

# The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

December 1998

## TREASURES

There is nothing like a good treasure hunt.

On Friday, November 6, Shirley Kuykendall, Lois Brooks and Twila Byrnes didn't need a map or the end of the rainbow to find Roma's upstairs room full of collected memorabilia and antiques that she had stored in her Century Farm Home now occupied by grandson, Lester Sitton, wife Brooke and two daughters.

We boxed a nearly uncountable number of items to be moved to the museum for sorting and evaluation, then, being of an age where negotiating the stairs with heavy boxes was not in our best interest, we left them for Shirley Venhaus and her young crew to complete the move.

Among the artifacts discovered was a jar of marbles said to have been brought to Oregon by Roma's father on the Hembree wagon train in 1843. Also located in this jam-packed room was a wagon jack that now is no longer lost.

We thank Brooke for saving us many trips up/down stairs with boxes and for information on some stored items. Unpacking will take a while but it will be most interesting for sure.

Twila Byrnes

## SCHREIBER FAMILY AND McCABE CHURCH

Phil Schreiber's ready wit and easy speaking manner made his program about the McCabe United Methodist Church and Schreiber family history a delight, which was enjoyed by a large turnout at the Amity Methodist Church on November 10th. Interspersed with a sprinkling of tidbits from relatives and others in the audience, his presentation chronicled the progress of the McCabe congregation from a borrowed church in the mid 1800's, through the construction of their own building in 1886, to the skunk-attending present day services.

The Schreibers (Phil's great grandparents) came from Nusdorf Germany in 1872 and farmed their way across the United States, their descendants arriving and settling in the McCabe area in 1907. Marriages into other pioneer families has produced church members - all related - of Cones, Murrays, Duersts, Blenkinsops, Bones, etc. (Phil said there are lots of Bones in the cemetery!) A McCabe friendship quilt top borrowed for the meeting from the museum quilt collection contains many of these names.

With family memories woven into stories and descriptions of the church, Phil's program was most informative and was highlighted by the donation to the museum of his great grandmother's (Soloma Bender and Martin Schreiber were married in Nusdorf, Germany in December 1855) wedding dress which had been in the care of Florence Bridenstine, and his grandmother's (Mary Schreiber Kenzler) black wool cape.

Lois Brooks

## NEW MEMBERS

Richard Bennette - McMinnville  
Mary Ann Henderson Stoller - Dayton  
Leila Henderson - Dayton  
Laura Compton - Dayton  
John B. Smith - McMinnville  
Delores Robertson became a life member.

We welcome you all.

## PRESIDENTIAL THOUGHTS

I have given hours of thought to the Yamhill County Historical Society presidency. All of the pros and cons. I have had four great years working with the society members. I had set up some goals for myself that I had hoped to work on and accomplish in the first year. I found it was necessary to extend the time frame to much longer than one year. That is one of the main reasons I have decided to accept the presidency for one more term, if the membership desires.

There are several projects that I would like to help complete and at least get started. The fact that I am somewhat limited to the time I can spend working with the society is a drawback. But I guess that is true with volunteers who love what they are doing. Without the help and cooperation of the entire membership none of these things could have been accomplished.

Since this is our December letter, I want to wish all of you a very "MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR."

Shirley

## HARVEST FESTIVAL 1999

A tentative date has already been set for the third annual Harvest Festival to be held in October of 1999. It has been suggested that we have an "OLD BOOK SALE" for something different and interesting and as a fund raiser. We would hope to have older books and not your usual paper back novels. We will be looking at our needs to determine where any money from this sale should be used. We have a long list to choose from.

Please keep this event in mind and sort through your old books for any that you would be willing to donate for this sale. We will be collecting books starting January 1. Thank you for your continuing support.

Shirley Venhaus



**GIVE THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING** through the year. Give a membership to family and friends. Do so now as after January 1 the price will increase to \$10. Send request and one year's dues to Lila Jackson with recipients name and she will send a card notifying them of the gift.



**OFFICERS - 1998****President**

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472-7328

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843-2069

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**Financial Secretary**

Lila Jackson  
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**Corres. Secretary**

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472-4547

**Librarian**

Olive Merry Johnson  
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**Newsletter**

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665-5376

**Car Pool Coordinator**

Joanne Watts  
835-5893

**MUSEUM HOURS**

605 Market Street  
Lafayette Oregon  
Phone: 864-2308

June 1 to Aug 31:  
Fri & Sun 1 to 4 PM  
Sat 10AM 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

**HARVEST FESTIVAL - 1998**

Twila Byrnes, Peggy Roghair and Barbara Hinman kept very busy keeping food available and on the table at all times.

**CHRISTMAS SLEIGH**

Something new in the Church Museum! At least for the holidays. Our Great One-Horse Cutter Sleigh that has been resting in the barn is now cleaned up, rubbed down with orange oil and ready to be decorated for Christmas. More work of rubbing on orange oil with wax will need to be done later to preserve the weathered wood.

The sleigh is thought to be about 1880 vintage and was given to the museum by Barbara Norris. Her father, Mr. West, was a relative of former Oregon governor Oswald West. A live tree is being provided by Crystal Rilee and Gertrude Jette and help will be appreciated for decorations and decorating.

Any members who have older Teddy Bears and favorite old toys that could be used in and around the sleigh are asked to loan them for the exhibit. They will be taken care of and will be returned after the holidays.

What fun we can have with this!

Delores Robertson

**GRANT YOUNGBERG INJURED**

Member Grant Youngberg was injured in a tractor accident on November 5. He has a broken leg and other injuries. He is recuperating and hopes to be able to go home soon. Our thoughts are with you, Grant.

**ELECTION**

New officers will be elected at the December meeting.

The nominating committee has chosen these to be on the list:

President, Shirley Venhaus  
Board member, John White  
Secretary, Shirley McDaniel and Eileen Crawley (jointly)

Treasurer, Betty Brown.

Others may be nominated at the meeting.

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



L Brooks photo

George and Maxine Williams dance to the old time music at the Harvest Festival. Lila Jackson and Delores Robertson are appropriately dressed for the occasion.



## A PLACE CALLED EKINS

By John White

The 32 mile Dayton, Sheridan and Grand Ronde narrow gage railroad had originally been financed by local area farmers but under-capitalization along with serious cash flow problems forced the operation into receivership during 1879. A group of investors in Scotland, headed by the Earl of Airlie and represented here in Oregon by the venerable William Reid, purchased the defunct line as the first step in building what they hoped would be a cost-effective narrow gage railroad network throughout the Willamette Valley.

Organizing under the name of the Oregonian Railway Company Ltd., the Scotch plan was to extend the old Dayton, Sheridan and Grand Ronde into more communities on the west side of the Willamette River and at the same time, construct another narrow gage line on the east side of the river. These two divisions would later be joined by a bridge across the Willamette from Ray's Landing (near St. Paul) on the eastern shore to Fulquartz Landing on the west. From this point a single line would extend to Portland. The plan also called for the Oregonian Railway Co. headquarters to be centrally located near Fulquartz Landing at a new community to be called Dundee. With either the Oregonian Railway Co. or William Reid himself owning much of the land in this area, little doubt existed that Dundee would become a controlled "company town" when developed.

By 1881 the east side section had been constructed from Ray's Landing to Brownsville via Woodburn, Silverton and Scio. On the west the line had been extended into Dallas and Airlie and also from Lafayette to Fulquartz Landing. This latter section removed the former narrow gage headquarters at Dayton from the "main line" and transfer of the railroad offices and maintenance shops to the settlement that would soon become Dundee was underway.

This was the scene when an upstart Irish immigrant by the name of Claudius Ekins (or Ekin) entered the picture. Arriving at Dayton with his younger brother George a few years earlier, Claudius had opened a modest store in that community and married Eliza Fulquartz.

Surmising an enterprising merchant could do well for himself by following the railroad operations from Dayton to Dundee, Claudius quietly began a search for a site upon which to relocate. Confronted with the railroad's "company town" philosophy, he would be forced to seek a suitable location outside the controlled

townsite - not exactly an easy chore. Fortunately a relative of his wife, Phoebe Hess, owned a parcel of land adjoining the townsite on the south and he eventually persuaded her to lease him an acre or two beside the Lafayette road. In present day terms this would be about where Nederberger Road intersects with Highway 99W at the south city limits of Dundee.

Claudius immediately set about erecting two buildings on the site. One was a general store and the other a saloon. To complete the operation he petitioned for a post office to be located in his store building. On June 7th 1881 the office of "Ekins Oregon" was authorized by the Post Office Department with Claudius as its postmaster. Apparently the entire venture was a success almost immediately.

The railroad interests however took a different view of Ekins' enterprise. It had been their plan to sell, lease or franchise business opportunities within the town of Dundee, thereby providing an additional source of income for Reid and the investors. In the company's mind Ekins was therefore an unwanted competitor and a threat to their scheme of things to come. The situation was not helped when Ekins' Celtic heritage (perhaps bolstered by a dram or two of spirits) caused him to occasionally remark in public something to the effect that "Scots may own everything but they still must come to an Irishman for their mail".

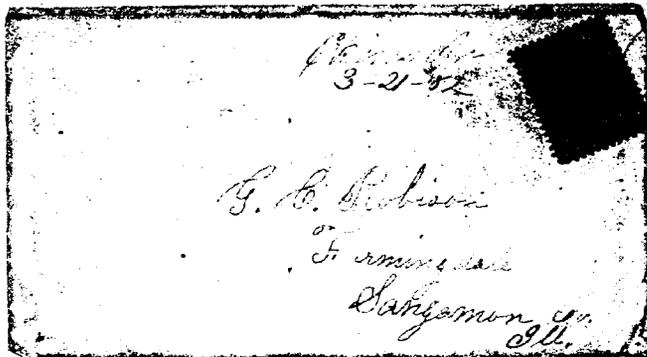
At any rate, Ekins' good fortune was short-lived. In early 1882 he found himself facing what were then rather serious charges of serving alcohol on Sundays. If convicted, he would surely lose his business and possibly go to jail. The actual validity of these accusations is unknown as they appear to have been withdrawn during April 1882 - soon after Claudius closed his store and relocated with his family to Sprague Washington.

The Ekins post office was quickly moved into the railroad's newly built hotel building with William Smith serving as temporary postmaster. On July 25th 1882 this officially became the Dundee Oregon post office with railroad telegrapher William Lewis as postmaster. Within the next few years the Oregonian Railway Company was absorbed into the Southern Pacific System and the Scotch land holdings in and around Dundee put up for sale ending the brief period of absolute company control. Today the site of Claudius Ekins' store, post office and saloon is occupied during fair weather by roadside peddlers hawking a variety of wares to passers-by on Highway 99W.



YCHS Photo

Claudius Ekins

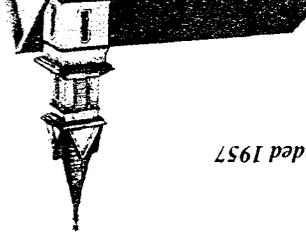


Author's Collection

Envelope posted at Ekins Oregon on March 21 1882. Since postmasters at smaller offices were at the time required to purchase their own cancelling devices, some opted to merely "X" the stamp and write the date and name of their office by hand.

### SPECIAL THANKS

The editor wishes to express his gratitude to all those who contributed to the newsletter during his recent illness. Of particular note are **Olive Merry Johnson** and **Mark Fery**, without whose efforts publication would not have been possible.



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*YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY*

## **YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

*December 1998 Calendar of Events*

**Tuesday, December 8th, 5:00 PM**

Board of Directors - Community Christian Church - McMinnville

**Tuesday December 8th, 6:30 PM**

General Meeting, Election & Potluck Dinner - Community Christian Church

2831 NE Newby Street, McMinnville

Bring your Own Table Service - Guests always welcome

**Program -- Nancy Thornton**

Nancy Thornton lives in Moore's Valley, Yamhill and will relate

Pioneer Christmas Stories