

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

May 2005

The Gibbs School & Community Center

Our April meeting was well attended and we enjoyed a wonderful program put on by Donna Landauer-King and other friends of the Community Center and



School alumni.

The first school in the vicinity was erected in 1858 across from Bell Road from the present center. There was a second, temporary location of the school, which was originally called the Chehalem school. This name was later changed to Gibbs to honor Addison C. Gibbs, teacher, lawyer and former Governor of the State of Oregon.

This school remained open until 1947, when remaining students were sent to the Springbrook school. In 1955 the Community club was formed, "to conduct activities for the betterment of the community and its youth". In 1970, the county foreclosed on the property, but then County Commissioner Rudy Schaad met Ira Winters and a deal was struck wherein the county deeded the parcel to the center in perpetuity so long as it remains actively used to benefit the community.

In 1988 the support group succeeded in getting the structure listed with the State Historic Preservation Office, and by 1990 efforts were underway to improve the structural integrity of the building while retaining its one-room schoolhouse atmosphere. Following the meeting, members enjoyed a tour of the school. Assisting Donna were Irene, Alan and Dean Tessman, siblings who attended the school and descendents of the Winters family, well known as pioneers in the area. Leander Drive, running northerly from the center to the county line, was named after Leander Winters, son of the original Donation Land Claimant, Philip Winters. We thank Donna, the Tessmans, and the many other guests and supporters of the center who attended and presented this bit of our county's history.

From our President

In order to better inform the membership I have established a Q & A section for the News Letter. If you have any questions please send them to the p.o. address and I will do my best to answer.

Q. When the new museum is completed, what will become of the buildings in Lafayette?

A. This is something that has NOT been totally discussed or resolved. The Society placed the church on the National Historical Register with the intention of caring for it for a long time. We have an endowment specifically intended for the maintenance and care of the three buildings. in Lafayette. We have some choices. One is to restore the church to its original condition and use for weddings or like events. The Log Museum would make a wonderful place to have a reception or meetings. We have a lot of time to get input from the membership and hopefully make a wise decision for their use.

Q. Will this new museum have displays created by our volunteers using the items we now have on display? Will it be the kind of museum that has the bulk of the items locked away with only small displays such as an interpretive center?

A. The Steering Committee calculated the space we now have for exhibits and more than doubled it coming up with something the size of 35,000 sq. ft. This allows a large space for permanent and changing exhibits. This will also give us a large area for agricultural equipment including what we have in the metal building, and an extensive collection from Ray Kauer. We are hoping others will see this as somewhere they would like to donate their treasures for exhibit. Add to all of this storage for artifacts not being shown, duplicates, and other items. Then the most important part, the volunteer who will decide what displays and how best to present them. With our Mission Statement we have always tried to be a "Hands On" museum and that will continue to be a major consideration. Shirley Venhaus, President

Note: This is our last newsletter you'll receive until mid-July. Have a nice summer and remember the Wednesday workgroup will be working at the Museum every week, so feel free to join us from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. — Editor

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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Newsletter

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MUSEUM HOURS

November 13 - May 31:
Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
or

By Appointment
(Friday openings after
May 31st depend on
finding volunteers)
605 Market Street
Lafayette Oregon
Phone: 864-2308
Email: yamhillhistory@
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March Board Meeting Highlights

The meeting was called to order by President Shirley Venhaus at the Amity High School. The following Officers and Board members were present: Marjorie Owens, Nancy Mahi, Shirley Venhaus, Shirley McDaniel, Barbara Knutson, Eileen Lewis, Annita Linscheid, Carol Reid, Dan Linscheid and Kathy Peck. Also present were members of the Steering Committee: Kenneth Williams, Colin Armstrong, Francis Dummer, Gloria Lutz, Ray Kauer, Katherine Huit and Troy Haworth. Architect Don Stastny, with StastnyBrun, an Architectural firm based in Portland, discussed his concept of a site plan for the new Museum. He would like to do some workshops with the Steering Committee and Board members to create the site plan, and design the master plan with a three-dimensional representation of structures and layout of all buildings and structures. He stresses the idea of the "Wow" factor needed as a draw to the entrance of the main building and the visitor experience. He handed out a rough draft with some of what he envisions for the museum. This is very different from what the first proposal detailed, which was posted for some time in the log cabin museum. The steering committee would like to proceed with this workshop and asked for Board approval, which was given with the stipulation to proceed only as far as current monies will permit.

The Treasurer's Report was given by Carol Reid, showing a beginning balance of \$8,456.39, expenses of \$6,057.55, and deposits of \$2,211.50, resulting in an ending balance of \$4,610.34. Her report was approved. Correspondence Secretary, Marjorie Owens reported twenty eight items of correspondence, all but one were thank you notes for memorials given for Elma. Membership Secretary, Kathy Peck reported that things for the Mothers Day Tea are going as planned and that it will be a Mother-Daughter theme. Old Business: Museum Report, by Marjorie: A request was made to move the combine housed in the barn out to the storage shed on the new property making room to better display contents of the barn. This will be done by the Grauer family when they have time from their farm work. Marjorie reported that the headstone found by the railroad tracks cannot be returned to place of origin so it is officially ours to do with what we may. A request for ordering two "Punk Rotten & Nasty" books for resale was approved. Marjorie also reported that \$979.00 have been received on behalf of Elma's memorial and it was discussed what might be an appropriate use to honor Elma. A permanent way to safely rotate a display of her beloved quilts was one suggestion. Preservation Report: Kathy and Annita reported the textiles are finished and volunteers are still working on making covers for the bibles and albums. Marking and recording all other items will start soon. Lafayette Pioneer Cemetery: Dan/Debbie - Dan stated that due to a recent survey near the cemetery it was found that the new subdivision next to the property has encroached onto the cemetery property. Although nothing has been erected some minor earthwork has been done. Dan also stated that due to his position as county surveyor he would not be able to vote on any proposed action. Debbie discussed some options on resolving the problem and Shirley agreed to go out to the property with her to see what the problem is and what might be the best approach. The possibility of having the owners of the subdivision build a fence between the two properties was one suggestion. Oregon Heritage Commission Grant: This grant of \$265.95 has been received. McMinnville Area Cultural Association (MACA): It was decided not to participate in this program next year because of overhead expenses connected with this program. Any monies would need to come directly to YCHS.

New Business: River Awareness Day: This program to involve schools in local history with a contest and prizes is still in the planning stage and if possible we would like the Retired Teachers to handle this project, making up the test and correcting them. This project would not take place until October. Membership Changes: Having membership dues come due for all members on one date is still something we would like to implement in the near future. The easiest and most practical way to do this is still being thought out. Signed Articles of Incorporation now in Safety Deposit Box: The deed for the new five acres property is also contained in the box. Lafayette-One Meter Bill: Shirley reported that The City of Lafayette has agreed to charge for one meter on both buildings (church and cabin). This will save the \$71.00 a month we have been paying for the second meter. It was decided to get the bathroom in the church repaired and have the water turned back on for it. Morgan Magee: Shirley asked Dan to take over the job of pursuing the matter of Morgan Magee in small claims court. She gave him the necessary information and he agreed to take care of the matter. Yamhill County Association of Realtors Auction in October: This event will be held this year at Golden Valley Brew Pub and YCHS will be one of the recipients of proceeds. This will go into

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YCHS

April Board Meeting Highlights

The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Barbara Knutson at 4:45 P.M. at the Gibbs Community Center northerly of Newberg. The following officers and Board members were present: Marjorie Owens, Nancy Mahi, Shirley McDaniel, Barbara Knutson, Eileen Lewis, Annita and Dan Linscheid and Kathy Peck. Also present were members Jean Sartor, Lorna Grauer, Ben Frum, and George and Maxine Williams. The Minutes of the March meeting were approved with one correction. At this point the Board conducted some business without the Treasurer and President being present. George Williams presented the Board with a new Heritage Tree recommendation, the Cary Oak tree at the Lafayette Cemetery. Ben told the Board the Debbie Clark will tonight be presenting the certificate to Colleen Williams, for the Cary family. Jean Sartor-YCHS Librarian: made a request to purchase twenty books of "Reflections of Carlton" for resale at the museum. She discovered them at the Penguin Café and the owners were willing to sell them to the Museum. The Board agreed that she purchase all twenty. The alternative would be to go to the publisher and that would likely entail having to order a large number of books. At this point Shirley Venhaus and Carol Reid arrived. Correspondence Secretary: Marjorie Owens reported six pieces of correspondence this month with a lot of people visiting to do research. The Treasurer's Report: given by Carol Reid, shows a beginning balance of \$7,347.67, expenses of \$3,474.93, and deposits of \$1,079.82, resulting in an ending balance of \$4,952.56. Her report was approved. **Note:** The Secretary has been reporting cleared and uncleared transactions each month in the minutes, and from now on will report only cleared checks.

Membership Secretary: Kathy stated things are on track for the Mothers Day tea. Carol passed out copies of the updated membership list to the Board. Shirley asked if any progress has been made on the reorganization of renewal dates for members. This has not been worked out yet but it will be addressed soon. Volunteer Chairperson: Carol has been working on some ideas to encourage volunteers and will have a sign-up sheet listing the days that volunteers are needed in the museum at each table during our monthly meetings.

Museum Report: Marjorie stated she has not had good luck with the Louie Loy scroll translation but has had contact with a person who actually knew him. She will be looking into other ways to get a translation done. She also stated that last Wednesday we had a visitor at the museum who turned out to be the former pastor of the Poling Church. She showed him around and learned a lot from him. Preservation Report: Everyone was impressed with the article in the News Register concerning our quilts and preservation progress featuring Kathy, Jean and Annita. Jean requested that we do a short program at the upcoming quilt show featuring our quilts and preservation with the article as a prelude to this upcoming event. Kathy's request for the funds to cover cost of the Mothers Day Tea was approved. Lafayette Pioneer Cemetery: Shirley has consulted an attorney on this matter to see where YCHS stands legally in this matter. It is not clear if any action has to be taken by us or the previous owners because the damage was done before we had been deeded the property. By consensus it was agreed that at this point we should ask that a fence be erected between the two properties and the land be reseeded. Dan had taken some pictures of the damage and other than some top soil being removed in the area the Board agreed the damage didn't look too bad. No decision was made on what to do about the loss of the top soil. MACA-Letter sent: Shirley has sent a letter to MACA requesting that our name be taken off their list. Nomadic Bank Balance: The check written to refund grant monies not used on this program has not been cashed yet but it will be, soon leaving us with a balance of approx. \$200.00. Marjorie Owens found a newspaper article concerning the annual Ernest Bloch Music Festival in Newport, which will not be held this year due to a dispute between organizers and the State of Oregon, regarding whether or not the musicians were contractors of employees. The organizers must now pay retroactive unemployment insurance back to the year 2000 and over \$8,000 in legal fees. This article clearly vindicated the actions of our own Board two years ago in dropping the Nomadic Teacher Program. The same questions were raised at that time, and the decision was reached to drop the program. Yamhill County Cultural Coalition- Yamhill River Basin Awareness Week: This project has been endorsed by the County Commissioners and some YCHS members who belong to Oregon Retired Teachers Assn. (OREA) These retired teachers have agreed to put together the questions and then grade the student responses. Evergreen Air Museum Preservation Workshop: Marjorie Owens and Louise Heindl recently attended this workshop. They said it was quite informative but dealt more with preservation of items an individual might want to conserve for their own family. Getting oral histories was stressed as being very important. First Federal Donation: YCHS has received a donation from First Federal Savings and Loan for \$436.32. Steering Committee minutes: Shirley passed out the minutes from the first workshop with architect Don Stastny held March 29th that included the steering committee, Board members and a few general members. She also stated that Daryl King will be joining the steering committee. Someone will be making contact with the Caswell's concerning the old school house. Shirley then read parts of a letter written to the Board from a member concerned about the new museum project and what direction we are pursuing in the planning aspects. Shirley addressed a number of the questions, and suggested that we have a question and answer area in the newsletter for this sort of thing. She offered to address some of the questions in the next newsletter. Annita then voiced some concerns she has on the new museum project and the issue of its name. It was decided retain the existing name (the Yamhill County Museum) until some compelling reason to change it arises. Other Business: Barbara Knutson made a proposal that Article V, Section 2(c) in our by-laws be changed to allow someone other than the vice-president to be appointed to the Program Chairperson position. The motion was approved and it will be submitted to the General Membership and be voted on at the September meeting. (the proposed amendment and justification will be printed in the summer newsletter)

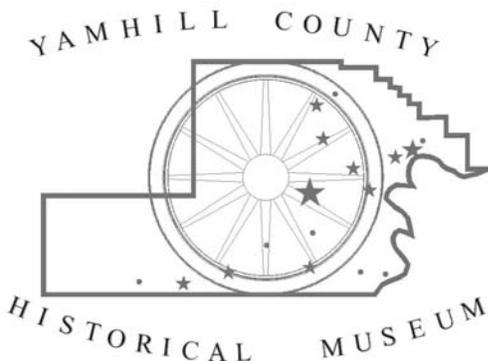
Respectfully Submitted, Annita Linscheid, Secretary

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Please make checks payable to the Yamhill County Historical Society. Annual membership 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 have paid your membership dues, please contact Carol Reid at 472-9631, or **check your mailing label, which should show this information also. (The month and year indicate your "paid through" period according to our records.)** If you see a colored notice inside your newsletter, you're at the end of your membership term!

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Calendar of Events

Board of Directors: 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 10th. Our next **regular monthly meeting** will be held Tuesday, May 10th at 6:30 p.m. Both meetings will be held at the Willamina Free Methodist Church.. Our program this month will feature Charlene Brown, descendant of a Willamina pioneer family, telling of Willamina History. **New Members/Renewals:** We welcome new member Jordan Dobson and renewing members Barbara Steers and Charlotte Filer. Thanks for supporting our organization. We invite you to attend our meetings, visit our museum and become more involved in our local history!

By Jim Lockett

Who were the first settlers? The Indians, of course. The Yamhill Indians were here when the explorers began to arrive. Early reports of these Indians were very negative: calling them lazy, dirty, thievish and completely disorganized. There was good reason for this, however. Between the arrival of the first explorer's ships off the Oregon coast and the settlement of the emigrants in the early 1840's, a complete Indian society had been decimated by disease. They had been through several epidemics that wiped out complete villages. By 1830, after numerous contacts with trappers, mountain men and explorers, it was estimated that ninety percent of the Indians in the lower Columbia River area and the Willamette Valley had perished. The survivors lost families and friends. The few remaining women were, no doubt, barren because of venereal diseases. By 1830, they were a "lost" race. In the 1910 census, only fifteen people were identified as "Yamhill" Indians.

What was it like before the explorers arrived off the Oregon coast? Scholars have made some educated guesses based on artifacts found in the valley. Stephen Beckham, in his book, "The Indians of Western Oregon," reports that the Indians generally lived in or east of the Cascade mountains up to 8000 years ago. He believes they moved into the upper valley near Eugene as early as 6000 years ago and then began spreading north as late as 2200 years ago. Geologically, this seems reasonable since the valley was ravaged by floods after the last ice age, 12,000 years ago. The valley was a lake for some time after that. Also, old Indian stories tell of the explosion of Mt. Mazama

(now Crater Lake) 6000 years ago. That event drove the people north to the Columbia River and the Willamette valley.

The first real settlers

We are sure these people were semi-nomadic: having permanent homes in the winter and moving to different camps in the summer, gathering berries, fishing and hunting. Their tools were stone; life was good to them in the lush Willamette Valley. They lived in small bands of which the Yamhills were one. A band consisted of several families, usually with a headman, a medicine doctor and a war leader. In the Willamette valley they were known as the Kalapuyans. An old Indian legend that Jacob C. Cooper put into print in 1902 is of interest to us. The book, "The Yamhills—An Indian Romance," tells of Hassiwa and his family who were the first people to settle in the Yamhill country. Colonel Cooper says in his introduction:

"Many of the myths and rites of Indians are and were changed at the whim of the leader. The legends, although claimed to be handed down through generations, were often colored by the imagination to suit the fancy of the narrator. Some of the incidents related in this story may be of historic interest. The grave of Hassiwa, in the foot hills northwest of McMinnville, is that of a noted Indian scout and warrior. The battlefield of Tonvolieu is yet in evidence, (in 1902 south of Bellevue on the Yamhill River) as the skulls, bones and battle axes are turned to the surface every year by the farmer who owns the land." You will find Cooper's books at the McMinnville library. Since they are old, rare editions they cannot be checked out.

A summary of the legend

Hassiwa, a wealthy old warrior of the Umpqua tribe, was tired of war. He purchased a beautiful bride, "Thera," and moved north and inland to the Willamette



valley. Arriving at the Yamhill River early one beautiful spring day, they knew this was the place for them: completely unspoiled, where no one had lived before. They set about making a home for themselves and their expected baby. Hassiwa wanted a boy to teach the ways of a man in this paradise. He was not particularly pleased when a baby girl was born but found that "Shanseppi" was a wonderful addition to the family. However, when the next baby girl "Tlynpe" was born, Hassiwa pouted and placed an embargo on the addition of any more females to the family. However, Hassiwa came to love his daughters and taught them the ways of this primitive world. He and Thera wondered how their beautiful young daughters could possibly meet some "appropriate" men because in all the years they lived on the Yamhill they hadn't had one visitor.

By Jim Lockett

New people in the valley

The Indian tribes east of the mountains and in the southern part of the valley began looking for new territory to settle. Several years of drought had seriously depleted their food supply and they needed more fertile ground to provide for their needs. Ralbo and Tocus, advanced scouts for the invading tribes, were scouting the Yamhill and Coast areas. As they crossed the Willamette River and were walking up the Yamhill, they came upon two lovely young maidens gathering roots. After watching them for some time, they tied a small cluster of flowers to the shaft of an arrow and let it fly: a traditional love message. As it landed between the girls, the scouts stepped out of hiding and waved. The girls responded excitedly to these young men—the first they had ever seen—Ralbo from east of the mountains and Tocus, a Kalapuyan from the lower valley.



Kalapuyan Costume

At this same time, a coast Indian courier, Nevyo, was headed north to unite the coast and Columbia River tribes to fight the invaders, Ralbo and Tocus. Noticing Hassiwa's home, he stopped and talked for some time and the old warrior said he would support the coast tribes. There was glad the girls were away as she didn't want this man to see them. (Little did she know what was happening down by the river.)

As good stories go, Shanseppe fell in love with Ralbo who was the main war chief for the Eastern Indians. But, the deceitful Nevyo kidnapped Tlynpe and carried her off to the Killamook (Tillamook) tribe. There, "South Wind," who was the war chief for the Killamooks, rescued and fell in love with her. Many strange events were to happen.

The climax came when the two war parties led by Ralbo and South Wind (Hassiwa's daughter's lovers) met in battle on the fields of Tonvolieu. (This, ironically, was Hassiwa's backyard.) Hundreds of young warriors were killed.

A strange truce

Ralbo and South Wind were saddened by all this. They called a halt to the fighting and wept over the braves lying dead on the battlefield. They decided that fighting was not the way to solve their problem, so they made a truce: a strange one, to be sure—leave all the dead on the battlefield for two years! Attempt to live together in this beautiful paradise and start a new nation. If, after two years, they were not successful, finish the battle to the end. Otherwise, bury their dead and continue to grow as a new people, *The Yamhill Nation*.

The story reports that they were successful! For many generations they lived in peace, always improving their ways of solving problems and taking care of each other. They were a well developed—though primitive—people who enjoyed a good life right up to the sighting of the "first tall ships."

It is interesting to speculate concerning a time frame for this legend. Two clues we might use are the depth of soil over the battlefield and the lack of horses in the story. It would take several floods to cover the results of a battle to plow-depth and, of course, native Americans did not have access to horses until introduced by the Spanish in the early 1500's. Also, the story mentions "many generations" of living together. This may have some historical value.



Kalapuyan Youth

Lafayette Pioneer Cemetery

The Lafayette Pioneer Cemetery Association would like to invite anyone interested in the cemetery to stop by and visit. The cemetery association plans to have the gate open on Friday, May 27th. through Monday, May 30th.

A sign-in sheet for visitors will be just inside the gate. The Yamhill County Historical Society Museum will be open on Saturday from 10:00AM to 4:00PM. Current newsletters and other cemetery related information will be available. On Saturday from 1:00PM to 4:00PM association president, Debbie Clark, will be at the cemetery to greet visitors and help answer questions.

Hope to see you there, Debbie Clark