

# Brooks Historical Society Newsletter

**October 2009 Vol. 4**

<http://www.oregonpioneers.com/marion/BROOKSHISTORICALSOCIETY.htm>

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

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## **Please Mark your calendar for November 7 Annual Meeting and Election of Officers**

The nominating committee will present a slate of candidates as listed below.

Nominations from the floor will be accepted at this meeting

This meeting will be a pot luck and election the main course will be furnished by Brooks Historical Society

Please bring a side dish, salad, or dessert.

There will be a Historical Video presentation of the farmers and residence of our community before the meeting.

**Location: Brooks Masonic Lodge—99E across from Bethel Park Time 10am**

### **Candidates presented by nonination committee**

President—Larry Leek

Vice President—Louis Sowa

Treasurer—June Smith

Recording Secretary—Dorene Standish

Correspondence Secretary—Texie Lou Price

Board Position-1 Bob Brown

Board Position 4- Dean Cuff

The two other Board members need no action

### **Brooks Area Location Project**

Brooks location project-Can you remember or help- we are trying to put together a map that will include Route 1, Brooks, Oregon—As well as any buildings that were at past locations and are no longer there. If you lived on the route when each house had a number rather than a street address where did you fit on our map and who might have been your neighbor and their box number back in the early 1950's ( earlier or later too.). EX: Manning School-Parkersville Hotel -Ramp Markets-Churches of Brooks- Anyone who can remember please contact BHS-503-390-0698



## WHEATLAND

Wheatland as a town was established by Daniel Matheny in 1847. However, the area already was known for the Matheny Ferry Landing. The first ferry had been built by Lindsay Applegate for James O'Neal who lived on the West side of the Willamette River, and Alonson Beers who lived on the East side, and was acquired by Matheny in 1844. It was the first ferryboat on the Willamette equipped to carry a wagon and ox team.

The site of the Methodist Mission founded by Jason Lee in 1834 was located on the East side. Following the move of the Mission to Salem in 1840, the site was occupied briefly in 1843 and 1844 by the immigrants Applegate and Matheny. The Mathenys lived in the West side home of Rev. David Leslie across the river from the old mission where the Applegates spent the winter of 1843.

The Willamette Valley was lauded for its fertility and quality of wheat by early explorers and emigrants. Rev. Ezra Fisher described the valley's fertility as scarcely excelled in the Mississippi Valley in wheat and far exceeds in yield any part of the United States. Wm. A. Slacum reported in 1836-7 that 150 bushels of wheat was grown in 1835 and 500 in 1836, by the first 3 missionaries who settled in 1834 on open prairie interspersed with good timber. Lt. Neil Howison reported in 1846 the products of the soil depend mainly upon the climate, and the excellence of the latter is indicative of the abundance of the former. Wheat is the staple commodity. The quality is unequalled throughout the world. It excels, in weight, size of grain and whiteness of its flour, that of the Atlantic States. Charles Wilkes, Commander of the U.S. Exploring Expedition 1838-42, reported that wheat in the Willamette Valley is of superior quality to that grown in the U.S.

The Applegates removed to nearby Salt Cr. which they described as a prairie rolled under a velvet like sward of grass which they transformed into vast wheat fields. The only market for grain was monopolized by the Hudson Bay Co., but wheat could be sold in the form of flour to the hordes of hungry emigrants who arrive every November.

The first warehouse was on the East side of the Willamette River at the Methodist Mission. The farmers from Yamhill County had to cross the river on the ferry to get to the warehouse for shipment down to Oregon

City and Vancouver. So in 1847 Matheny V staked out the town to become known as Wheatland on the West side of the river and a warehouse was erected. Lots could be bought with wheat as payment. As the years passed, the town boasted shops, stores, mills, warehouses and hotels. In the 1850s the steamboats brought freight and new settlers and took on board cargoes of grain and farm produce for Portland and export trade. The floods of December 1861 carried away the lower portion of the town and destroyed a warehouse. A gristmill which shipped flour to Portland was burned 1872 and rebuilt, but the flood of 1890 wrecked the nearby warehouse.

Wheatland the town was entirely dependent on the river for transportation and declined as the railroad, then known as the Southern Pacific, replaced the river as the trade artery. Wheat no longer is the prevailing harvest at Wheatland and in Mission Bottom, and has been replaced by hop yards, berry fields and orchards. But the Wheatland Ferry continues as Oregon's oldest ferry service, plying the river with a power ferry named Daniel Matheny V.

## REFLECTIONS ON STEAM-UP 2009

### PASSPORT GAMES

The Youth Passport program ran full-steam ahead. The game is really catching on. Some youths were so enthusiastic they played each of the four days over two weekends. Of course, some poor families were exhausted just making it to all participating museums just once. A full card turned in each day to APMA earned a small gift and a chance for the big prize.

At the Depot we had picked out eight new exhibits (a different one for each age group each day) to find and return with answers to the posed question. With the coveted stamp (a replica of our logo) the guest could chose a flashy flag pencil or key ring. When families of more than one child of each age group (6 and under or 7 to 12) came, questions from past years were also used.

Reports by other partner museums indicate we will need more new questions next year as these youngsters made it clear they want to be challenged and to learn something new. Oh yes, and the winner of the grand prizes at the end of each day get a new bicycle.

It is a good program, to promote education and to stimulate interest in families to come to Powerland. It is also a commitment by the museums to have the extra volunteers needed to process the questions and rewards plus the docents placed around the exhibit areas to give little talks about the items on exhibit. Time to plan ahead for next year.

## **SILENT AUCTION**

The Silent Auction is held only on the first Saturday of Steam-Up, also the busiest day of the two weekends. It is payoff day for all the work that goes into contacting contributors, picking up donations, putting them together in attractive packages, pricing, tagging, displaying. This year there were more donations, thanks to our local businesses and the members themselves. We did feel the effects of the economy in lower competitive bidding. However, about \$2200 was grossed and the event is an attraction to Powerland and to the museum.

## **VENDING**

The economy may put a damper on some spending, but people still like to eat. And weather in the 90s makes everyone thirsty. So lots of food and drinks were served by a large faithful crew of volunteers for five days of Steam-Up.

Early morning sales of coffee and pastries are always popular. After a long hot day, hot dogs lose their appeal but those cold pops are popular to the bitter end.

It was a very busy and successful season. Thank you to each and every one of you faithful hard-working volunteers. May your halo keep glowing.

## **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. This is the last segment

### **CONTINUED (from last issue)**

They shipped us—Aunt Dorothy and I—to Uncle Raymond and Aunt Ruth's house. We stayed there while they were sick. Uncle Raymond came home one night, and my Aunt Ruth shoved us all in a bedroom and then shut the door. They sat down, and Uncle Raymond told Aunt Ruth that his mother had passed away. Well, one of the kids went out, curious what was going on. They come back in and said, "My grandma just

died." Well, it was our grandma too, but we hadn't realized that's who they were talking about. It didn't dawn on us who it was. I had no idea. It was somebody's grandma, but it wasn't our grandma, but it really was. It was my mother's mother as well as my Uncle Raymond's mother. But, that wasn't what we knew out of it until we were quite a bit older we learned that.

What else? What else do you want to know? There's a lot.

That teacher's name was Beckett. She was my seventh and eighth grade teacher and the one that took over when I was in the sixth grade. I went through three grades with her. She was an excellent teacher. And I did well in high school. I mean, I should not have been put back. But, what can you do? And phonics, I didn't know what phonics meant. What's that? You know. But I couldn't read. I couldn't pronounce words.

## **FENCES**

Remember when it was common to have a fence across the front of your place? They were decorative and kept out wayward boys and livestock. These were milled picket or board fences, painted white, or more likely white-washed with a mixture of hydrated lime and water.

Along the sides of the yards and kitchen gardens were lighter, less fancy board fences. Barn yards and close-in pasture were enclosed with heavier unpainted board fences, utilitarian, stock proof. Kids and dogs preferred the ones with lateral boards that could easily be climbed over or slid through.

Out around the fields were the proverbial split rail worm fences—no nails, no post holes to dig, just small logs from nearby split by hand. These easily became lost in brush rows and blackberry brambles.

As lumber became expensive and wood-lots denuded, wire fences became the accepted enclosure. Barbed wire could be added on top or strung independently.

Now fields are cultivated to the property lines with few fences or brush rows to impede the large cultivating and harvesting equipment. Sturdy fences are mainly a means of protecting equipment and storage areas from trespassers and vandals or any livestock.

More often beautiful homes and gardens face the public with landscaped borders of manicured shrubbery. However, a variety of fancy fencing materials can be seen around town using low maintenance pseudo wood materials. These are especially important for privacy, restraining dogs and as sound barriers. Not seen, of course, are the electric "invisible fences" popular with owners of spirited outdoor-loving dogs.

**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**

- President - Larry Leek
- Vice-President - Louis Sowa
- Treasurer - Dorene Standish
- Recording Secretary - Adele Egan
- Correspondence Secretary -  
Marilyn Schlechter Barner
- Board - Position 1 - June Smith
- Position 2- Ray Smith
- Position 3 - Frank Cunningham
- Position 4 - Gary Cuff

**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