

Brooks Historical Society Newsletter

2009 Vol. 1

http://www.oregonpioneers.com/marion/brookshistorical_society.htm

We gather, preserve and make available material relating to the history of Brooks and neighboring communities having natural, economical and cultural affinity

The Applegate Family to be honored this year

This year, in our June 2009 'Open House' meeting we at Brooks Historical Society honor the Applegates who came to Oregon on the 1843 Wagon Train. The connection that the Applegate families have to our Brooks Historical Society is that with the permission of Joe Gervais they stayed in the abandoned Willamette Mission on the banks of the Willamette River during the first winter upon their arrival to Oregon. Brothers Jesse, Charles and Lindsay with their families walked and rode 2000 miles to get here to take part in the 'Manifest Destiny', or the inherent right for the United States to extend from shore to shore.

More information in the next newsletter

Oregon 150 year celebration at Powerland Can you say Senquicentennial?

Better start practicing. Everyone at Antique Powerland will be participating in Powerland's special project: Made in Oregon. 150 years of manufacturing in Oregon. The Brooks Museum will be featuring tools, furniture and documents made or used by local people in the late 1880s and early 1900s. We are proud to play a part in APMA's celebration, especially since we have an original Depot building built in 1900 right in Brooks. Everyone is welcome to come participate at the Museum or on the grounds for Powerland. We would appreciate knowing of any Oregon-made product you have that has been here since the early 20th century at least.

THE PEOPLE OF THE 1850s

Women and children had it hard in the 40s and 50s. It was a rare family crossing the Plains by wagon that did not lose at least one family member. A quick check of the local cemeteries near Brooks, St. Louis and Gervais reveals the horrors. Hard work, cold drafty homes, diseases like measles, diphtheria, consumption which came in epidemics, wiped out children and worse, their mothers.

The area close to Brooks and Antique Powerland had Land Claims filed by a mix of early French-Canadian settlers and wagon train immigrants. Included were Augustus Lambert, John Albright, John Lemmon, Jean Petit dit DeGobin, Linus Brooks, Thomas Moison, Harvey Smith, Alexander Lapratte, William P. Harpool, Octave Martel, Harvey Smith. When they came and who has stayed is another story for later. These names are mentioned as many local land descriptions were tied to these early Donation Land Claims.

2008 ANNUAL MEETING and CHRISTMAS PARTY

This function was held on December 6 at The Brooks Masonic Lodge. Luncheon furnished by Brooks Historical Society in appreciation of all members for our successful 2008.

Historical interview DVD Videos were shown. We now have the capability of showing VCR's and DVD's and will be showing one or two of these after our regular monthly meetings. All members welcome for the meetings and/or the showings.

FRENCH PRAIRIE - THE DECADE PRIOR TO STATE-HOOD

The early settlers prided themselves in managing their own affairs as they did in forming the Provisional Government, electing George Abernathy as Governor, and sending emissaries to congress with petitions for Territorial Government. They resented the governor being selected by Congress when the Territorial Government was approved in 1849 and Congress appointed Joseph Lane as Governor.

The infusion of California gold provided wealth and a currency which stimulated and transformed the economy of the Valley. Both agriculture and lumber industries expanded to supply the new markets in California and the continuing immigration to the west coast. More ships were built to carry flour, lumber, clothing and tools up and down the coast. There was also a demand for fruit, metal and leather goods. The healthy economic outlook of the region, coupled with enactment of the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, encouraged more migration westward. This Act granted men 320 acres of free land or 640 acres if married. A requirement was residence and cultivation for four consecutive years. The four years proved to be a hardship so in February of 1853 the Act was amended to two years residency to earn a patent. For those later settlers arriving between 1850 and 1853, they only got 160 acres or 320 if married.

Towns sprang up around the flour and lumber mills and at the river ports where produce was loaded onto flatboats or onto steamboats. The first steamboat above the Falls was in 1851. Fairfield was the main shipping point for the Brooks area. In 1853 Ben Simpson and a group of farmers built a warehouse that was a grand improvement over the open field storage and bad weather until a ship came to port. Wheatland was an even closer shipping point for Brooks but without the amenities of Fairfield. Both sites are gone although the Matheny Ferry remains popular at Wheatland.

Good trades for men were cabinetmakers, brick maker, tinsmith, ironworker, tanning of leather for shoes and gloves. Linus Brooks made furniture. Women processed wool they spun into yarn to be woven, knitted and crochet into sox, hats, clothes, and blankets. They also churned butter, made cheese, raised chicken for eggs. As early as 1844 Mrs. John Kirkwood grew flax from her own seed, processed it by hand and spun it into clothing and household linens. Everyone had a cider press. All of these products were intended for trade, either to markets in California or to the new immigrants

just arriving by wagon train.

By 1853 there was a stage line from Champoege through Salem to Corvallis. It carried mail and passengers. Starting with the Territorial Government there were three dedicated roads serving the Valley: the Oregon City-California road, now Pacific Highway 99E with 99W on the west side of the river; the Oregon City-Salem Road ran down the east side through Silverton which was on higher ground so the creeks and rivers were easier to ford; and the Salem-Champoeg Road, now River Road North.

Through the mid-1850s the U.S. Congress and state legislators were debating and planning better ways for market and mail movement by stagecoach and by rail, then popular in the East. It was always the expense and who should subsidize this cost that stopped new ways to get people, goods and mail through mud and mountains. In 1854 Oregon did have telegraph service.

Interviews with Ida May Nosack

The following are excerpts from interviews with Ida May Nosack by granddaughter Cindy Quitta. Transcribed July 19, 2005 from interviews recorded the previous week.

I. Meeting Grandpa and dating

We worked on the Lake [Lake Labish], and they separated the men's group from the women's group. The women worked together. The men worked together. I saw Grandpa across the way, and people started telling how nice he was and he had such a good tan. I don't know why that came out that way, but that's what they did. I saw him run up the hill after a girl, and they told me that he had a date with her that night. And, of course, I was green with jealousy, because he didn't even know that I was alive.

[How old were you then?] 14-15.
Somewhere in there.

Then we went to a swimming hole called Schmidt's swimming hole. It was close to his home, a couple, three miles, something like that, from where he lived. So he always went there, and Grandma Nosack went there, and the family and the kids and everything. Anyway, we went there. My mother found out that's where they were, so she took us over there. It was a real sunshiny place, and it had a sandbar on the other side. Well, I saw your grandpa taking younger children on his back, taking them over to the sandbar and playing with them. I thought, "Oh, what a wonderful thing to do." Then, he really dated Aunt Dorothy. Huh! He sat down beside her at the swimming hole. He never talked to me, but—we have a picture of it somewhere—of him talking to her. Dorothy and I fought

over it for quite awhile.

Then, she had a date with him on a night when the Grange had a dance for everybody. It was, I suppose, a Saturday night. I'm not sure. Anyway, he had a date with Aunt Dorothy on that night. I didn't have a date. Before they came, Grandma discovered that Aunt Dorothy had two dates coming: George Dowell and Grandpa! She said, "Dorothy, you cannot have two dates. You have to choose one. I said, [coily] "Oh, I'll take Al." And that's how we dated. That's the first time that he knew that I existed.

So, we danced, and later he told me that I had taught him how to dance. I said, "What do you mean?" I said, "You danced really well." He said, "Yeah." He said, "I'm light on my feet because I box." And he said, "It wasn't hard to dance that way, you know, stay light on your feet." So that's what he told me: I had taught him how to dance.

[So were you leading, Grandma?]

I don't know, but I did dance, and I did teach other kids in high school to dance at our breaks, whatever you call them, our lunch hours, whatever. They had music going and suggested that everybody dance, and a lot of kids didn't know how to dance. I even taught girls as well as boys.

[How did you learn how to dance?]

I don't know. I know Aunt Dorothy and I did dance. Both of us did, so I really don't know how we learned. I know our mother didn't teach us, so I don't know how we learned. Anyway, I suppose from watching because Grandma liked to go to dances and, of course, we'd go along and watch. Maybe, in that way, [we learned to dance]. I don't know, because we didn't have TV to watch.

Anyway, Grandpa and I started to date. He came on a Sunday, and Perry Reeder showed up. He used to come over. He worked across the road from us on a farm doing the haying and the milking of the cows and what not, he and another fellow. They used to come over on a Sunday, and we'd play cards and stuff. Well, then he joined the Army and was gone for a while. That's when Daddy (Grandpa) and I were dating. Anyway, on this Sunday, your Grandpa showed up in a Model T. That's what he had to drive. And here come a car, and Perry Reeder got out and walked into the house. I just about fell through the floor. We didn't have telephones. I didn't know he was coming, had no idea. So, anyway, I was a little upset and so was Grandpa. (Laughs) I didn't know what to do. So I said, "Well," to Grandpa, "Can we go over to my mom's and get a ticket so he can get back?" He was over here at Fort Vancouver. That's where he was stationed. He was very angry with me.

[Who Al or Perry?]

Al was. Your Grandpa was very angry with me. Huh! I went over there, and I told Grandma what had

happened, so she got some money out and gave it to me.

[Where was she?]

She was topping onions.

She said, "Why don't you take my car?" Because it's bigger, you know, for four people. Well, Grandpa and Aunt Dorothy sat in the front seat. Perry and I got under the hood in the back. Instead of a trunk, we called it a hood in the back. It wasn't a rumble seat. So, we took him over to Berk's. I went in and paid for his ticket back to Vancouver. His folks lived in Independence. That's where his home was, Independence. So he stopped in between before going back to the Fort Vancouver. Anyway, he got on the bus and went to Vancouver. I got in the car. Aunt Dorothy sat next to Daddy (Grandpa). Huh! We got home, and I took Grandma's car back to her. Grandpa got in his car, and he took me home, and that was the end of that.

(To be continued)

Editorial

We have not been attributing articles to those that have done the hard work of either writing or putting together the articles. So to partially correct this I would like to list some of the contributors to this newsletter.

Adele Egan has done the research and provided the wonderful articles the past several issues about the early Oregon history. Dorene Standish has provided considerable information for the publication. Starting with this issue we will be presenting the first part in a series of an interview with Ida My Nosack provided by Marilyn Barner. This year we are honoring the Applegate family which Frank Cunningham is a relative and will be providing material and other help.

There are a lot of others that have contributed a great deal toward the founding and success of the Brooks Historical Society. We will be displaying a plaque at the BHS with the names of those who have done so much.



1904 pedal Organ
made by the Hughes
Company of Dallas,
Oregon

We would like to
acknowledge the
organ
donation to Brooks
Historical Society, by
Richard Breen of
Brooks, Oregon.

Brooks Historical Society

1 (503) 390-0698

3995 Brooklake Rd. NE
Brooks, OR 97303

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9265
Brooks, OR 97305



MISSION STATEMENT

The objective of the Brooks Historical Society and Depot Museum is to be educational, to stimulate an interest in, and a knowledge of, the history of Brooks, Oregon, and the surrounding area.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- Adult Member ----- \$12.00
- Student Membership ----- \$ 5.00
(Elementary and High School)
- Business Membership ----- \$30.00
- Donation ----- \$

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/zip: _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

**Checks should be written to
Brooks Historical Society
Mail to: PO Box 9265
Brooks, OR 97305**

OFFICERS and BOARD

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MEETINGS

The Brooks Historical Society meets at the Brooks Depot Museum at 10AM the first Saturday of the month.
Directions to the museum at Antique Powerland:
From I-5 - take Exit 263 -- go west approx. 1/4 mile to: Antique Powerland 3995 Brooklake Road, Brooks, OR 97303