

The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

September 1996

HISTORIC HOUSE TOUR SET FOR OCTOBER 26th

Plans are now quickly falling into place for what promises to be a memorable event. Tourgoers will depart via shuttle van from the Miller Log Museum at regularly scheduled intervals between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM. From there the tour will consist of visits into five of the county's proudest old homes as guests of the current owners:

◆A fine Gothic Revival style house built about 1879 by businessman and legislator Lee Laughlin.

◆The Colonial Revival estate residence begun in 1912 by financier and lumber baron Charles S. Ladd.

◆An excellently preserved Queen Anne Victorian home erected in 1892 by merchant Joseph Matthey.

◆The masterful 1934 conversion from farmhouse to Colonial Revival style done by journalist Paul Kelty

◆A classic example of Rural Gothic frame construction built by Alfred Fletcher circa 1905.

Refreshments will be served as well as demonstrations of several traditional homemaking handicrafts conducted throughout the day in the Miller Log Building. Visitors should allow ample time either before departure or after return from the home tour to also view these activities.



The Lee Laughlin House - circa 1920s

-Twila Byrnes Photo

The total cost for the tour and museum activities is a modest \$10.00 per person (or \$8.00 for YCHS members in good standing). Because of limited seating in the vans, reservations for specific departure times will be required. OREGON STATIONERS at 472-5181 will book reservations during business hours or a call to Shirley Venhaus at 472-7328 during the evening will do the trick.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

What a busy summer!!!

Everyone is getting excited about the Historic House Tour in October. We still need a few volunteers to act as tour hosts and someone is needed to help with the publicity and flyers. Interested parties may call me at 472-7238.

The fact the July 13th picnic was not held at Wennerberg Park was no great disappointment to most of us. Thanks to Grant Youngberg we were able to use the basement of his church in Carlton. It was cool, clean and quiet. Grant also related the history of John Wennerberg (donor of the park).

Thanks to the Budget Committee and Don Crawford we now have a real budget to work with. This is a "first" and a very necessary tool for the Board of Directors.

We welcome Eileen Lewis to the museum. She will be working on our accessions and other projects under the federal "Green Thumb" program.

Ruth Crawford continues working on the museum landscaping, but she desperately needs more people to assist her. Any time you can spend would be greatly appreciated. Volunteers may call Ruth at 434-9843

Our next "Work Day" will be Friday September 13th at 9:00 AM. This will be the next to last time we will be working on getting the museum buildings and grounds ready for the house tour. A major project on the agenda will be paint and a new floor for the Poling Church bathroom. Bring an extra dust cloth too. I'll see you there.

.....Shirley

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 - 1996**President**

Shirley Venhaus
472-7328

VP/Program

Barbara Knutson
843-2069

Secretary

Betty White
665-5376

Treasurer

Don Crawford
434-9843

Financial Secretary

Lila Jackson
472-8510

Corres. Secretary

Dolores Robertson
538-0767

Board of Directors

James Vincent
472-7239

Robert Kuykendall
662-3354

Harvey Stoller
864-2589

Ed Roghair
472-6909

Historian

Jim Lockett
472-5005

Librarian

Olive Johnson
472-6070

Newsletter

John White
665-5376

Publicity

Elaine Rohse
472-6827

MUSEUM HOURS

June 1 to Aug 31:
Wed-Sun 1 to 4 PM

Sept 1 to May 31:
Sat-Sun 1 to 4 PM
or

By Appointment

TRANSPLANTED PICNIC A "COOL AFFAIR"

Early arrivals braving 100° heat for the July 13th YCHS picnic at Wennerberg Park discovered a reservations mix-up resulted in the facilities being already in use. All was not lost however as Grant Youngberg directed everyone a few blocks east to the Grace Baptist Church. Once inside some suggested that perhaps being forced to relocate in a cool church basement on such a hot day may have in reality been an act of Providence.

Two previously unannounced events followed a plentiful potluck lunch:

First, President Shirley Venhaus recognized several members for their services to the Society with small presentations. The highlight was award of the coveted silver downspout trophy going jointly to Ed Roghair and George Williams in recognition of their efforts directed toward solving drainage problems at the museum site.

1996 PRIZE WINNER

This year's winner of the \$15.00 cash award provided by YCHS for the best artistic representation of Yamhill County History was Joyce Messina of Yamhill. Her entry was an original acrylic painting of the old Wright Building on Third Street in McMinnville. Presentation of the award came at the August 13th directors meeting.

AT THE MUSEUM

Olive Johnson reports brisk publications sales over this past summer requiring re-ordering or reprinting of several titles. We are all reminded that many of these items make great gifts as well as provide the Society with an important source of income.

The museum grounds are taking on a new appearance reflecting the efforts of Ruth Crawford. Also, Ruth sends thanks to the museum volunteers who kept her plantings well watered during the summer heat.

Maxine Williams extends thanks to all who offered their services in keeping the museum open over the extended summer schedule.. For those who may have missed out on this, a few openings remain for duty on upcoming fall or winter dates.



Heat outside didn't bother these YCHS picnickers

Next, impromptu host Grant Youngberg told of John Wennerberg (for whom the park is named) and his many contributions toward the welfare of fellow Swedish emigrants as well as the community itself. All agreed it was an excellent presentation offering an informative slice of earlier days in Carlton.

Clearly, the transplanted YCHS picnic of 1996 will be remembered as a difficult act to follow.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

The first potluck dinner and meeting of the new season will be held on September 10th at 6:30 PM in the parish hall of Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Sheridan. Speaker for the evening will be Fr. Martinus Cawley of Guadalupe Abbey who will discuss Fr. Felix Bucher, turn of the century missionary to Native Americans at the Siletz and Grand Ronde reservations.

The church is located at 127 NE Hill Street (corner of Hill and Main Streets). Coming into Sheridan from the east via Main Street (Hwy 18 Business Route), Hill Street is located to the right at the slight bend of the road as you approach the business district. (If you get to the traffic light, you've gone two blocks too far)

As always guests are encouraged to attend.

IN MEMORIAM

With regret we note the loss over this past summer of two long time members. **Ivan Shields** of Amity passed away July 17th at age 92. **Mildred Renne**, who served the Society so very well for many of its earlier years as secretary, died June 28th at Newberg. Our remembrances are extended to family and friends.

Remember, A Red Dot on Your Address Label Means Your Dues are Due

THE CENTURY MILESTONE FOR ROMA

On Monday September 9th Roma Sitton, matriarch of the Yamhill County Historical Society, will celebrate her 100th birthday. During that span she not only has seen a lot of history as it was unfolding, but devoted much of her time toward its preservation as well.

Although now retired as its director, the Poling Memorial Church Museum in Lafayette with its extensive display of artifacts still provides ample evidence of Roma's dedicated expertise. It began during 1969 when the Society purchased the old building for \$2500.00. An auction, rummage sale and donations provided funds necessary for volunteer labor to make the structure sound and presentable. As this was going on, it was Roma's job as the first Museum Director to supervise sorting out, cataloging and display of a vast accumulation of items gleaned from attics, basements and barns throughout the county. With little more in the way of formal training other than a two day course at the Oregon Historical Society, she rolled up her sleeves and went to work. The results have received **countless compliments** from visitors over the twenty seven years since then.

Roma's long time interest in local history is deeply rooted within her own family. Her grandmother, Nancy Jane Hembree, was born during July 1843 in a wagon headed west over the Oregon Trail. Two decades later her other grandparents migrated from Switzerland to the Yamhill Valley. In 1920 she and her late husband Charlie moved into the nine room house on Poverty Bend Road built in 1874 by Charlie's grandfather John Scott. Roma still resides in this fine old home which now stands as a Century Farm centerpiece.

During her tenure as Museum Director well over five thousand adult guests were logged in along with countless school children who often arrived by the busload. For



*Seated in her parlor, Roma examines one of her many family scrapbooks
...News-Register photo*

them, Roma tried to make it "a little like exploring grandma's attic"; offering information or providing demonstrations of numerous articles from a bygone era. While not being professionally organized, the museum under Roma's stewardship received many compliments for its "homey atmosphere" and "spotless appearance".

Evidence of her commitment to getting the museum properly under way are the several lighted display counters located in the main room. Upon learning that Meier and Frank in Portland were conducting renovations and disposing of some of their fixtures, Roma managed to contact the right person within the company and secure them as a donation to the Society. It is not known exactly how she presented her case, but it must have been formidable

as the firm sent a \$100.00 check as well..

On another occasion when the museum was in its infancy it seems there was a large wooden divider situated in what was then called the D.A.R. Room. Roma believed it interfered with proper viewing of the Joel Palmer bed and should be removed. One of the faithful volunteers assisting her however was rather adamant in insisting that it remain. Exercising patience and diplomacy, Roma let the matter drop until one day when she and Marie Winters were working alone. Realizing the divider was too heavy and bulky for them to carry, she devised a scheme employing leverage provided by brooms. One pushed and one pulled until the partition reached the old library at the rear of the building. Once there it was immediately covered with a display of vintage clothing giving an appearance of always having been there.

How does one sum up such a career? Perhaps the *London Times* said it best on the occasion of Queen Victoria's 1897 Diamond Jubilee:

"Go it old girl, you've done us proud"

Thanks to Lois Brooks for her assistance in preparing this article

WELCOME EILEEN LEWIS

It's not often a person gets paid for a job they really enjoy. The YCHS and *Green Thumb*, a federally funded senior community service employment program have made an agreement whereby Eileen will be working at the museum on a regular basis at no expense to us. The list of tasks we have is endless, but one of her major projects will be working with accessions.

A resident of Amity, Eileen is not a newcomer to the Society. She has been a member for over eight years and active in our oral history program. A reader of history

from Egyptian times to modern, she brings considerable enthusiasm for the job with her.

Of Polish and Irish decent her parents moved from North Dakota to the area during the depression years. Eileen has one son residing in Willamina and another at Amity. There are three grandchildren and her mother, Eileen Crawley, also lives in Amity.

We welcome Eileen to the museum and thank the *Green Thumb* program for providing this special person to help us out. Stop by and say "Hi" to her.

Since 1960

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P. O. Box 484
Lafayette OR 97127

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #3
Lafayette Oregon

YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
September 1996 Calendar of Events

Tuesday, September 10th, 5:00 PM

Board of Directors, - Good Shepherd Catholic Church - Sheridan

Tuesday, September 10th, 6:30 PM

Potluck Dinner - Good Shepherd Catholic Church Parish Hall - Sheridan

(See page 2 for Directions and Program Details)

Bring Your Own Table Service

Guests Always Welcome

Friday, September 13th, 9:00 AM

General Museum Cleanup Day - All Three Buildings - Lafayette

Friday, September 13th, 1:00 PM

Historic House Tour Committees - Miller Log Museum - Lafayette