

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

January 2001

December Meeting cancelled

Due to inclement weather, a decision was made to cancel our last meeting. The snow and ice on the streets and highways made for slippery driving as well as walking. We hope the first several months of 2001 are kinder to our meeting dates.

Your YCHS President, Officers and Board members take this opportunity to extend the very best wishes to you and your family in this new year.

Signs Proposed

Patsy Miller had another one of her great ideas during the Harvest Festival. Why not do a little advertising with large signs which could be attached to the sides of vehicles during parades or even the wagon and team at Harvest Festival? She promptly approached the kind gentleman from Dayton who owns the wagon and team and he was all for the idea.

This sign will be about 2 feet tall and 8 feet wide, made of canvas with eyelets to allow it to be attached to various surfaces with twine or wire. All that remains now is for us to turn her idea into a reality before next summer. Thanks Patsy! This brings up another point... it's not too early to begin thinking about and planning the Society's 2001 Harvest Festival....

Articles Wanted

As you can tell by reading this month's newsletter, the editor has experienced a dry spell of articles (again!). If you have any current events, interesting historical tidbits or just items of general interest to our membership, please feel free to submit them for future publication. Some months, there is barely enough room to squeeze everything in; while in others we sadly lack sufficient content. There would doubtless be a lot more white space herein were it not for the kindness of Betty White. She donated much of the historic collection her late husband John had diligently gathered over the past several decades to assist in our efforts.

How times change

From the April 1, 1910 News Reporter (McMinnville): "Two and 1/2 acres, adjoining town, 5 room house, good well, fine peach and apple trees, nearly half acre of strawberries, lots of small fruits, grapes, asparagus bed, barn and nice cellar under house. A nice oak grove. With a little work this could be made the most unique place in this locality. A nice living could be made off this place if properly worked. Price \$1400; \$500 down, balance on easy payments. It will pay you to look into this. NOTE: Will take team, harness and wagon as part payment.

This issue also contained a "Call for Meeting" of the Executive Committee of the Yamhill County Pioneer Association for April 7th at the parlors of the McMinnville National Bank, for the purpose of arranging for the annual association picnic. Any towns desiring to have said picnic were requested to contact Mr. M.B. Hendrick, President.

Highway 18 Blues are not a new tune...

The following is a partial reprint from the Amity Standard, entitled "Automobile Rules of Ten or More Years ago" and dated February 14, 1919 (not very close to April Fools Day!):

"The increasing number of automobile owners throughout the county has driven the farmers to desperation because of the careless disregard for the rights of others shown by some of the fellows who ride in autos, and we are informed that the farmers in the Bellevue district have formed the "Farmers Anti-Automobile Society" and adopted the following rules, and expect careless automobilists to observe them.

1. On discovering an approaching team the automobilist must stop offside and cover his machine with a blanket painted to correspond with the scenery.

2. The speed limit on a country road this year will be a secret, and the penalty for violation will be \$10 for every mile an offender is caught going in excess of it.

3. In case an automobile makes a team run away, the penalty will be \$50 for the first mile, \$100 for the second, \$200 for the third, etc., that the team runs; in addition to the usual damages.

4. On approaching a corner where he cannot command a view of the road ahead, the automobilist must not stop less than a hundred yards from the turn, toot his horn, ring a bell, fire a revolver, holler, and send up three balloons at intervals of five minutes.

5. Automobiles must be seasonably painted, that is so they will merge with the pastoral ensemble, and not be startling. They must be painted green in spring, golden in summer, red in autumn and white in winter.

6. Automobiles running on the country roads at night must send up a red rocket every mile and wait ten minutes for the road to clear. They may then proceed carefully, blowing their horns and shooting Roman candles.

7. All members of the society will give up Sunday to chasing the automobiles shooting and shouting at them, making arrests and otherwise discouraging country touring on that day.

8. In case a horse will not pass an automobile, the automobilist will take the machine apart as rapidly as possible and conceal the parts in the grass."

It is obvious the editor of the Standard had a strong sense of humor, but little could he know that nearly a century later the automobile problems along this stretch of highway would still be a plague to Oregonians and the nearby community.

Log Building Maintenance

Morgan Maghee has completed the sealing of the joints on the south side of the Log Building. This treatment, penetrating deep into the cracks which were directly exposed to the elements, should drastically reduce dry rot and pest infestation problems for many years to come. Thanks Morgan, for your continued efforts: they are much appreciated. Materials came to less than \$200 for this work

OFFICERS - 2001

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MUSEUM HOURS

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or
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97128*

**January General Meeting
and Potluck Dinner**

Our meeting this month will be held on Tuesday, January 9th at 6:30 p.m. in the Yamhill County Public Works Auditorium at 2060 Lafayette Avenue in McMinnville (Across from Wortman Park) Our program this month will be presented by Marjorie Owens, on her studies of the Lewis and Clark Trail. Please remember to bring your favorite dish and tableware. Guests are always welcome! Frank Morgan's sister Nancy Kellogg from Aloha plans on bringing 4 mincemeat pies for our enjoyment.

Web Sites

Web sites: Our official website is located at <http://www.onlinemac.com/users/dlin>. This site contains links for genealogists to other sites as well as census, cemetery records, Donation Land Claim and Biographical data on many of our pioneering families. Our historical photo album is located at <http://www.co.yamhill.or.us>. Contact Dan Linscheid at dlin@onlinemac.com with comments or requests.

Books for Sale

The folks who look for collectible books on eBay have not responded favorably to our recent on-line auctions, so we will be selling the following books to anyone interested: (Many of these were donated to us by Roma Sitton's daughter)

- An anthology of light verse, 1935, 291 p
- Canyon Passage (western) 1945, 264 p
- Tumbleweeds, (western), 1923, 297 p
- Evangeline by Longfellow, 1903, 154 p
- Wanted—A Chaperon, 1902, 135 p
- Robinson Crusoe, 1918, 96 p
- My Lady Caprice, 1907, 289 p
- Snowbound, 1891, 43 p
- Riders of the Purple Sage (Zane Grey), 1912, 335 p
- Call of the Canyon (Zane Grey), 1924, 291 p
- Westy Martin in the Land of the Purple Sage, (western) 1929, 199 p
- The Mayor of Castorbridge, 1917, 318 p
- Vicar of Wakefield, 1891, 256 p
- Treasure Things (childrens book), 1922, 35 p
- Lorna Doone, 1906, 766 p
- When a Man's a Man (western) 1916, 348 p
- The Golden Snare, 1921, 257 p
- The Blue Bird, (Six Act Play), 1926, 287 p

All are hardbound, in fair to good condition. If you or anyone you can think of might be interested in any or all of these, please contact a Board member and we'll enter into negotiations on a sale. Who knows, some of these may be worth many times the purchase price in future years.

We are in the gradual process of cleaning house in the Church Museum, and will have more books and other items to offer in the future. Some may end up on eBay, some at Harvest Festival and possibly some at auction at our monthly meetings...

Atchison

When Daniel Matheny, his wife and seven children settled on the westerly bank of the Willamette seventeen miles upstream from Cham-poeg, his primary intention was to be a productive farmer. However, the property he bought from James O'Neal also had commercial potential, and a ferry boat built by Lindsay Applegate for A. Beers and Mr. O'Neal came with the land purchase. His services as ferry operator were "On Call" at first. Increasing numbers of ranchers and farmers brought their goods to the landing for shipment to the Mission Bottom warehouse across the river or



further downriver to Oregon City and Vancouver. Between 1844 and 1847, Matheny helped many pioneer wagoners cross the river, and tons of wheat was transported downriver from this point. In the spring of 1847 Matheny staked out the town of Atchison.

Early records of Atchison are sketchy at best. The flood of 1861 removed the entire lower portion of town, along with 7,000 bushels of wheat. Local residents never really cared for the name much, and instead took to calling the place Wheatland. Over the years, Wheatland saw businesses flourish, including shops, stores, mills, warehouses and hotels. Steamships added to the traffic at the wharves starting in the early 1850's. By 1881, Wheatland had a population of 319 people, fifteen business concerns, an Evangelical Church and a school with 30 pupils. New that year was a saloon, a general store and a one-man shingle making plant. Dr. Kirkland kept the inhabitants as healthy as he could. As the river was abandoned as a trade artery, the businesses folded one by one. The golden age of river commerce had come and gone, taking the last vestiges of Atchison with it.

Note: the four characters in brackets to the right of your name on the address label indicate the year (1st 2 digits) and month (final 2 digits) our records show you last paid your membership dues. If those numbers show it's been more than a year, this may be your last issue of the newsletter. A 90 day grace period has been approved by the Board: thereafter, sorry, but we cannot continue to send out newsletters. For those having date codes of [9909] or earlier on the label, this is a reminder to you.... and thanks for understanding.

One transportation mode that we often overlook in Yamhill County is the steam powered river boats of the 1850's through the 1880's. This period is reminiscent of the Mississippi River sternwheeler days that provided a needed and fairly luxurious form of travel for the early pioneers.

By 1850, abundant crops were being raised in the upper Willamette Valley and getting them to market was a serious problem. Roads were not good, and during the fall harvest when crops needed to be sent to Oregon City and beyond, the wagons were usually mired deep in the mud.

James D. Miller of Linn City, aware of this transportation problem, saw a way to help and also make some money. He started a water transportation service on the upper Willamette and Yamhill Rivers in the spring 1850. He had a sixty-five foot flat boat capable of carrying 350 bushel of wheat. The boat was manned by four Indian oarsmen who received \$16.00

a trip; one day down river and two days back. Charging 50 cents a bushel to carry wheat down river to Canemah and \$35.00 a ton for other goods upriver was a lucrative business for Miller. Canemah was located just above the falls at Oregon City where the goods could be portaged on down the river. Throughout 1850 Miller made many profitable trips with full loads both up and down the river. In the summer of that year George A. Pease also started boating on the upper Willamette river so the two men enjoyed racing each other and making great profits.

Unfortunately, in May of 1851, the "Hoosier," a crude steamboat, appeared on the upper rivers. This put Miller and Pease out of business. The appearance of the "Hoosier" at Dayton and Lafayette was a great event for the county residents and farmers and they flocked to see the boat. It was able to haul more freight cheaper and faster than the flatboats and also provided transportation for those needing to go to Oregon City. But the Hoosier's monopoly only lasted a month. On June 6, 1851, the small "Washington" churned up the Yamhill for her share of the great grain wealth bound for lower Willamette flouring mills. For several months they competed but in September of '51 the "Canemah" was built and launched at Canemah. This boat and the side-wheeler "Multnomah" soon were up river competing with the smaller steamers. 1851 became the year of the river steamboats. These two boats added first class travel for the upper river residents. In the next two years the steamers "Oregon," "Shoalwater," "Portland" and the "Wallamet" were added to the transportation scene in the area. A boat ride was a great adventure for the early Pioneers. Good food and lodging were enjoyed on an easy trip to Oregon City.

During this time, John T. Apperson had become a Pilot on a River Boat between Oregon City and Portland. This route expanded up the Willamette and his business prospered. Working with him on the boat, the "Clinton," was his brother, A.J., and an engineer named Edwin Fellows. Soon, John Apperson and Edwin Fellows.

Soon, John Apperson and Edwin Fellows decided to go into business for themselves. They were on the "Clinton" when it blew up and burned in '61. They bought the burned boat and two others; the "Yamhill" and the "St. Clair." Then they rebuilt the "Clinton" and began hauling freight and passengers between McMinnville and Portland. Usually, they stopped at Dayton but during the winter they could go up the river as far as McMinnville. It was a lucrative business. Soon they added the "Unio," a new shallow draft boat that had just been launched. No one was sure why it



Steamboats loading at the Dayton Docks

was called the "Unio." It was during the Civil War and businesses in Oregon were prone to not show favorites. However, one night while the boat lay in dock at Lafayette landing Edwin and John decided to add an "n" to the name of the boat and show their colors, "UNION!" Evidently, that was a success as they did well from then on.

One problem that surfaced in 1864 was the fact that wheat was selling in San Francisco for two dollars a bushel and the Yamhill county farmers share was only seventy-four cents. The steamboat companies were accused of gouging the farmers. They began to look forward to the railroads coming but they found that rail shipment was more than water at that time. So finally, the Yamhill Locks and Transportation Company was incorporated in December of 1869 with a capital stock of \$75,000. Their goal was to build two locks, one near the river mouth and one at the falls below Lafayette. However, it was June 4, 1897 before Congress appropriated the money to undertake the project. The locks would be 275 feet long with two gates to raise the water sixteen-feet, allowing steamboat travel up to McMinnville. The locks were opened on September : 21, 1900. This was too late. By now the railroads were up and running and charging much less freight. Also, they were faster. A passenger could actually go to Portland to conduct business and return home the same day. The wonderful years of steamboats were over. By the 1920's a few boats still traversed the Yamhill but the period of glory was gone, leaving few traces.





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YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January 2001 Calendar of Events

Tuesday, January 9, 5:00 PM

Board of Directors - Yamhill County Public Works Auditorium, McMinnville

Tuesday January 9, 6:30 PM

General Meeting & Potluck Dinner- Yamhill County Public Works
Auditorium, McMinnville

Bring your Own Table Service - Guests Always Welcome

(See page 2 for details)