben Simpson, Indian Agent, submitted his annual report.

For more information on these events, refer to "A History of Fort Yamhill, 1856-1866" by Preston E. Onstad.

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 484

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Paid July each year

□ Individual	\$15
□ Family	\$25
□ Friend	\$50+
□ Supporter	\$100+
□ Community Builder	\$250+
□ Community Benefactor	\$500+

Please make checks payable to the Yamhill County Historical Society. New members can prorate dues monthly from the above table. Membership dues, artifact donations and gifts are tax deductible.

Members receive the Westside newsletter and access to our research library free of charge. We are an all volunteer organization, and are constantly on the lookout for new helpers. If you can assist us in any way, financially or with your time or talents, it will be greatly appreciated. If you are not sure if you paid your annual membership dues last July, please contact Kathy Peck at 472-6562. Rates Effective May 31, 2002.

Calendar of Events

Our next regular monthly meeting will be held 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, December 12th, at the Seventh Day Adventist Church in McMinnville. Our program this month will be our Christmas Memories theme, coordinated by Nancy Thornton. It's also time for election of six officers and directors.

New Members/Renewals: We welcome new members **Leotta Bush, Mary Baker, Carol Cox and Karen Lowery.** Thanks for supporting our organization. We invite you all to attend our meetings, visit our museum and become more involved in our local history!