

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

November 2002

YCHS Origins

At our October meeting, we were thrilled to have Dorothy Gunness tell us how our Society began. Of the founders, only three members are still living: Betty Orr, Bob Kuykendall and Dorothy. Since the beginning, potluck meals have been the norm at our general meetings. A meeting attended by 30 people was considered large at the time. Family stories were told at these meetings and notes were kept. A hunt was initiated for a place to contain the historical artifacts which were rapidly being donated. Funds were raised for the purchase of a museum building. Several prospective homes for our museum were considered, but when the Poling Church in Lafayette came on the market in 1969, the decision was not hard to make.

Many long hours of dedication by our volunteers have resulted in over 8,000 historical artifacts, books and other publications in our inventory.

One of the first projects undertaken by Dorothy's father, Ralph Wortman, was a massive cleanup of the Malone Cemetery, adjacent to Wilco Farm Store on the north side of McMinnville. This 1961 project called for cutting back of tall blackberry plants and other brush to expose the headstones. This cemetery has been cleaned up several times since then by various groups. The ownership of the property itself is uncertain.

We thank Dorothy for her staunch dedication to our society... we can all look up to these early members who were (and remain) so crucial in keeping interest in our historical past alive throughout the years.

A plea for help

We have recently been made aware of the fact that our displays of textiles are in danger of deterioration because they are laying on wood or felt. One of our goals is to preserve our past, so it is imperative that we take appropriate steps to insure the longevity of these items.

We can easily remedy the situation by using unbleached muslin or white cotton sheets to lay these on. If any of you have old cotton sheets or muslin you no longer need we can sure put them to good use in the museum.

Perhaps you have some that are old, tired, and threadbare, yet you just hate to throw them away. Please donate them for these displays. You can drop them by the museum weekends from 1 to 4 p.m. or bring them to the next meeting... we'll see they get put to good use.

Annita Linscheid

From our President

Hi everyone, We finally have a slate of officers and board member for election. It will be announced at the Nov. meeting. We are still working on the nomination of the "Poling Memorial Church" for the National Historical Register. When we receive this nomination (and we will receive it) we will be required to resubmit the application for matching funds to paint the church. We will be successful with this. I'm just not sure when. Barbara Doyle & I attended the "Cultural Trust" meeting at the McMinnville Community Center. It is a good plan, supported by many people, with hopes of providing money for non-profit groups in the state.

In Mid October, under the direction of Barbara Doyle & Eileen Lewis and with the able assistance of Tom Genco and his county work release crew, the Church basement has had a good cleaning of the crawl-space. Lots of boards, wood & trash were removed in preparation for putting down visqueen for a moisture barrier for the building. Tom hauled off a huge load of trash. We really do appreciate these work release crews. The garden hose band rail going downstairs has been removed and we now have a sturdy broom handle. Yeah!!!

HARVEST FESTIVAL: Great day weather wise, missed the mule team and wagon, for the lack of an "O Ring" the cream separator could not separate (next year), Jim Lockett and Patsy pressing apples for fresh cider, Barbara Doyle with 2 freezers of ice cream, Joanne and her home made soap, the wonderful music in the Log Building, Maxine for the loan of George for a Fast turn on the dance floor, the hymn singers, the fiddlers, Annita and her kitchen crew, the new shelves in the kitchen, Shirley and the crafters who were busy crafting upstairs and all the volunteers who made the day special. Next year you will be asked to attend and bring a non-member guest, spread the word and do everything you can to get more people to attend. It is such a special day and we would love to share it with more people. Don't forget the Holiday event at the Museum Saturday, December 7th.

Email update

As you may have read, we now have our own email at the museum, and the address is history@onlinemac.com. If our volunteers feel up to the task, they should feel free to open up our email, delete the spam, and help those seeking assistance with their research. Volunteers who are willing but lack the computer skills need only make their ambition known to board members, and training will be made available.

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

OFFICERS - 2002

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Shirley Venhaus
472-7328

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843-2069

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662-3528
Eileen Crawley
835-3673

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Betty Brown
472-7100

Financial Secretary

Lila Jackson
472-8510

Corres. Secretary

Marjorie Owens
843-3081

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472-6909
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Francis Dummer
864-2637

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Eileen Lewis
835-7531

Librarian

Olive Merry Johnson
472-6070

Newsletter

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-2625

Car Pool Coordinator

Joanne Watts 835
-5893

MUSEUM HOURS

September 1 - May 31:
Sat-Sun 1 to 4 PM

June 1—August 30:
Fri-Sat-Sun 1 to 4 PM
or
By Appointment

605 Market Street
Lafayette Oregon
Phone: 864-2308

Email:
history@onlinemac.com

Websites: YCHS is at
http://
sites.onlinemac.com/
history & historic
photo gallery is at

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YCHS

Harvest Festival Highlights

Space is limited here, but here are a few pics..



Our favorite old time band at work....



Glen Watts, Ed Roghair & Chuck Howell...



Maxine, Twila & Lois above, Jim Lockett making apple cider below....

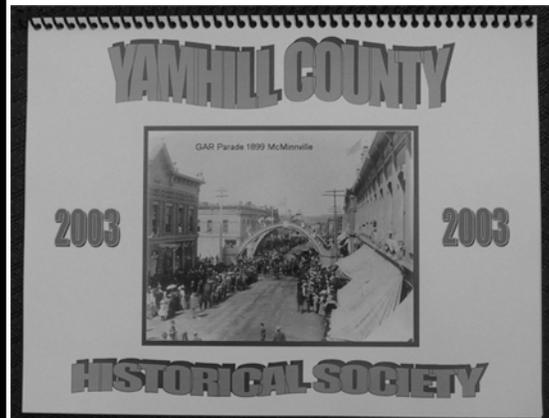


Inventory Project

Did you know that we have more than 8000 items in our three museum buildings? Kathy Peck, Julie Amen and Eileen Lewis are still in the process of inventorying these items. Display items are being rotated to allow better exposure of all items. The inventory, being put in a computer database, will allow us to better track all items and update our accession cards. It will also allow us to locate these items easier. Some interesting items in our care include a chinese silk shawl from 1850, a scale for weighing gold, a 1900 bicycle that was ridden across the United States, a black velvet beaded collar and a canteen which was used at the Battle of Gettysberg in the Civil War.

NEW CALENDARS AVAILABLE

Our 2003 calendars are now available at the museum or by contacting Lila or Shirley Venhaus. The price is \$7.00 each, with an additional \$2.00 charge if mailed.



The front cover is in color, and we think you'll enjoy the captioned historical photos inside. Please support your society... these will make a perfect holiday gift for that special person.

Crafters & quilters put on a wonderful show. These are busy and talented ladies!



October Board Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by President Shirley Venhaus with the following officers and board members signed in: Lila Jackson, Dan Linscheid, Betty Brown, Barbara Knutson, Eileen Lewis, Ed Roghair and Shirley McDaniel. Also present were members Barbara Doyle, Julie Amen and visitor Kathy Peck. The minutes of the September Board meeting were corrected and accepted. Treasurer's Report: Betty presented printed reports. September income \$1,021.42; total expenses \$289.27; net \$732.15. The Nomadic Teacher summaries will be put in the next month's report. Grant requests: have been made from Stimson Miller Foundation, Spirit Mountain, Meyer Memorial Trust, and U.S. Bank.

Financial / Membership: Lila reported two new members and seven renewals. Correspondence Secretary: Marjorie sent a written report with Barbara Knutson. There were thirteen mailings. Volunteer Chair: Eileen reported volunteers have been active this month. The alarm system has had some "beeps" under "motion default". Push the top "status button" to clear it.

Old Business: The Historical Nominations report was sent September 11 and will take 45 to 60 days. Our paint the church fund expired on September 30, so we will have to re-apply after we receive the nomination. The church painting is still on hold until the process can be completed because of lack of local funding. E-mail: Dan has it set this up, and our email address is history@onlinemac.com. The number pad on the computer in the Museum does not work, and a motion was approved to have it replaced. Motion passed.

Budget Committee: Report presented by Barbara Doyle for a proposed budget for 2003. The committee suggested adding two columns for Restricted income and Restricted expenses as they are not part of the operating budget but would be reported. Eileen moved, Shirley M seconded, a motion to add these columns. The motion died on a 1 to 1 tie vote, with no one else voting. Newsletter costs were discussed as part of the proposed budget. Nominating Committee: Report has not been completed. Eagle Scout: Kris Molloy has completed the work and the Roadside Council has paid \$255 toward this project (see elsewhere in this newsletter for a more detailed report on this project).

Nomadic Teacher: Another check is in and a copy of the bank statement is on file. PGE: grant request has been turned down. The PGE employee must have been a member of the YCHS for six months and then may apply for a grant from the Portland General Electric Contributions Committee. Harvest Festival-October 12:- Plans are in place, to include Apple pressing, homemade ice-cream, cream separator, butter making, crafters. Members are also asked to bring finger foods. Flyers inserted into last months newsletter had the wrong date on them. Eileen will check with Mr. Beckworth about the mule team and wagon.

Publications: Forty-three Old Yamhills have been sold to the Book Shop for \$15 each and will sell for \$20. We are out of the Willamina books. We will ask Maxine Williams to check into this. We have some Dayton books for sale. Investments: We have received a letter from Chris J. Turner about the McDonald Investments. Cultural Trust Meeting: Report - the meeting was well attended. The area includes from Hillsboro to Grande Ronde. There are three ways to earn money - 1. a tax credit on tax returns, 2. sale of license plates, 3. sale of surplus government property. Barbara Doyle has applied to be on the local board. Arts Alliance: Barbara Doyle will contact them to see how we can work together to promote the area. Security Code: Key must have a code. Proposed Holiday Fair. Scheduled for Saturday, December 7, Joanne Watts and Barbara Doyle have been selected to head up the planning committee.

Calendars: are to be ready for sales by the end of October. New Business: Sheridan Library has contacted us for some volunteer help. We will ask Marjorie to check into this for us about just when and what kind of help they want. Under Church cleaning: Work day to clean out from under the church. Eileen can contact the inmates, plan to come on a Wednesday when Julie, Kathy and Eileen are working. Smaller stuff can be taken out through the coal chute. There is a large bench that will have to come out some other way.

Other Business: care of artifacts: After much work by Kathy in making a complete listing of items in the museum, she presented a report about the proper care of the textiles and old photographs that we need to put into place in order to preserve the many items that we have in our care. Items must be cared for in a proper manner. There are 30 pages of items that are not identified. The board will need help in setting up a plan to solve this major problem of preservation. Please consider volunteering.

Meeting adjourned. Respectfully, Shirley McDaniel, sec.

Sprucing up

Members of Sheridan Boy Scout Troop #215, family members and friends recently helped Kris Molloy complete his Eagle Scout project at the museum. A prairie style garden was planted around the grist stones in front of the log building. The project was financed with a grant from the Oregon Roadside Council.



Kids & Ice cream always go together at our Harvest Festival.

NATHAN KOONTS (DOC) SITTON

by Jim Lockett

In our research we've noticed that "N.K. Sitton" is mentioned along with the other settlers in the area. However, his name was not on the list of those coming on the first wagon train. Feeling that a story about him is appropriate, it's back to the books.!

We found that he was on that First Great Emigrant Train but was listed as "Nathaniel Sutton". (The Sitton Family has assured us that this is true.)

"Nathan Koonts Sitton" was the oldest child of Franklin and Rebecca Austin Sitton. Nathan had spent his first seventeen years in Missouri and must have been an adventurous and maybe somewhat rebellious teenager. He had lost his parents and was alone with his younger brother. Concerned about their future, they decided to make the overland trip to the Oregon Country. With two young friends, Tom Brown and John Cox, they made arrangements to cross the prairie with the first Emigrant Wagon Train leaving Independence, MO. in May 1843. Here were "just boys" leaving for the wild, unsettled Oregon Country, expecting "Indians behind every tree".

Nathan, whose nickname was "Doc", probably didn't have the money to join the train but since they were taking unmarried men who would earn their keep by hunting, scouting, and protecting the emigrants, he was able to "sign on".

When the Wagon Train split at the Blue River, Doc rode with the Cattle Column to help with the stock. It was great fun being a part of this venture and having some responsibility. However, one fateful night when he was on guard duty, he thought he saw Indians in the brush. He shot and killed "The Indian", called for help and the rest of the group came running. When they finally gained courage to check the "dead Indian", there lay Captain Jessie Applegate's mule, shot dead center through the head. Undeniably, the Captain was upset and exiled Doc from the wagon train. He was given what he could pack on his back and sent on his way. (Apparently, his brother went with him but chose to continue South to California or Texas).

Well, Doc wandered around the wilderness for sometime. Eventually, he was discovered by a hunter who loaded him on his horse and took him to the next wagon train. The hunter was Charles Fendle, who became a life long friend, partner and brother-in-law. Also, for several generations of Sittons, the "Charles" name has been used because of this man.

(Recorded by Rick Steber in his book THE OREGON TRAIL VOL 1). The Sitton and Fendle families are still in contact and have regular reunions. Doc finally arrived at Fort Laramie with the Fendle wagon. Here his friends were waiting for him. They struck a deal with a Mr. Vance to take a team to Fort Hall. Doc drove the team and the others picked up horses to ride. Even though this stretch of trail was hard on animals due to the poisonous alkali dust and the lack of grass and water, the three young men made the crossing with no losses.

Upon arriving at Fort Hall, they obtained pack mules with which they completed their journey. Some time after leaving Fort Hall, Tom Brown became sick, probably with the proverbial "Mountain Fever", and required constant care. Doc Sitton and John Cox did the best they could and got him safely through to The Dalles. Here they exchanged a horse for a canoe and joined up with two men named Eaton. The Eatons and John Cox brought Tom Brown down the Columbia River and up the Willamette to Oregon City. Doc set out with the animals on an uncharted route across the mountains (this was before the Barlow Road), and arrived at Oregon City, somewhat after his friends.

Meanwhile, Dr. McLoughlin had called upon the sick man, Tom Brown. The good Doctor sent for a boat and Indians to take him to Vancouver where Dr. Barkley would care for him. Brown was in the doctor's care for four weeks. The charges were \$20.00 and could be paid when Brown was able. (Doc Sitton was later quoted as saying, "too much praise cannot be given Drs. McLoughlin and Barkley for their kindness to the immigrants.")

In the meantime, Doc Sitton showed up in Oregon City in the middle of October, just 2 weeks past his 18th birthday. There he was, a sight to behold! He was barelegged to his knees because the legs of his trousers were torn off from rubbing against the low brush while coming over the mountains. His animals were worn out from the long journey and he had no idea where to go or where to find his friends.

About this time, old Mr. Gertman walked up to him and asked, "Do you know Doc Sitton?" Doc was surprised to have anyone looking for him! Gertman took him to his house to stay even though Doc told him he had no money. Gertman replied, "Never mind, none of us have any money, here. Your comrades have been here and have been sent back to Vancouver to the doctor. They told us you were coming and to look after you."

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Mrs. Gertman gave him free access to the pantry, plus all his meals. She said, "eat all the bread and meat you want, for I crossed the plains last year and I know how hungry you are." He ate five and six times a day for several days before he was satisfied. She made him some new clothes until he could get his from his friends at Fort Vancouver.

Doc Sitton never forgot these kindnesses. He later acquired the reputation of being one of the most hospitable people in the area. No one could approach his house without being loudly greeted and invited to eat with the family.

In the History of Oregon by REV. H.K. HINES, D.D., Doc's first year in Oregon is outlined: "He made shingles at the mouth of the Clackamas; December 1 he came to the mouth of the Yam Hill, stopping at Mr. Labontee's (Louis LaBonte); went six miles and helped put up a cabin for a young man and his wife, who were starting out on a donation claim. Then he was employed by a Mr. Gray at Salem as a mason tender, in building the institute; next he worked in the sawmill at Salem until March, 1844; then went to Astoria, and worked six weeks; came back up the (Columbia) river and helped build a sawmill; went to Oregon City and engaged in a sawmill for the Mission there. Later, he proceeded to the Dalles after a number of wagons, going up the river in a canoe and bringing down the wagons in a bateau belonging to Dr. McLoughlin; and in the autumn 1844 he came to his donation claim in Yam Hill County. Charles Fendle had taken the claim, and they batched together for a time. Fendle desired to return to the States and Mr. Sitton bought him out, and at length exchanged it for the present beautiful farm of 640 acres, where he has since lived".

Certainly, these experiences had tempered, trained and matured Doc Sitton. On April 22, 1847, he married Miss Priscilla Rogers, daughter of the honored Oregon Pioneer of 1846, Lewis Rogers. Doc's outfit consisted of a buffalo robe and blanket. His wife had a feather bed and a set of cups and saucers. They had a teakettle without a cover, a Hudson's Bay frying-pan with a long handle, and her parents gave her money with which to buy a coffeepot. With this stinted supply of household goods the young couple started out in life, happy in each other's love.

It was about this time that Charles Fendle returned from the States to see his old friends. Soon he was to become Doc's brother-in-law by marrying Priscilla's sister.

In the Fall of '48, Doc Sitton was lured to California and tried his hand at gold mining. He drove cattle down to pay expenses. He was quite successful and in five months accumulated enough gold to return home.

It is said that, from that time on, his urge to travel was satisfied and he never again was far from home.

He and Priscilla went on to develop an excellent farm and raise a fine family of 9 children; 7 who reached adulthood. Their oldest, Charles, was born in 1848 and was named after Doc's former land donation partner and brother-in-law, Charles Fendle.

Priscella died in 1870. Doc later married Mrs. Mary Laughlin by whom he had Ward, Pratt, and Minnie. Mary brought 2 youngsters with her which increased their family to 12 children.

The Eaton Brothers settled close to the Sittons and families by the name of Bacon and Bean lived near by. Doc was quoted as saying, "We'll never go hungry, Sitton (and) Eaton Beans (and) Bacon."

As you can see, Nathan Koonts Sitton was on that First Great Emigrant Train of 1843 and remembered as another Empire Builder who exerted a powerful influence on our area.



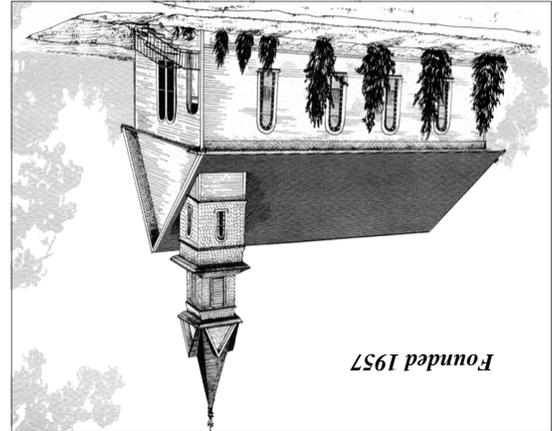
City— County Meeting

Various mayors, councilors, and other city and county officials held their bi-monthly meeting in the log building museum on October 17th. Shirley Venhaus welcomed them to our facility and enticed them with a little history on the beginnings of the Town of Lafayette.

Attendees expressed pleasant surprise at the breadth and depth of our displays, artifacts as well as the building itself. Many were impressed enough to promise to return with friends or families during normal visiting hours for more in-depth studies.



Peggy Roghair all decked out in period costume at our Harvest Festival.



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YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Effective May 31, 2002

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | \$50+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter | \$100+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Builder | \$250+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 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.

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Meeting Notice

Board of Directors:

November 12, 5:00 pm

Monthly Meeting & Potluck:

November 12, 6:30

Both at Seventh Day Adventist Church,
Old Sheridan Road, McMinnville

Our November meeting will feature Elma Shuck discussing Shuck family pioneers in Yamhill County. Please join us for dinner; bring potluck fare and your own eating utensils.

We Hope to See you There!