The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

August 2008

August Member Picnic at Parrett Mountain Farm

Crystal Smith Rilee who passed away in 2006, was a long-time member of the YCHS and supported the organization for many, many years. We all fondly remember her "jokes" and sense of humor. She was passionate about heritage and history. Prior to her death, she created a legacy for the public that is now known as the Crystal Dawn Smith Rilee Foundation. Its mission is to keep 412 acres of farmland, located on her beloved Parrett Mountain, whole and to use it as a tool for education and discovery purposes by the general public. A living history farm is being developed with three interpretive sites: a Native American site, a 19th century site and a 20th century farm. It will operate under the name The Parrett Mountain Farm. This year, the YCHS Annual Membership Picnic will take place at The Parrett Mountain Farm. Many of you may remember going to Crystal's wonderful birthday parties held at the farm. The picnic will be at the same location. Elizabeth Rhode, Crystal's granddaughter, together with the Crystal Dawn Smith Rilee Foundation Board of Directors have done a fabulous job with the farm house and property! So, please join us in the fun and discover Crystal's vision, which is unfolding all over the 412 acres, and enjoy the wonderful scenery from "Rilee's View"!

Volunteers participated in numerous parades this summer, including McMinnville's UFO Parade, Sheridan Days Parade, and the Portland Rose Festival Star Light Parade.

Volunteers continued work on the sawmill building too. Stop by and check out their progress during Harvest Fest!

Harvest Fest 2008

Don't Miss Harvest Fest!

Witness mules, draft horses, vintage machines and YCHS volunteers demonstrate harvesting methods of yesterday… Bring your kids for fun activities… enjoy a root beer float…

August 9 & 10

10 am—3 pm

Yamhill Valley Heritage Center—Highway 18 & SW Durham Lane

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.
**President's Letter**

Dear Members,

Increasing numbers of history organizations, ranging from all-volunteer staff to million-dollar operations, are undergoing major change and transformation. Museums and history organizations worldwide have been challenged to justify their existence by the public value, and positive contributions they make to their communities. Partnering with diverse community organizations, they are discovering shared goals, visions, plans, and outcomes, and pursuing more active agendas to improve their communities. Undertaking major organizational change is not for the faint-of-heart. It takes courage, perseverance, and passion. Failure of management’s view that they are separate from the people and systems to be changed may not succeed. Consideration for all those involved in change is so important through communication and understanding. Your help in this process is so important. Ask questions, volunteer your time and expertise. Become involved and we will succeed.

Sincerely, Shirley Venhaus

**May Membership Meeting Highlights**

On May 13, 2008, a meeting of the general membership of the Yamhill County Historical Society was called to order by President Shirley Venhaus at 7:00 PM in Dayton, Oregon. Guests were introduced. It was noted that Katherine Huit had recently celebrated a milestone birthday. Venhaus reported that the annual picnic is scheduled for August 16 in Newberg.

Venhaus discussed with the membership the name, Yamhill Valley Heritage Center, proposed by the Board of Directors for the Durham Lane facility. Tonia Beebe moved, Stuart Pitman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to accept Yamhill Valley Heritage Center as the name for the facility.

Treasurer Williams presented the Treasurer’s report. Venhaus distributed pledge forms to the members in attendance and reported that pledge forms would be mailed to members not in attendance. Venhaus introduced the members of the Board of Directors that were present. Treasurer Williams discussed the importance of the fund raising effort. He reported that money is needed to complete the construction project. Venhaus presented a draft of the barn calendar that will soon be available for sale.

Following the business meeting, the Dayton Graveside Re-Enactors presented a delightful program, enjoyed by all.

**Welcome New Members!**

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<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Families</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hazel Dailey</td>
<td>Marjorie and John Reuling</td>
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<td>Patricia Heimer</td>
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<td>Susan Scoell-McGregor</td>
<td>Sidney and Barbara Bass</td>
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<td>Barbara Jenike</td>
<td>George and Luicy Edmondson, Jr</td>
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<td>Dan Bernards</td>
<td>Nancy Payne</td>
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| Supporter:                      | Herbert H. Anderson           |

**Planning a Vacation?**

Please notify Gloria Lutz (phone: 503-472-7563; email: glutz@onlinemac.com or write to YCHS, PO Box 484, Lafayette, OR 97127). She can forward newsletter to your temporary address or hold them until you return home. Otherwise, your newsletter comes back to YCHS and we have to pay additional postage!!

**Book Notes:**

Nothing better than a lazy summer afternoon to enjoy a good book and the Museum has several new titles. All available at the Lafayette Museum.

- Into the Eye of the Setting Sun - Charlotte Matheny Kirkwood—Coming west on the Oregon Trail with her family, Charlotte shares her memories.
- Koenig’s Wonder—Linda Kuhlman, a local author.
- Well Traveled Casket—Tom Nash and Twilo Scofield

Next month we’ll be adding several children’s books about early pioneer life.

Due to the success of the covered wagon project, we’ve had great interest in the pioneer toys. With help from Gloria Lutz we will be selling several handcrafted toys similar to those toys found the wagon along with other pioneer crafts here at the museum. It’s a good time to gather family and friends and come for a visit.

**Book Lady** (Jean Sartor)

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**Book Notes:**
Meadow Lake
By Nancy Thornton

Meadow Lake is near the Yamhill County line on the west side of the Coast Range. Some time in ancient history there had been a landslide across a narrow channel of the upper Nestucca River, which formed a small natural lake.

During the early 1900s, this dam was heightened. A group of businessmen from the Portland area owned the area around this lake. They built a lodge and stocked the lake with fish for a private fishing club.

In 1924, George Yates was 15. He was hired for general help at the lake. George did yard work, chopped wood, cleaned fish and assisted the caretakers. When the club members wanted to visit the lodge, George would take a horse and buggy over the summit and down the canyon made by Idedewll Creek. It was a narrow wagon trail scratched in the side of the hill. The road went south of McMinnville’s reservoir on Haskins Creek; along the ridge south of Moors Valley; down Beaver Creek; past the Panther Creek Junction; through the White Cloud area; over Reservoir Hill; across the bridge over The North Yamhill River and into Carlton where George would meet the Red Electric train to pick up his passengers. They would then reverse the trip back to the lodge. The fellows would stay several days then would return to Portland. This road probably followed one of the Old Indian Trails from the Valley to the Coast.

Other people from the area used this wagon trail to get salmon from the falls on the Nestucca River; to cut cedar shake bolts or for general recreation. The old maps show Nestucca Mill as being in this vicinity. In the 1930s the dam was raised. This gave the lake an area of one mile by 300 yards. Twenty or thirty professional people from the Portland area belonged to the Club that owned the lake. They called their fishing club The Spruce Fly Club (Spruce Flies are a design of fishing flies).

Jeanette Smith lived with her folks on land that looked out on Beaver Creek and the Panther Creek Junction. She said that when they saw fancy cars going west up the dusty road, they would assume that it was fellows going to Meadow Lake.

Sam Bixler & sons, the Wirh Brothers, the Morley Brothers, R. B. Thornton and Vernon Thornton had permits to summer their cattle in this part of the coast range. Vernon Thornton told of visiting with the people at Meadow Lake. He rode his horse into the area weekly to check on the cattle.

Ray and Pearl Manning were the last caretakers of the Meadow Lake Lodge. Marilyn Good worked at the lodge the summers of 1959, 60 and 61. There was no electricity so they used a generator for power. The fishing in the lake was restricted to fly-fishing. There was a boat house. The boats used motors.

In 1958, a contract was awarded to construct a 172-mile road along the Nestucca River. This would complete the trails so there would be a direct way to travel from Yamhill or Carlton to Blaine, Beaver and Highway 101. George Zimmerman had campaigned for such a road since 1926. The Depression, World War II, funding and politics delayed the project.

People were always envious of the good fishing at Meadow Lake and were resentful that it was not open to the public. When the access to the lake was limited, the owners could control who used it. After the Nestucca access road was built, the Club decided that it was time to sell their land. Willamette Industries bought the timberland and gave the lake and lodge to the Boy Scouts.

On November 20, 1962, the earth dam ruptured. It was estimated that 1000-acre feet of water gushed down the narrow Nestucca River channel. This took out numerous bridges and destroyed some of the construction equipment that was being used to finish the road. Miraculously no one was injured or any towns damaged.

It was speculated that a recent small earthquake had weakened the dam and heavy rains overwhelmed the structure.

Executive Directors’ note: A long-time YCHS member and volunteer, writer Nancy Thornton cites Marilyn Good Eager, George Yates, the November 20, 1962 issue of The New Register, Names of Yamhill by Gordon Zimmerman, Vernon Thornton, Jeanette Smith and Big Sky Maps as sources for her story on Meadow Lake. Nancy contributes occasional articles of historical interest to The West Side for publication.

Do you know an interesting bit of Yamhill County history? Let our newsletter editor, Tami Spears, know! We’d be happy to print our members’ stories and by doing so, we will preserve them for future generations to enjoy.

Cheers,
Katherine Huit

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**Name That Tool!**

Alan Tessman showed us this interesting tool and we thought we’d challenge our readers to identify it and how one might use it.

We didn’t receive a response to our quest to learn more about it. If you would like to see it up close examination it will be available during Harvest Fest!
Yamhill County Historical Society’s Covered Wagon

The Yamhill County Historical Society owns a full-sized replica of a covered wagon. In 1992 the McMinnville Chamber of Commerce and the Yamhill County Visitors Association had this wagon made for the County’s part in the Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial celebration. After that event, the wagon was given to the Yamhill ESD because YCHS did not have room to store it. About four years ago the Willamette ESD (Yamhill ESD merged with other ESDs) donated the wagon to the museum because we now had room to store it.

Since that time, volunteers, dressed in period costumes, have taken the wagon to schools in the county to give students a concrete visualization of the main mode of transportation used by the pioneers as they forged their way west. There are many artifacts in the wagon that were used by the pioneers. Emphasis is on the contribution the children made at that time. The chores, toys, fun, and hardships the children encountered are talked about. After the brief lecture, students are divided into several groups. One group can explore the wagon and toys. It is hands-on! It is fun to watch them sit on the seat of the wagon wearing a hat and vest, pretending they are driving those oxen across the prairie. Another group might be with a volunteer—Kim Alt—watching her spin wool. We can always tell they have been with her because they have a little bit of wool that they can take home. Another group will be with Linfield College students. These students are part of Bob McCann’s Social Studies methods education class. They are teaching the younger students games that were played on the trail.

Two years ago we received grant monies from First Federal Savings and Loan and Prudential Realty. That money was used to have a covered trailer custom built to transport the wagon. It has an electric wench to take the wagon in and out. This makes life easier for the volunteers who move it.

During the summer of 2007, the wagon was in many of the community celebration parades, being pulled by a tractor or a pickup. We have not tried to pull it with animals—yet. The plan is for the wagon to be in all of the community parades again in 2009.

During this school year we went to 12 elementary schools in the county and visited with over 900 4th grade students. We also made a trip to Mission Mill Museum’s Sheep to Shawl event in Salem. This summer the wagon visited Parrett Mountain Farm to help with a history camp put on by the Sherwood Historical Society. It also visited Bethel Baptist Church’s homeschool program as well as Turkey Rama.

There have been many volunteers helping. It takes a full size heavy duty pickup to pull the wagon to any event. Volunteers have cheerfully given of their time and equipment. Other volunteers who help with the presentations have also given freely of their time. The rewards are many when you see the kids playing and pretending they are pioneers. A frequently heard comment from students is, “It’s so small!” Another (usually made by an adult) comment is “It’s so valuable to see for ourselves the actual size – a picture in a book simply doesn’t do it justice.”

YCHS Upcoming Events

- Sept. 9th 6:30 pm—Meeting—Program: “Walk from Astoria to Yachats on the Beach in 1916” Location: Trinity Lutheran Church in Sheridan. Address: 311 SE Schley St.
- Oct. 11th 8:00—3:30—Family History Conference Location: LDS Church in McMinnville. Info. (503) 434-5681
- Oct. 14th 6:30 pm—Program: Marjorie Owens speaking
- Nov. 11th 6:30 pm—Program: TBA
- Dec. 9th 6:30 pm—Program: Frank Dummer and a sing-along