YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

DATE: TUESDAY MARCH 13, 1984  12:00 NOON
PLACE: Community Christian Church, 2831 N. Newby, McMinnville, Oregon
POTLUCK: Bring your own service
Program: History of the McMinnville area

MUSEUM NEWS

At our last meeting Mr. Keith Padgett of the Taylor Publishing Co. discussed with us the possibility of publishing the History of Yamhill County. This book would contain individual family histories. Many people are in favor of picking up our family history from 1880 to date. I think it's a good idea.

We just received a wedding dress and plush cape to display. The rental house is still for rent. We have put an ad in the newspaper and have received quite a few calls. We also need to repair some eaves that leak.

If you would like to order a copy of SCHOOLS OF OLD YAMHILL, just give me a call at 472-7935. The cost of the book is $11.00 postpaid. Otherwise stop in at many Yamhill County locations for your copy—MCMINNVILLE, The Book End, Chamber of Commerce, The Book Shop. NEWBERG: The Gray Mouse Bookstore. SHERIDAN: Sheridan Drug. YAMHILL: Hardware store.

Remember to come visit us at the museum on weekends from 1:00 to 4:00!

ROMA SITTON

THE RICHARD WILLIAMS FAMILY

The first white family to cross the mountains for the sole purpose of acquiring land and settling in Oregon came in 1840 but soon moved on to California. The following year two families with small children arrived in the Willamette Valley by way of the overland route from Missouri. One of these families left for California in 1844, leaving the other as the premier pioneer family of Oregon. This was the Richard Williams family who arrived in the fall of 1841 and immediately settled on land, which some ten years later they would file on as their (continued)
The Richard Williams family (con't)
donation land claim. The land they acquired was on the Tuality Plains in present
day Washington County. In later years at least two of the Williams' daughters
lived and died in Yamhill County, and some of the children of a third were Carl-
ton residents. Today there are still at least two great-grandchildren of Richard
and Keziah Williams living in our county—Maud Reed Smith of Newberg and Glenn
Brooks of Lafayette.

Richard Williams was born in South Carolina in 1796, the son of Benjamin
and Winnie Williams. The family moved to Barren County, Kentucky where Richard
married Keziah Nichols on November 15, 1816. Keziah was born on January 30, 1800
in Virginia. According to one account the Richard Williams family moved "from
Kentucky to Indiana, from there to Missouri, and with their family of seven chil-
dren crossed the plains to the far West in 1841". The account states further
that two of the children were married and and brought their families to Oregon
in 1843.

There has always been some confusion among historians as to just how many
children Richard and Keziah brought with them to Oregon. Since the two oldest
children stayed in Missouri and came to Oregon in 1843, we can only account for
six children on the trail in 1841. The oldest was Winifred, born October or
November of 1825. She married Isaiah (Zade) Kelsey on June 1, 1841 when the
overland party reached the Platte River. Asa Williams born on March 22, 1827
in Missouri was fourteen years old when the family started on their westward
journey. Martha (Patsey) born in 1829 or 1830 was only about twelve years old.
Samuel born in 1833 would have been eight years and Nathan was about five in the
summer of 1841. The youngest Williams' child was Sarah Ann born May 5, 1841.
It is difficult to believe that forty-one year old Keziah started the journey
with a week-old baby in her arms!

When the 1841 migration left Missouri the "would-be" settlers were all
destined for California. They traveled with a northwest bound Catholic mission-
ary party who had hired an old mountain man as their guide. The missionaries
traveled with carts and a wagon. The settlers had wagons drawn either by oxen
or mule teams.

The group traveled together until August 11, when they were about fifty
miles south of Ft. Hall. Here, instead of going to California, part of the
party decided to follow the guide as far as Ft. Hall and continue on to Oregon.
A decision that was probably made by some because of the lack of a guide to lead
those bound for California. The Oregon group had to abandon their wagons at
Ft. Hall and acquire Indian ponies to ride and pack their goods. They were able
to attach themselves to a Hudson Bay Brigade led by Francis Ermentiger and bound
for the Columbia. There were two families with the Oregon-bound emigrants--Rich-
ard Williams and Samuel Kelsey. The Kelseys had three small children.

(to be continued)