The Punk, Rotten & Nasty

We were thrilled at our January meeting to have author Paul Michael Clock give a presentation on the PR & N railroad between Portland and Tillamook. Punk, Rotten & Nasty: The Saga of the Pacific Railway & Navigation Company is the title of a book Paul recently wrote.

The saga of the Pacific Railway & Navigation companies’ gargantuan effort to build and operate this standard gauge line was told in conjunction with many photos of construction and the people who worked so hard to fulfill this transportation need. Many of the photos Paul shared with us were not in his book.

The primary focus of Paul’s presentation to our group was the construction of the section of the line between Hillsboro and Tillamook. The rugged Coast Range mountains of northwest Oregon presented many special challenges to the railroad construction crews between 1905 and 1911. Thirteen tunnels and over sixty trestles and bridges were constructed, some of which towered over 160 feet from the rail to the stream or canyon below.

Paul was raised in Forest Grove and now lives in southwest Portland. After graduation from college, he taught school for 9 years. His fascination with this old railway drove him to uncover many original photographs from various sources. His wife assisted in the presentation, keeping him on track (so to speak). Paul brought some of his books with him which he sold after the meeting, his dream into reality. Paul’s photographs depict the hard times endured by the crews during construction, adverse weather, tunneling through solid rock peaks and the beginnings of many small towns and villages along the route, many of which no longer exist. The opening of this line spelled the doom of the Tillamook Toll Road by 1912. This older mail and overland transportation route is now being extensively researched by member Wally Brosamle.

Railroad promoter Elmer Elm Lytle raised the money for this project and turned his dream into reality. Paul’s photographs depict the hard times endured by the crews during construction, adverse weather, tunneling through solid rock peaks and the beginnings of many small towns and villages along the route, many of which no longer exist. The opening of this line spelled the doom of the Tillamook Toll Road by 1912. This older mail and overland transportation route is now being extensively researched by member Wally Brosamle.

Hi Everybody. People have been so generous toward the Yamhill County Historical Society! You have given hours of your time helping out at the museum and with extra activities. Then, there are the memberships and cash donations that you have generously given to the Society. Add to that the items on display at the museum that you have entrusted to our care.

Now, the Society is in a position to begin preserving, protecting & exhibiting these items in the manner they truly deserve. It is a huge job and not one we treat lightly. It requires lots of research, funding, and hours of labor. A meeting was held at the museum to form committees who are interested in working toward these goals. Three initial group interests were decided on: Looking into putting coverings on the windows to protect the exhibits from sunlight, helping better protect and store our old photographs and last, but not least, the need to clean, mend, and exhibit or store the fabrics we have in trunks in the museum. There are some beautiful dresses that desperately need a lot of TLC. If you have a little time to spare and a desire to work with any of these groups, call me at (503) 434-0567. Thank you...

Shirley Venhaus, President

New Email address

Marjorie Owens is rapidly becoming adept at using the computer in the Log Building to download and respond to email inquiries. For various reasons, we are changing our email address to yamhillhistory@onlinemac.com. President Shirley is paying the monthly charge for this service out of her own pocket. The amount of email requests for copies of documents and photos has increased tremendously over the past year. Olive Johnson has been assisting in this effort also.

Another change under consideration is dropping the online listing of specific documents within the index of biographical files in the Ruth Stoller Research Library. There have been some problems with administering the copy requests for these, and with the newly installed internet connection at the Museum, it will be easier for volunteers to respond in a timely manner to requests for copies. Changes in the contents and organization of these documents are forcing this change in our procedure.

Although new to computers, there is little doubt Marjorie will become fully competent in dealing with this method of communication. As she struggled with her first attempt at learning this email process, Marjorie jokingly asked Dan Linscheid (her instructor) if he knew how to make quilts. (He does not, and never will) Literally hundreds of inquiries and requests for copies are received each year from around the world. Kathy Peck, our Green Thumb employee, is also helping respond to these inquiries. Our thanks to Marjorie, Kathy, Olive and Shirley for their continued support.

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
Board Meeting Highlights

The meeting was called to order by President Shirley at 5:05 pm in the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The following directors and officers were present; Lila Jackson, Barbara Knutson, Marjorie Owens, Eileen Lewis, Dan Linscheid, Francis Dummer, Ed Roghair, Carol Reid, Shirley Venhaus, Annita Linscheid and Annita Linscheid. Member Barbara Doyle also attended. The minutes of the December Board meeting were approved as submitted, moved by Ed Roghair, seconded by Barbara Venhaus.

The Treasurer's report was submitted by Treasurer Carol Reid. December income was $3,689.19 with expenses of $944.96. We had a year-to-date income of $13,917.65 and expenses of $10,449.53. Barbara Doyle was asked to submit a report on expenses and revenues for the Nomadic Teacher program.

Volunteer Chair: Eileen reported volunteers were on track, but admitted she overlooked the fact that there were five Sundays last month. Kathy Peczkowski was at the Museum on the overlooked day, so we were covered.

Correspondence Secretary Marjorie reported 10 pieces of correspondence including thank you notes and one condolence card.

Old Business: the custodial agreement with the Hewlitt family was discussed. Our current policies and bylaws will not allow us to enter into this agreement as submitted. It was agreed that we would work on a clearer agreement in keeping with our requirements. A committee may be required to oversee a new accession policy in the future. We sold all but about 90 calendars, and will likely sell some more at the general meeting tonight (price reduced to $5 based on a motion by Marjorie, seconded by Francis). Shirley suggested that the newsletter include the names of new members and renewals, memorials and special thanks to those who make special donations (unless they specifically request to remain anonymous). PGE is now averaging our monthly electric bill. An internal audit of our finances will be performed in the near future, with several members having backgrounds in accounting assisting in the effort. Shirley mentioned the First Federal Community Bank as an additional potential revenue source for the society. Under the Cultural Trust, we received $3,800 during 2002, even though we are not under a local MACA (McMinnville Area Cultural Association) agreement. These revenues will go into our general fund. A discussion regarding general operating expenses was held, and it was agreed to allow the Treasurer to pay our bills as they arrive rather than once a month on a specific date.

New Business: Our proposal for the Oregon Museum Grant has been submitted. A communication was received from our insurer advising that we need to be concerned with the threat of terrorism and how it may effect our policy and coverage. There will be a meeting of the Preservation Committee on January 20th at the museum, to discuss projects and costs of preserving clothing, quilts and photographs. Marjorie moved and Eileen seconded to have a Recycle Sale on Saturday June 28th, motion approved. Annita Linscheid, Sec.

Renewing and New Members

We welcome the following renewals: Mina Hansen, Mary Jo Capp, Jim & Reita Lockett, Patsey Miller, Harold & Elsie Lehman, Kathryn Kreiger, Jean Green, Marjorie Bowman, Maryellen Schwarzmann and Ben Frum. New members include Jim and Lee Hartzell.

Donations Received

Our December donations include contributions from Davison Auto Parts, the Yamhill County Commissioners, Barry W. House, Judith Hammer, Julia Staigers, Michael & Jodi Boundy, William Hurl, Colin & Milly Armstrong and one donor who wished to remain anonymous.

Information Requested

If anyone knows the address of Life Member Mrs. J.Y. Richardson of Portland, please contact Lila Jackson. Mrs. Richardson’s last known address S.W. Gregorian Place in Portland is apparently no longer valid.

Calendars still available

We still have a number of 2003 calendars available at a reduced rate of $5.00. These feature old photos of various towns around the county, and they are available at the Museum or from Lila Jackson during monthly meetings.

A Search for 2004 Calendar Photos

We are still seeking photos of old barns for our next calendar. The barns need not be standing, but if they are, we’d need written permission from the landowner to use the photo in our publication. The Board is considering a Barn Tour in conjunction with this effort. Answer to our photo test: this is of the old McMinnville Bridge over Cozine Creek, taken near the new Walgrens store, looking southwesterly down what is now Hwy. 99W. One of the homes pictured was constructed in 1918, both are still standing.
Courthouse Display

Among our many volunteers is one who gives our society exposure to the public nearly every day of the year, and is rarely recognized for her work. If you have not taken time to stroll the hall of the main floor of the Yamhill County Courthouse, you may be surprised at the efforts of member Barbara Stanley. For years she has been collecting and displaying dozens of historic photographs of pioneer communities, events, places and people on the courthouse walls. These are beautifully reproduced and capture the essence of early life and scenes of the county. The Board of Commissioners have financially supported Barbara in her endeavors, and they are also striving to find and present copies of photographs of all of our Commissioners, starting in 1843.

Last month, Barbara, assisted by several of our volunteers, filled the display case in the lobby of the courthouse with the artifacts you see below. These will be on display through June. As you can see, this beautiful arrangement covers a lot of historical ground. This display is hard not to notice, and many people are drawn to the tastefully laid out historical items of Yamhill County significance.

These photos cannot do justice to the actual display. Please stop by the Courthouse and view them yourself.

It is through the efforts of people like Barbara Stanley that we are able to proudly display these pieces of our local history in a manner that supports our mission and educates the public.

A special thanks to Barbara for her support and work on this project... it is much appreciated.
When people first considered the trek to Oregon, their most serious concern was the "savages" along the trail. They had reason to be concerned. Their fears were based upon the reality of the terrible relations between the Indians and Whites back east during the last century. The women admitted having "nightmares" about possible altercations with the Indians. The men wouldn't admit to these fears but took enough weapons to fight an "army." For example in 1846 a train of seventy-two wagons carried 155 rifles, 104 pistols, 1,672 pounds of lead and 1,100 pounds of powder. They were prepared to fight their way west. It has been said, "there has never been so great a number of firearms per capita among civilians as found on the Oregon Trail." They had made up their minds that Indians would be a problem.

Where are the Indians?

One day, we wondered if, or when, our William T. Newby ever fought Indians. Well, "Indian battles" make good stories, so we went searching. To our surprise, there were no battles. Not one emigrant was killed by Indians during this first Great Emigration. Mr. Newby mentioned Indians only a few times in his diary. On May 25th of that year, he wrote: "The Cow Indians is Tolerably theaveish." On June 17th, he saw his first Pawnee Indian. After passing over the Continental Divide on August 9th, he felt "safe as to Indians." On August 23rd, he "saw about 100 Snake Indians." These were the first Indians they encountered in over two months but found them friendly and traded with them for horses, skins, etc. On October 23 they camped at an Indian village near The Dalles. There were other Indian stories, however, that Newby did not mention. As the wagon train approached the Grande Ronde Valley (in present eastern Oregon), the emigrants were a ragged lot. They were running out of food and most of them were barefoot and their clothes were in shreds. It was here, in this valley, that they met the Indians from the Cayuse Tribe. The Indians brought scores of dried salmon and fresh garden peas. They also had skins to trade and fresh animals to offer the emigrants. These commodities were sold to the whites for a reasonable price. Many of them later remarked that had it not been for the kindness of the Cayuse people, they might not have survived the last leg of the trip over the Blue Mountains.

Sticcus, The great Indian guide

Most remarkable is the story of the Indian guide, Sticcus. At Fort Boise, Dr. Whitman, who had been the overlander's guide, was called to hurry on ahead to the Mission. He gave them directions on to the Grand Ronde valley where he placed the fate of the train in the hands of Sticcus, a Cayuse Chief. Sticcus led the emigrants safely over the Blue Mountains and delivered them to the Whitman Mission near Walla Walla. Many reports and diaries carry sincere thanks to this Indian brave, who saw them over the worst terrain encountered on the trip. These people could not communicate with each other so Sticcus did it all with pantomime. It is estimated that, in the twenty-five years the trail was in use, 30,000 emigrants died. 360 of these were due to Indian attacks.

However, almost as many died from misuse of their weapons. The emigrants shot each other-accidentally or on purpose-at an alarming rate. Accidents took a large toll as the overlander’s fell under wagon wheels, set themselves afire, were kicked by mules, drank bad water, ate bad food or strayed from the trail and became lost. But disease from unsanitary conditions took the greatest toll. While the Newby’s did not have serious problems with the Indians, the next few years saw a steady increase in hostilities. The deaths peaked during the gold rush years and became a serious problem for the military. As time went by, the Indians resented the thousands of people moving in on their hunting grounds; forcing them to ever move to poorer land.

Military fans hostilities

The "Grattan Massacre" was a good example of "fanning" hostilities. On one of the 1854 trains, an emigrant's cow wandered off into a friendly Indian village. The owner of the cow went to Fort Laramie to report the incident. Lieutenant Grattan and twenty-nine other troopers set out to get the "stolen" cow back. Well, the Indians had butchered and eaten the cow. When Grattan arrived at the village, he tried in vain to find the guilty Indians. The tribe apologized and offered to replace the cow with a horse. Grattan refused the offer, aimed his cannon at one of the Indian lodges and opened fire. The Indians decided to fight back. When it was over, several Indians, including the Chief, were dead. All but one of the military force-who lived to tell this story-were dead. This incident intensified the anger and the Indians began random raids in the area. The military stepped-up its patrols and sought revenge.

One of the few Indian attacks on emigrants happened to the Ward wagon train near Fort Boise. Here, a band of Snake Indians attempted to steal a horse and one of the braves was shot. The ensuing battle left eighteen of the twenty emigrants dead. Two boys survived whom the Indians believed dead. The Great Western Migration was moving ahead and the drive to settle new frontiers would overpower all obstacles. The thirst for land in Oregon and gold in California was unquenchable. The emigrants suffered terribly, the Indians were decimated and the Military learned many tactical lessons. The first emigrants, reaching their destinations, were penniless and physically worn out. However, that first winter and the following spring found them staking out rich farm land in the upper Willamette Valley. By the following fall their bellies were full.

After several years it was said that a month of farm work would keep a family for a year. One of the reasons for this was the lack of "problems with the Indians". While there were a few minor incidents of Indian and white conflicts, there were no serious outbreaks. The great epidemics of the 1790's and late 1820's had erased 80% of the Indian population in the Willamette and lower Columbia River drainage. The Indians remaining in the valley were completely demoralized by this lose and posed no problem for the whites taking their land.
The Indian Situation (cont.)

Governor Joseph Lane in a report dated October 22, 1849 said "The Yam Hill Indians are a small tribe who claim the country drained by a river of that name, which is mostly taken up by the whites: they are poor; have a few horses; are poorly armed, and are well disposed. They number about 90; of whom 19 are warriors." Governor Lane considered them "degraded, worthless and indolent people. They are poorly armed and entirely inoffensive." The claims made by those early pioneers were finally legalized by the Oregon Donation Land Act of 1850. The Federal Government agreed to a settlement with the Indians and paid in cash, supplies and personal items.

The Kalapuyan Tribes in the Valley seemed to accept this. The next problem came in the 1850's as the tribes in Southern Oregon and East of the Cascades banded together to drive the white men from their land. Yamhill County was asked to send a militia of volunteers to fight. Every family in the county sent men, donated arms and supplies and hoped for the best. Absolum Hembree was elected Captain of this force of Yamhill Volunteers and was to lose his life in battle. The lack of leadership and arms spelled the end for the Indian and Joel Palmer began the reservation system to keep the two races apart. It is reported that by 1910 there were only 15 Indians left that could be traced to the Yamhill Tribe of the Kalapuyan People.

Test you historic skills... can you identify this location? Clue: taken during or after 1918....

You’ll have to hunt around in this newsletter for the answer to this one.....

Photo Highlights from our January Meeting

[Image of people at a gathering]
YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 484
Lafayette Oregon 97127

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES
Effective May 31, 2002

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

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 Lila Jackson at 472-8510. Alternatively, check your mailing label, which should show this information also. (The month and year indicate your “paid through” period according to our records.)

Meeting Notice
Board of Directors:
Tuesday, February 11, 5:00 pm
Monthly Meeting & Potluck:
Tuesday, February 11, 6:30
Both at the Seventh Day Adventist Church, in McMinnville.

Our January meeting will feature member Crystal Riley, telling of her life. Please join us for dinner; bring potluck fare and your own eating utensils.

Founded 1957