



Yamhill County Museum, 6th and Market Street, Lafayette, Oregon

OFFICERS 1986

President	Doris White
Program Chmn.	R. Kuykendall
Secretary	Mildred Renne
Financial Secy.	Evelyn Nieman
Treasurer	Mike Boundy
Historian	Ruth Stoller
Board:	Austin Bowen, Ed Roghair, Harvey Stoller, James Vincent
Newsletter	M. Roghair
Museum Curator	Roma Sitton

MUSEUM HOURS: Saturdays and Sundays, 1-4 o'clock
(except by appointment)

OCTOBER

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

1986

MEETING: Tuesday, October 14, Lafayette Senior Center, Lafayette, OR
POT LUCK SUPPER: 7 o'clock. Bring own table service. Visitors welcome.
PROGRAM: Charles Walker, an expert on family history research, will have the program. He has traced his ancestors back to the signing of the Magna Carta.

MUSEUM NOTES by Roma Sitton, Curator

We have returned to the fall and winter Saturday and Sunday schedule. We have had a good season. Visitors' count is 800, 275 of them children. On a recent Sunday the childrens' class of the Lafayette Baptist Church visited the museum, then the adults, so it was a busy afternoon. All enjoyed the many articles of pioneer days. We had a recent visitor from Mississippi, who was visiting her mother here. . . Again I thank those who helped man the museum. A new member, Gene Irvin of Matthey House Bed & Breakfast, between Lafayette and McMinnville, has done his share of museum days. We need more new members, so try to bring them in. . . The new paint job on the building is a pleasure to see. The windows that had cracks have been replaced. The frames have been redone. We are not bothered with the old white owl in the bell tower, anymore. . . A housecleaning is needed at the barn. Things have gotten crowded, and I am not able to move them. . . I hope that John Regan of Snohomish, Wn. will be successful in obtaining the old school building in Lafayette, so that it can be preserved. We need more activity in the community, and a museum complex such as he proposes won't hurt us and will bring more people. See you weekends, or by appointment. 472-7935.

Is your membership up-to-date? \$3. per member per year. Or why not a life membership, or a memorial membership?

Most of the business sections of Yamhill County's early towns were victims of devastating fires. McMinnville had several bad fires in the 1880s and began replacing the burnt structures with brick ones. Yamhill in September 1902, Lafayette in July 1904, and Dayton in August 1906, all had fires that destroyed much of their business areas. Sheridan probably suffered the greatest loss of any town in the county in July 1913. Willamina's fires took place in 1919 and 1923. The 1923 fire destroyed almost two blocks of businesses.

So far we have not found a record of a similar fire in Amity. Newberg and Dundee have lost single businesses by fire but we do not recall having found a record of whole business blocks being destroyed by fire.

The Dayton Herald had an account of the Lafayette fire in its issue for July 5, 1904:

DAYTON HERALD, Friday, July 8, 1904

On Friday evening the first of this month (July) the people of Dayton and vicinity were aroused by the clanging of fire bells at Lafayette. Some observed the smoke and others were notified by wire that a fire was raging at Lafayette. A large crowd was soon rushing a foot, a wheel, a horse and buggy, a horseback, for the scene of destruction. When they arrived half an hour after the fire had started they found 10 buildings destroyed and five more in the direct line of fire. A few minutes later the fire leaped across the main street to the building owned by H.D. Begun and occupied by Edwards Bros. Jr. for store purposes. Their goods were carried out by willing hands--men, women, boys, and girls of all sizes and ages, all working like beavers--and scattered around in places of safety, for several blocks north and west of the fire zone. Only once did flames jump the street--the thick foliage of the maple trees serving as a protection to the Olds Hotel property, also the widow Carey's house. The brick building occupied by J.L. Vickery, merchant, and the saloon was not damaged with the exception of some broken glass. The buildings burned were: Burt's house, the old Bird store, occupied by Peebles and O'Gonnor who lost nearly all their stock of goods, the livery stable, where the fire originated, blacksmith shop, Masonic Hall, barber shop, fire apparatus house, and the whole row of ancient buildings from the corner at the town pump westward, ending at the corner--Matty's old stand--16 buildings in all. The firemen worked heroically, but their efforts were in vain owing to the dry condition of the buildings and scarcity of water. The "second oldest town in Oregon" presents a picture of desolation today and will be apt to remain so until the opening of the Panama Canal when all Oregon towns will take a boom and soar sky high!

Ruth Stoller