

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

October 2001

From our President

Happy Harvest Festival Time!!! I hope all of you have made plans to attend and bring a friend to the "Harvest Festival on Saturday October 13th. Be sure to share the flyer that came in last month's West Side with a group or anyone who might enjoy visiting with old friend and see wonderful collections from the past. Also please let Annita Linscheid know if you are bringing something for the refreshment part of the festival (843-2625).

Work continues to put the Church building on the National Register. The Oregon State Preservation Office is being very helpful in putting together this request. It will be in by December 1st. If all goes well, funds will be released to paint the building in 2002.

Don't forget to get your copy of our new Calendar, published by our Society. Thanks to Dan for the work he has done on this fund raiser. I do look forward to the arrival of the newsletter each month. Thanks again to Dan for these, plus the ladies who prepare it for mailing each month. (Olive Merry Johnson, Betty Brown, Lila Jackson)

Barbara Doyle has received encouraging support from the schools in the county for her "Nomadic Teacher Program". She has worked hard to put this together and we are very proud of her efforts.

See you at the Harvest Festival! Shirley

You may like to know....

There is another fossil tree in addition to the Maidenhair (Ginko Biloba) and our own Dawn Redwood (Metasequia Glyptostroboides) thought to have been extinct for thousands of years—the Wollemi Pine, too recently found to have a botanical name.

A small grove of the pines was discovered in the rain forest of Wollemi National Park Northwest of Sydney, Australia. Although known in the fossil record, the trees are of a kind thought to have gone the way of the dinosaurs. So far only twenty three adult and sixteen juvenile Wollemi pines have been found. The tallest of them reach 130 feet and is 10 feet in circumference.

The extreme wetness of the Gorge in which they grow is thought to have protected them from fire and allowed their survival.

From a horticulture magazine recently read by our member George Williams.

Board Highlights

Treasurer Betty Brown presented a written report for the month's activities together with a year-to-date summary. August income was \$497.78, with expenses of \$2,198.49. Correspondence secretary Marjory Owens sent two cards, answered two inquiries and did a telephonic follow-through. Volunteer Co-Chair Ben Frum is still getting used to his new position, and he needs to fill in some more blanks in the Volunteer Calendar. Under Old Business, Barbara Doyle has 22% of the possible classes scheduled for the current project. The new proposal for Oral Histories grant request would include 18 histories, with Barbara Hinman, neighbor of Barbara Doyle doing six, and Barbara Doyle doing the remainder. The Board has submitted a list of histories that would be good additions to our museum. Thanks to Barbara Hinman for her work with the photos and negatives from the Gillam Studio files. Thirteen organizations were contacted and sent pictures which were pertinent to them. Sixteen dollars in donation-in-kind were received by the Museum in response to Barbara's good work.

Endowment Committee: Francis Dummer and Ken Williams have been appointed to meet with Dan Corrigan. Calendars: Dan is printing these. Shirley and other helpers will assemble them prior to the Harvest Festival. Church painting: it was moved, seconded and approved to paint the Church this year, since it is in such sad shape. Shirley will contact the bidders to check on schedules. Bats: Morgan has fixed the sensory device which should help keep these pests at bay. He also repaired the front steps for the cost of materials, less than \$50. Harvest Festival plans were reviewed. Cleanup Day will be Friday October 5th beginning at 10:00 a.m. Members are asked to help on that day. Everyone is also asked to bring a finger food donation to the festival.

New Business: Discussion of next year's Antique Road Show was held. Betty White's letter of concern was addressed. Marjorie plans to meet with her. Dues increase: this needs to be discussed in the future. With the loss of rental income where the Log Building was placed, we no longer have a regular income and interest is at a low point, so operating income needs to be looked into. Postage has gone up. We need to be thinking about these issues.

**HARVEST
FESTIVAL
OCTOBER 13, 2001
10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.
AT THE MUSEUM**

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 - 2001**President**

Shirley Venhaus
472-7328

VP/Program

Barbara Knutson
843-2069

Secretary (Joint)

Shirley McDaniel
662-3528
Eileen Crawley
835-3673

Treasurer

Betty Brown
472-7100

Financial Secretary

Lila Jackson
472-8510

Corres. Secretary

Marjorie Owens
843-3081

Board of Directors

Eileen Lewis
835-7531

Ed Roghair
472-6909

Francis Dummer
864-2637

Dan Linscheid
843-2625

Volunteer Coordinator

Ben Frum
472-7953

Librarian

Olive Merry Johnson
472-6070

Newsletter

Dan Linscheid
843-2625

Car Pool Coordinator

Joanne Watts
835-5893

MUSEUM HOURS

June 1 thru August 31
Fri-Sat-Sun 1 to 4 PM

or

By Appointment

605 Market Street
Lafayette Oregon
Phone: 864-2308

ANNUAL DUES

\$10.00 Individual
\$17.00 Family
\$125.00 Life

Mail to:

Financial Secretary
2430 North Baker
McMinnville OR
97128

**September Meeting
& Potluck Dinner**

Our October meeting will be held at the Friends Center in Newberg at 6:30 p.m. on the 9th of October. The center is located at 200 South College Street in Newberg. Our guest speaker will be Loraine Hall, Curator of Minthorne House. Please invite a friend and join us for great food and fellowship. Please bring potluck fare and your own tableware.

2002 YCHS Calendar nearly completed

A new calendar will made available at our Harvest Festival, containing the remaining 3 months of 2001 and all of 2002. The cost is yet to be determined, and due to a number of pre-publication orders, the initial run has been increased to 75 copies.

The wall calendars will contain gray-scale historic photos for each month, from different towns and cities around our county. The dates of all of our scheduled events will be indelibly imprinted for each month.

There will be sufficient space for you to write in notes and reminders for each day.

This will be a new project for the society, and we hope this will help us boost revenues. These will make a perfect gift for that special someone with an interest in our local history.

Volunteers Needed

Ben Frum, one of our newest museum volunteers and co-chair of the volunteer committee, is looking for more than a few good volunteers. Ben and **Eileen Lewis**, the other co-chair, have been struggling to keep our facilities open this summer. Ben has even talked his mother, **Barbara Frum**, into becoming a volunteer.

We are always in "recruiting mode" with this committee, so if you can spare one afternoon a month, please contact Ben at 472-7953 or Eileen at 835-7531. We cannot stress the importance of our volunteers to our organization. It can be slow at times and exhilarating at others, but the rewards benefit both the volunteer, our patrons, and our Historical Society. Please help us out with this if you can.

Please help us prepare for the Harvest Festival... a cleanup volunteer effort will begin at 10:00 a.m. on October 5th. Any help will be appreciated.

The Nomadic Teacher

This program brings local history to the classroom in an exciting, experiential, dig-your-hands-in-and-get-dirty sort of way. Grounded in historical research and brought to life by authentic artifacts (or faithful replicas), this program immediately engages students by immersing them in a history they can see, hear and touch. The Nomadic Teacher program meets Oregon's educational standards and benchmarks and is designed to compliment the State's 4th grade social studies curriculum.

A primary goal of the program is to weave a thread from the past to the present, connecting the lives of the early people who lived in Yamhill County—the Native Oregonians as well as the pioneer settlers—to the lives of students who live on this same land today. Because of its hands-on, discovery-based focus, this program encourages creative learning and helps students develop critical thinking skills. The Nomadic Teacher currently offers four thematic programs from which teachers can choose: Yamhillas (Natives of the local tribe living here in the early 1800's), Early Pioneer Life, The Oregon Trail, and Mountain Men: Trappers and Traders.

Teachers are Barbara Doyle and Jack Davis. Barbara has always loved history. She has many years of experience as a teacher, museum educator, and history society curator. She was instrumental in creating and implementing Washington County Historical Society's highly successful Mobile Museum program, which takes artifacts from the Museum's educational collection, along with relevant stories, to local schools. This program is modeled after the Mobile Museum. Jack has studied, and practiced, the ways of mountain men for almost twenty years. Part Native America, he makes his own tools, leather goods, and clothing. Jack regularly attends "rendezvous" that celebrate the traditions and lifestyles of mountain men and Native Americans. He enjoys teaching children about the early days of the Oregon Territory, and the kids adore him!

Each session is presented to one class at a time and lasts for 45 to 60 minutes. The teacher must be present during the program. A 6 foot table is needed in order to present the artifacts.

Barbara Doyle is certainly helping with the goals and objectives of our society with her efforts. She deserves our thanks for performing a needed function.... If we can't get more of our youth to visit our Museum, the Nomadic Teacher will bring at least parts of our historic heritage to their classrooms. Thank you very much, Barbara.

Captain Absalom Jefferson Hembree was one of the more colorful figures to cross the plains in 1843. He made the trip with two other Hembree families, his older brother Joel and his uncle Andrew. He was Roma Sitton's great great uncle.

Absalom Hembree was born in 1813, near McMinnville, Tennessee. Here, he married Nancy Dodson in 1835. She was the daughter of McMinn Dodson, a former Governor of Tennessee. They had three children while living in the east; Nancy, Jane, and Annie. After arriving in Oregon, five sons, James, Andrew, Joel, Frank and Absalom and another daughter, Lillie were born into the family.

The Hembrees spent that winter in Oregon City. In the spring of 1844, they settled on a donation land claim about ten miles northeast of McMinnville. It was said that Absalom made a splendid selection-the very "Eden of Oregon." Here he built his log cabin and began the life of a pioneer. In fact, he built a fairly large cabin so that new emigrants to the valley would have a place to stay until they were settled. While a farmer at heart, Absalom was elected to the Legislature for the Provisional Government and the Territorial Government when it was formed. He also served as Sheriff of Yamhill County. In 1855, when the Indian War started, he was elected captain of a company of Yamhill County volunteers.

The Indian Nations of the Oregon Territory were feeling a loss of their land and a threat to their lifestyle so they entered into a co-operative effort to rid the land of the "pale faces." However, the lack of a leader to co-ordinate their activities and a diminishing supply of ammunition, brought about their surrender. While over 8,000 Indian braves were on the warpath-disturbing emigrant routes and supply lines-only 3,500 settlers, capable of bearing arms, were available in Oregon. Many of these men could not be sent to the wars because of the everyday work needed to sustain their families. So, the governor of the State initiated a system; calling on each county for volunteers and supplies. The volunteers reported to the county seat, organized themselves by electing officers and planning their attack. County residents sent supplies in the following manner: Andrew Hembree, 600 pounds of pork and twenty bushel of wheat; Eli Perkins, one horse, two pounds of powder, two boxes of caps, five pounds of lead; William J. Martin, one horse loaded with provisions; John Baker, one horse; Hiram Cooper, one rifle, one musket, sixty rounds of ammunition; W. T. Newby, one horse; Richard Miller, one horse, six boxes caps; etc. etc. etc. In this manner, Yamhill County sent about sixty-five of its bravest men to fight the Indians under the command of Captain Absalom Hembree.

Following are excerpts from the diary of Waman C. Hembree, Absalom's nephew, who served under his uncle: "On Oct 16, 1855 we met in Lafayette to organize and elect officers. On Oct 21, we went aboard the Gazille, a river stern wheeler, to go up the Columbia River to fight the Cayuse Indians. A small group of 'Regular Soldiers' from California joined us in late October. In early November two soldiers drowned during a 'brush with the Indians.' Christmas day we

had eight inches of ice on the Walla Walla River and temperatures of 20 to 26 degrees below zero."

A letter from Captain Hembree to his brother, Joel J. Hembree (Waman's father and Roma Sitton's great grand father) in McMinnville reported the following in early April of 1856: "Dear Brother: I take this opportunity to let you know what we are doing in this God-forsaken country. We have been living for the past 15 days on horse beef. Our horses are all very weak, many of them giving out and left. We are laying by at present to recruit (more) horses and get provisions. (The Commissary Department at The Dalles was so poorly administrated that the volunteers were without regular rations and supplies while the commissary staff was well fed and comfortable). We have been across the Snake River and all through the Palouse country. The Indians fled. We have run them all out of their country.... We came down to the Columbia to the mouth of the Yakima River. Five companies swam their horses across the Columbia River in order to get down to the Yakima country Waman and Lafayette are both well and are with me."

Captain Hembree and his men crossed the Columbia and moved up the Yakima River near the present town of Toppenish. Thinking he might find some beef, he took six men up a bluff where cattle had been reported. Instead of cattle, they saw a herd of seemingly "riderless" horses, running like the wind toward their camp. Suddenly, an Indian rose up on each horse as the warriors rode into the small group of volunteers with savage yells. Fighting for his life, Captain Hembree killed two assailants before falling from his horse. When help came, he was found naked, lifeless and scalped.

That same day, Major Cornoyer, in command of several companies, drove the Indians from their fortified stronghold. This ended hostilities. The next day the entire company marched for home, bearing the body of the gallant Hembree.

Accounts of the funeral differ. One tells of how the "pale Captain lay in his coffin with a dainty handkerchief over his scalp wound." Another, tells how someone followed the Indians, recovered the scalp and had the ladies of Lafayette gently sew it back in place," so well you could hardly tell what had happened." In any case, Captain Absalom Hembree was back in Lafayette where a great, emotional funeral was held. He had been a popular and effective leader in the Oregon country. He died a hero's death and hundreds of people and dignitaries came to pay their last respects. Whatever the story, this man gave himself to the service of his country-finally giving his all. It is interesting to note that Toppenish, Washington, near where Absalom was killed, has erected a stone monument in his honor. Yamhill County is generally not aware of this war hero.

Absalom's wife Nancy survived him by thirty years. She was well known in Yamhill County for her hospitality and community activities. Eight of their nine children lived to adulthood-each making significant contributions to life here in the "Eden of Oregon!"

Visit our Historical Photograph Album at <http://www.sites.onlinemac.com/history>
YCHS website at <http://www.co.yamhill.or.us> and our

(more details inside)

Harvest Festival—Saturday, October 13th at Museum

(See page 2 for details)

Friends Center—Newberg

Monthly Meeting & Potluck—October 9th, 6:30 pm

Friends Center—Newberg

Board of Directors - Tuesday, October 9th, 5:00 pm

Fall 2001 Calendar of Events

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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P.O. Box 484

Lafayette Oregon 97127

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage

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