

YC-Cyclopedia

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5-5-04

To: News Register
Cc: Mayor McMinnville
Parks Recreation

From: Johnny J. Edwards
2052 SW Marie Dr.
McMinnville Or.
97128

Hello,

My name is Johnny J. Edwards and I am a resident of McMinnville and have been for the last 7 years. A few years back I was shocked at the lack of caring of the historical Mill Stones of the City Park, off of Star Mill Rd and 2nd Street.

I voiced my concern to the Mayors office and I was referred to the Parks and Recreation department which said that I needed to come up with a plan to fix the stones and they would look into it. The stones were not in that bad of shape at this time, and I told the person that I would hope that they would look into fixing the stones out of responsibility and for historical reasons.

On a walk not that long ago I decided to walk to the stones and check on them and the enclosed photographs show the sad condition of the stones. I have contacted the DAR and with them being a local Non-Profit the cost of repair will be I am sure something that will be hard to come up with.

I am sending this letter to you for the reason that I would hope that money to repair these stones will be sent to the appropriate place to make this happen.

Johnny J. Edwards

000003

DAMAGE TO THE DAR MILLSTONES
LOCATED STAR MILL RD. OFF OF 2ND
3-1-04



000004



DAMAGE TO THE DAR MILLSTONES
LOCATED STAR MILL RD. OFF OF 2ND
3-1-04



000006



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Turning history's pages

May 27, 2003 

On Memorial Day, the buried are remembered, if not by family, then by history. So on a May day in 2003, Pat Williams, Min Coburn and I search out history at Brookside Cemetery.

A pucky wind stirs the massive oaks and evergreens that spread a canopy over the Dayton cemetery as if protecting the graves from trespassers. Ivy vies with toppled markers, dark as soot with age and bespattered by birds.

Rain spits on us historians who walk on ground given for this cemetery by Gen. Joel Palmer, superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon Territory and co-founder of Dayton with Andrew Smith, who became his son-in-law.

Now, almost in the maw of the cemetery, we come upon the marker for Gen. Palmer, perhaps Dayton's greatest history maker. His four-sided black granite marker is taller than any of us three. "Born Oct. 4, 1810; died June 9, 1881," it reads. His second wife, Sarah Derbyshire, April 11, 1815, to Dec. 14, 1891, rests beside him. Palmer's daughter, Joline, who died at age 32, is buried here, too, as are two other Palmer grandchildren: Ella A. Mann and Alexander Mann.

Palmer's marker does not mention that he was speaker of the House, a state senator, commissary general of Cayuse War volunteers, that he gave land for Dayton's Courthouse Square and that a bed that belonged to him can be seen in the Yamhill County Museum in Lafayette.

Because the school was then the only organized body in the community, Palmer deeded the cemetery site to the Dayton school. It still belongs to the school, and the school maintains it.

In a secluded corner near the hustle of State Highway 221, we find the gravestone of Medorem Crawford, 1819-1891. A DAR marker reads that he attended the May 2, 1843, Champoeg meeting that birthed Oregon's provisional government. Several years ago, Min Coburn researched Yamhill County cemeteries, and Carl Francis, the now-deceased Dayton attorney and state legislator, told her that Medorem floated down the river on a log or plank to reach the Champoeg meeting.

Crawford's marker does not note that feat, nor that he was Oregon's collector of internal revenue, appraiser of customs, provisional and state legislator, and that his son, Medorem, was the first child of white parents born west of the Willamette River.

Now, at the grave of Pleasant Armstrong, Min tells us this Carl Francis story: Pleasant, who volunteered in the Rogue River Wars, was killed in action in Jackson County. Dayton residents, wanting to bring home the body of their hometown hero, dispatched a delegation with wagon, team and casket for bringing home his remains. His body and those of three others killed were found wrapped in a common blanket, so decomposed that identification was impossible. All remains were rewrapped, returned to the original burial site and the unused casket was stashed in a tree. Back to Dayton went the delegation, where a grave had been prepared. In the dead of night, they filled in the grave as if Pleasant were there. Sometime later, a logging outfit came upon the coffin. An investigation ensued, and the legend of the empty grave of Pleasant Armstrong then came to light.

Prominent in the cemetery is Joel D. Chrisman's marker, ornate almost as a gingerbread house. Born when George Washington was still alive in 1795, Joel crossed the plains with Polly and nine children and took up a 640-acre claim near Dayton. He plowed their first field with his cattle that had survived crossing the plains - three oxen and two mules - using a mold-board plow made of wood. He borrowed seed wheat the first year, harvested 40 bushels and wheat was their menu mainstay that first winter. Their coffee was ground wheat.

At the grave of Benjamin M. Robinson, another page of history is turned. Benjamin came to Oregon in 1844, married lovely Elizabeth, daughter of the Joel Chrisman - the first marriage of white people in Yamhill County. Their oldest daughter, Mary Robinson Gilkey, buried here also, was the first white girl born in Yamhill County and one of the first two women to climb Mount Hood.

water and they were the first to erect a windmill.

More pages in the history book: the grave of Francis Fletcher, who came with the Peoria Party in 1840, taking up a claim between Dayton and Lafayette. He, too, was at the Champoeg meeting. But even before that, Fletcher managed to meet Elizabeth, beautiful daughter of Andrew Smith. According to Dayton Reading Club's "Some Dayton Chapter in Oregon History," he yearned for reading material in this new country and, using that as an approach, asked Elizabeth if she had brought books west, whereupon she loaned him one. They were married and rest peacefully now at Brookside.

We come to the grave of Dr. B.F. Swick: 1848??1919, said to have owned one of the first three automobiles in Dayton, and now the marker of Doug Snyder (1864??1946) who, with his dad, built the first fruit dryer in Dayton in 1890 and later a plant for drying fruits and curing vegetables that became the largest such plant in the Northwest.

Stephen Coffin (1807??1882) is buried here. He's famous as a Portland founding father. And at Brookside is the grave of a memorable Alderman: A.L. Alderman (1820??1909), "founder" of Alderman Farms.

We note the many markers of young children, markers adorned with lambs, doves, lilies and remembrances such as 'Our little Mabel A., daughter of J.T. and M.A. Watson. Aug. 17, 1877??Aug. 19, 1878). Thou art gone, little sweet child of our love. From earth's fairy strand to bright mansions above."

Although these markers harbor secrets and do not tell all, they serve as memoriams to those buried here. They serve also as catalysts for us historians to learn more.

Elaine Rohse is a longtime McMinnville resident who shares a love of traveling and golf with her husband, Homer.

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Masonic cemetery tells tales of early McMinnville

May 21, 2002 

In the McMinnville Masonic Cemetery, the tree-sized purple lilac at the grave of McMinnville's founder, William T. Newby, bloomed fully three weeks before Memorial Day as if fearful it would be late for the occasion.

In a cemetery plot, a killdeer warmed two speckled eggs and practiced its distraction performance for Memorial Day visitors, dragging itself along the ground, feigning a broken wing to lure all away from its nest.

rooms and flowers, and walk among the graves of those who founded, molded and dreamed a McMinnville dream. These aftercomers will read marker names, the same as those on local creeks, parks and streets. They'll look at the amphitheater view of the Cascade Range with Mt. Hood and Jefferson as backdrops, and understand why their forefathers came — and stayed — in McMinnville's valley.

Dick Magers, Masonic Cemetery sexton, who delves into the cemetery's history as a genealogist does a family tree, tells the story of one visitor, Ephraim Adams, 1799–1876. He came via the Oregon Trail in the 1840s and never lived here, but was so captivated by the site that he willed to be brought back to this cemetery for burial. He's said to be the grandson of President John Quincy Adams. During the 1860s, four other Adams family members were buried here in the 10-acre original section of the cemetery bought by the lodge in 1876 from Patsey and Johnathon Todd for \$180. Pioneers used this as a burial ground prior to that. The earliest graves date back to the 1840s.

Apparently, lodge members originally envisioned the site as more than a cemetery. According to a Nov. 16, 1876, Yamhill County Reporter story, the lodge's plat provided not only for a cemetery but for a 56-by-56-foot public square in the center, as well.

Magers hasn't positively determined the site of that public square. But he discovered a clue: a drinking fountain adjacent to the grave marker of Charles A. Berry. As Magers observes, family cemetery plots don't usually have drinking fountains. He surmises that the fountain was for those who gathered at the public square to plan McMinnville's future after burying the dead.

Many of those who tailored McMinnville's future now are interred at this burial ground.

Here is the grave of John G. Baker, 1818–1887, his white marble marker lily-festooned. He was the first white settler to establish permanent residence in the McMinnville area, and the namesake of Baker Street and Baker Creek.

And Samuel Cozine is buried here. Samuel's blacksmith shop was one of McMinnville's first businesses. From his grave today, Samuel could see some of McMinnville's present development: the blue Cascade Steel mill, the roof of Evergreen Air Museum. Samuel would have been amazed.

Now the marker of another of McMinnville's namesakes: J.W. Cowls, 1823-1896, and Mrs. Lucretia Martin Cowls, his wife, 1827-1892. Here is the Hembree plot as per another street name: Lycurgus Hembree, born in Warren County, Tenn., 1820-1876; Mary M. Hembree, who died in 1880 at 39 years; their only child, L.H., born in Walla Walla in 1864 and died in 1881.

Next the grave of another well-known pioneer: Henry M. Daniel, proprietor of Star Mill, for which Star Mill Way was named. And next the grave of Louisa Sawtelle, 1849-1925, and Daniel W. Sawtelle, whose Civil War reminiscences and letters recently were edited by Peter Buckingham, Linfield professor, and published as "All's for the Best." We come to the marker of Jacob C. Cooper, 1845-1937, and Melzena, 1850-1939. Jacob served in the 14th Missouri Cavalry Volunteers and wrote "Military History Yamhill County," which is on the shelf at McMinnville library.

Now the large imposing Wortman marker, remembering the family that brought McMinnville its first bank: Jacob,

On to the marker for the Meads: Volney C., 1857-1917, and Alice L., 1856-1939, and then the grave marker of Francis A. Ford, who died in 1878, and presumably the grave of his wife, Sarah G. Ford, 1847-1933. Was the McMinnville street named for him?

Here are buried Martins who came in the wagon train of 1843 and the McDonalds, Gouchers, Fellows, Rogers, Olds — some of whom are in Ruth Stoller's historical compilation "Old Yamhill." And there are the markers that bear the names of McMinnville businesses some hundred years ago: Hodson, Wright, Grissen, Apperson.

Now come the markers of more recent comers: H. Wayne Stanard, proprietor of a Third Street grocery; his wife, Edna, and son, James, a familiar face at First National. Eugene Marsh, law firm of Marsh and Marsh, Oregon House speaker, Senate president, and his wife, Dorothy. Lee Waugaman, 1895-1985, Oregon Mutual Insurance Co. president; his wife, June F., 1899-1987; longtime McMinnville Fire Marshal Charley Carter Price, 1907-1992; and a marker with the family name Tilbury: Cary Tilbury, 1851-1938; and Jennie Fink, 1889-1969. You once could buy furniture from Jennie at Tilbury-Fink Furniture store on Third. Gilbert, for many years, had the local Ford distributorship.

One cluster of 15 to 20 graves has no marble or granite markers and probably will be flowerless on Memorial Day. It's the Poorhouse Cemetery at the Masonic Cemetery's southern corner. Although not owned by the lodge, when county work crews groom the Masonic cemetery, these graves are tidied, too.

Some Memorial Day, the cemetery's 24 acres will be company-ready. The 100-foot tall firs, that probably saw the first wagon trains come to the valley, will stand tall and erect on this day. The maples, in full leaf, will offer vast umbrellas should the sun be unseasonably warm. Lacking irrigation, the cemetery, which last summer was dry and brown, is now spring-lawn green as if especially for Memorial Day.

But another task must yet be completed for Memorial Day. The American Legion will place upwards of 200 American flags on the graves of veterans: Civil War, Spanish-American and others. Near the metal storage shed is a special veterans plot with 16 government-issue markers. Magers explains that some of these men perhaps were killed on Civil War battlefields and their bodies never returned home.

Hopefully, on Memorial Day, all 2,200 of those buried here in this cemetery that overlooks the town they protected, loved and helped build, will again receive our devout thanks — and be remembered, still.

Elaine Rohse is a longtime McMinnville resident who shares a love of traveling and golf with her husband, Homer.

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A historian's own history

Mar 8, 2005 

That night, as she took her place at the the podium, we at the Yamhill County Historical Society meeting wondered if speaking to us might be too stressful for the 87-year-old.

She was uncertain as to whether she could stand at the microphone and asked for a chair so she could be seated to talk. Then, frail, gray-haired Elma Shuck, with all the composure, graciousness and command of a First Lady, told her great-grandfather's story - about the beginnings of Yamhill County. Elma, a bit stooped, and her niece, Lynda Ott, told us the awesome story of Andrew Shuck, a sire of Yamhill County.

Great-grandfather Andrew Shuck, said Elma, was of German forebears who left Alsace-Lorraine in 1752 and

And then, on an April 1847 morning, as the skies softly wept flakes of snow, the Shucks headed west. Susan Shuck, twin daughter of Mary and Andrew, then 6 years old, wrote when she was 98 of memories of the trip and preparations for it.

'Our dolls," she wrote, "were rag, stuffed with wool, and when Pa sold the farm and we started on our trek, we buried them with funeral honors."

Originally, the caravan consisted of some 200 wagons - loaded with furniture, bedding, kitchen pots, spiders, food, a jug of water, apple and vegetable seeds, and maple sugar and tobacco for the Indians. When the caravan of 200 proved too large to make good headway, they divided into groups of 50 - and Andrew Shuck led one caravan.

Across the plains, they urged their oxen across the rivers - first caulking their boats with hemp brought from Iowa so they could be floated, gathering "soda" at Salt Lake "to make our biscuits rise." Susan wrote, too, of the burned forts they passed and of how, when they were running low on food, the Pony Express brought supplies. Shoes were worn to shreds and feet were bruised and sore. Susan's mother poulticed and wrapped those sore feet in rags every night.

Blessedly, they arrived in Oregon. Andrew Shuck located a 640-acre claim east of North Yamhill and began to make Yamhill County history. He was appointed by Gov. Lane as first sheriff of Yamhill County after Oregon became a territory.

After the Oregon Territorial Legislature established a probate court, Andrew Shuck on Nov. 5, 1849, called the first probate court to order in Lafayette. He served not only in the territorial Legislature but also in the first Legislature after Oregon became a state. He helped Joel Palmer with the settlement of the Indians, helped with problems relating to the organization of the state, served as road commissioner for a road between Lafayette and Corvallis, and even granted divorces. After Andrew and Mary sold the farm and moved to McMinnville, he was president of the town council.

Andrew Shuck died in 1894 at age 79, and Mary died in 1907 at age 89.

Said Elma that night, "No other global frontier has been tamed as quickly as was the Oregon country." That came about because of settlers such as Andrew Shuck.

Elma offered no historical data as to her own past, and not until she died Feb. 1, 2005, did most of us learn of great-granddaughter Elma's contribution to our state.

Born in McMinnville on Dec. 30, 1915, to Byron and Flora Moore Shuck, she grew up and was schooled in Yamhill. She majored in home economics at Oregon State College and, in 1941, began teaching in Reedsport - then in The Dalles and Portland.

Twila Reimers Byrnes, now of McMinnville but who grew up in Yamhill, remembers going to Sunday school with Elma. She remembers Elma as a "cute" girl with brown hair so naturally curly it curled just with the help of a finger.

At Girls Polytechnic in Portland, as part of her home economics program, she ran a preschool program. When James Madison High School opened in Portland, she offered her home economics program to boys and wrote the curriculum for the state of Oregon. She served as president of Oregon Home Economics Association and as state president of the Future Homemakers of Oregon. In 1976, she was named teacher of the year.

She retired in 1980 - but not to sit and rock. She was a life member of Eastern Star. She volunteered as docent at Mission Mill Museum in Salem and at Yamhill County Historical Museum - because preserving history was a passion for her.

Travel excited her. River rafting delighted her.

When on Feb. 1, 2005, Andrew Shuck's great-granddaughter left to join her great-grandfather, in Elma's obituary her nieces and nephews thanked Elma for her "living acts of kindness and for being the role model of the independent, progressive woman that she always was."

And that night in November 2002, we at the Yamhill County Historical Society thanked Vice President and Program Chairman Barbara Knutson, for bringing us Elma and her niece Lynda Ott as a program - and for the chance to learn the history of Andrew Shuck, first sheriff of Yamhill County after Oregon was a territory.

But although Elma was passionate about preserving Yamhill County history, she was a poor historian in one respect. She never told us the history of Elma Shuck, 1915-2005.

Fortunately, other historians such as Lila Jackson of McMinnville, also of Shuck heritage (as is Crystal Rilee of Newberg), brought to light how Elma Shuck followed in Great-grandfather Shuck's footsteps and helped to build Oregon during all her adult years.

Elaine Rohse is a longtime McMinnville resident who shares a love of traveling and golf with her husband, Homer.

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City Park once boasted zoo, pavilion, pond

May 31, 2005 

One of the real treasures in McMinnville is its city park system. Not many cities this size can boast five well-developed parks and two more maintained in natural habitat.

We have 100-acre Joe Dancer Park, featuring extensive recreational amenities; 21-acre Wortman Park, featuring extensive picnicking facilities; five-acre Kiwanis Marine Park, featuring access to the Yamhill River; 21-acre

covered picnic areas. We also have the 21-acre Airport Park and the 36-acre Rotary Nature Preserve at Tice Woods, both featuring trails threading through natural areas.

The city also boasts three major community facilities that take advantage of park settings - the library, aquatic center and senior center - plus a spacious community center, several small neighborhood parks and the Cozine Creek greenway.

The park of most historical interest is City Park. It was this park that laid the foundation for our present park system.

It took 50 years of settlement before the people of McMinnville began to consider the need for a park. We're not sure who got the drive going in the first place, but it was beginning to gain momentum as the city moved into the 20th century.

Two dozen prominent local families were each asked to donate \$100 toward acquisition of property for a park. The \$2,400 in seed money was combined with \$7,100 from a bond issue.

The money was used to carve Upper City Park out of what was known as the Jones and Adams Tract and add four acres from the Brower Tract. The property included all the present upper park, extending down the hill to Cozine Creek.

In June 1908, contractor and landscape gardener J.A. Gilbertson was hired to draw up detailed plans. He was paid \$50 for his work.

His blueprint called for a pavilion, playground, pond, water tower, tennis court and sprinkler system. Water would be pumped from Cozine Creek for the tower.

The pavilion was built in 1908. At least the size of a large gymnasium, it stood where the aquatic center stands today.

Locals bragged that it was the largest Oregon building outside of Portland. It met community activity needs until 1922, when it was torn down.

Why its useful life lasted only 14 years is lost to history. However, material salvaged from the pavilion enabled a local farmer to build a home, barn and chicken house, all still standing just north of Monrovia Nursery on the Lafayette-Hopewell Highway.

We believe it was Paul Trent's brother who made such good use of the pavilion material. It's not clear whether he had to pay for it or simply agreed to haul it away.

In 1910, the city sold another \$3,000 worth of park bonds to finance construction of a bandstand. A pond was developed, along with a small zoo featuring bears, deer and other animals.

That same year, the pond was lined with concrete. The park got a concrete driveway and set of bathrooms in the bargain.

The next big project was undertaken in 1928.

The Star Mill, which quit producing flour in 1921, burned in 1927. So the city decided to sell \$8,5000 worth of bonds to finance the purchase of the property.

The tract ran from Star Mill Way to Cozine Creek and Western Avenue, now West Second Street, to the mill pond site now occupied by a set of tennis courts.

The first city swimming pool was built near the old Star Mill ruins. The mill's old boilers, still intact, were used to heat the water.

That pool served the city until the present aquatic center was built in the 1950s.

One of the more interesting endeavors undertaken over the years was to have every species of American tree represented in the park. As room in the park itself filled up, the city extended the project down Baker Street and eventually onto the Linfield College campus, but apparently achieved its goal eventually.

The park has undergone an extensive renovation in recent months.

Walking paths have been developed, new stairs built and historical markers installed. In addition, the entrance off Adams Street, between the aquatic center and library, has been rearranged and landscaped.

Jim Lockett, now retired, is a former Memorial Elementary School principal whose study of local history has made him a widely recognized authority.

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Back in time: Yamhill Valley - 1859

Feb 14, 2009 

Back in time: Yamhill Valley - 1859

A look at what life was like hereabouts a century and a half ago

By KARL KLOOSTER

Of the News-Register

The Beaver State's sesquicentennial celebration begins today, February 14, 2009. Happy 150th birthday, Oregon. Oh,

much on the frontier and its settlement had only begun to take shape.

Though the vast majority of early settlers trekked across the plains with the intention of acquiring a donation land claim and cultivating that land, among them were nascent entrepreneurs whose dreams didn't revolve exclusively around a farming-centered lifestyle.

Instead, they saw opportunities to provide the evolving agriculturally-based economy with needed goods and services. Like their farming friends and neighbors, these pioneers also took up land claims, but with a different purpose in mind.

They made use of the land by platting townsites, selling parcels, constructing mills, operating ferries, running general stores, livery stables and blacksmith shops and persuading others to join them in their community-building efforts.

Even though the establishment of towns hadn't been factored into the original land claim concept, practicality bore out its inclusion when the Donation Land Claim Act was finally formalized and passed by Congress in 1850.

This obviously worked to the benefit of certain farsighted individuals, some of whom had already laid the foundations for their personal success on the frontier. Rather than hewing it from the forest or tilling the soil, they did so by nurturing the infrastructure.

It was predicted early on that the most logical place for a permanent settlement in the Yamhill Valley was at the Falls of the Yam Hill River. Francis Fletcher and Amos Cook were the first to arrive in 1840, but both were farmers.

The beginning of town building at Yam Hill Falls was left to Joel Perkins, who took up the land claim adjacent to the river but met an untimely death before he could see his efforts come to fruition.

Jacob Hawn bought the claim and carried its initial development forward. By 1859, the Falls, which by then was becoming known as Lafayette after Perkins' Indiana hometown, teemed with commercial activity.

Retail merchants and tradesmen, a physician and a druggist set up shop there attracting business from around the valley. A post office, teaching academy and several churches added to the structural substance.

Having been the seat of county government since pre-territorial days, the town boasted the area's first major public building, a courthouse, which solidified the town's preeminent stature and made it home to several attorneys-at-law.

When the first courthouse burned in 1857, it was quickly replaced by a more imposing one. River traffic included saddlewheel boats carrying passengers and supplies from Portland and a ferry crossing at the falls.

...

To get there cross country, horsedrawn wagons and mounted riders traversed the old Indian trail along the Tualatin River to Forest Grove, from there south to Lafayette, then on into the rapidly evolving village of McMinnville.

The trip took three days under normal conditions with most travelers laying over in Oregon City, which had been the territorial capital. It hoped to retain that distinction after statehood, but ultimately lost out to longtime rival Salem.

McMinnville founder, William T. Newby, was perhaps the Yamhill Valley's most ambitious and energetic town proprietor. He traveled from Fort Vancouver and followed that Indian trail to a place crossed by a creek, later called Cozine, in 1844.

There, just north of the claim taken by John Baker, Newby farmed for nine years then built a grist mill in 1853. Local farmers, whose only alternative was to take their grain to Oregon City, made his new venture an overnight success.

The city of McMinnville got its start around that mill. By 1859, a thriving little village had sprung up along the much-used Indian trail, now called Baker Street, and along Adams Street, named for another local pioneer, Sebastian Adams.

Newby's tiny mill town had already overtaken its neighboring rival by 1860 when the census counted 445 people in McMinnville and 426 in Lafayette. Yamhill County's total was 3,245, reflecting the fact that farm dwellers far outnumbered townies.

It was only the beginning of a flourishing future for the city, guided for another decade by its shrewd founder who ensured its long-term dominance by negotiating a deal with railroad man Joseph Gaston to bypass Lafayette in favor of McMinnville.

Joel Palmer, Christopher Taylor and Andrew Smith all played a part in Dayton's founding, though Palmer and Taylor were the legal claimants, having laid out the town in 1850, half on Palmer's claim, half on what was purchased from Smith.

Dayton was enjoying its day as the area's most active riverport when the stars and stripes added their 33rd star. Its locks handled the shipping of the vast majority of grain grown in the valley at the time.

Fire, an all-too-common hazard then, destroyed Palmer's sawmill in 1859. A major flood in 1861 all but took out the town's central district clustered along the riverbank.

But it was soon rebuilt on higher ground, barely missing a beat in growth that continued through the 19th century.

The first precursor of Amity appeared in 1849 when a school was built on John Watt's land claim. His son, Ohio,

The town was platted in 1854 and by statehood five years later three retail merchants, two blacksmiths, a saddle maker and a wagon builder were doing business on Trade Street.

These were the Yamhill Valley's only towns - villages actually - when Oregon joined the union in 1859. None of them was as yet incorporated. The sites of other communities yet to come were still being farmed, mostly by their location land claimants.

Sheridan's founder Absolom B. Faulconer, who had arrived in 1847, farmed for nearly two decades before platting the town in 1866. He named it for the heroic civil war general who, as a young lieutenant, had commanded Fort Yamhill in the late 1850s.

Farthest west of any valley settlement, Willamina didn't begin development until almost 20 years later, though a post office was established there in 1855.

Both Carlton and Yamhill were latecomers community-wise, as well. What would be called North Yamhill for nearly five decades took root in the mid 1860s and Carlton's commercial stirrings began in the early 1870s.

At the valley's far east end, Newberg was referred to both as Chehalem and Roger's Landing after its founder, Joseph Rogers who had arrived in 1848. Were it not for Rogers' early death in 1855, the town would likely have been called Chehalem.

Owing to its location, there was considerable coming and going in the area from that time forward, but the town wasn't platted until 1883.

The adjacent settlement of Dundee was started essentially as a company town in 1881 to serve Scottish entrepreneur William Reid's Oregonian Railway Company.

And that's the way it was on February 14, 1859 in the fertile valley called Yam Hill, though no yams were grown on its hills or flatlands, for that matter, and the Yamhelas Indian tribe name had been corrupted for convenience.

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First, there was a mill

Nov 18, 2009 

First, there was a mill

Newcomers to our city, as they walk our historic busy main street, may think it all started here on Third Street.

But a dozing pocket of McMinnville history, along Cozine Creek and its banks, holds the secret to what is usually considered the beginning of our town: the building of William T. Newby's grist mill in 1853.

Information collected by McMinnvillian Lila Jackson - for 30 years a genealogy buff - clarifies some of the business of this beginning. Lila's great-great-granduncle once owned that grist mill.

There on his claim, Newby envisioned a town - that he would name for his Tennessee home. But, Newby reasoned, if such a town were to materialize, it needed a grist mill so settlers would not have to travel great distances to have grain ground.

One day, as Newby pondered this problem, he had a barn-burner of an idea. Cozine Creek could be the answer - if only it provided enough water. And if water could be channeled from Baker Creek to Cozine, sufficient water would be available.

But for this, a special act of the Oregon Territorial Legislature would be required. That act was passed in 1853. Additionally, Newby would need consent from all claim holders whose interests would be affected by that four-mile ditch. In Lila Jackson's file is a memo of these consents as listed on page 45, Records of Mortgages and Contracts, in the Yamhill County Courthouse.

Newby's next challenge - a costly one - was getting millstones for his mill. He hired millwright Jacob Hawn of Oregon City, who later moved to Yamhill County. The stones were brought by boat, then sled, pulled by an ox team and deposited on the east side of Cozine. Two years after starting his grist mill, Newby founded McMinnville.

Wrote historian Ruth Stoller, "Newby's grist mill is usually considered the beginning ... of McMinnville."

In 1860, Newby sold the mill to Lila Jackson's forebear: Robert Crouch Kinney, whose son, Albert, married Newby's daughter. Although no McMinnville street is named for Robert Kinney, he was a mountain of a man. Born in Illinois in 1813, he was in the sawmill and flouring business for 15 years, read law, built a hotel and wharf, laid out the town of Muscatine, Iowa, and came to Oregon with the 1847 Joel Palmer wagon train.

He first settled in Lafayette, took out a donation land claim, set out 1600 fruit trees, helped establish Oregon's livestock industry with sheep from Hudson's Bay Co. when HBC cornered the market, served in Oregon's Territorial Legislature and gave \$25,000 to McMinnville Academy, the forerunner of Linfield College.

After moving to McMinnville, he bought the historic Newby grist mill in 1860. In 1868, he sold the mill and moved to Salem. The mill changed hands a few more times. John Sax Sr. became sole owner. In 1881, he closed down the mill and in 1882 built a new mill of brick on the west side of Cozine, using much machinery from the original site.

The structural frame of the old mill was left standing until 1889 when it was purposely burned. At first, the new mill was known as the Brick Mill - later as Star Mill -- the brand name registered with the state for its flour. Thus the name of the stub street - Star Mill Way - that now connects Second Street and Wallace Road.

This second mill - a three-story building with stone basement - had various owners. In 1894, Henry M. Daniel acquired an interest in the mill, becoming sole owner in 1902 and selling a half interest to his son, Ivan, a year later. The father-son operation ended with Henry Daniel's death in 1908; subsequently, the business became a stockholders company, with the Daniel family retaining an interest in the mill, which continued operating until 1921.

roperty, including the hillside, upper grounds and mill site, as an addition to City Park.

Two years later, the Yamhill Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, realizing the historic importance of the mills, presented to the city a marker made of the two original millstones. The inscription on that marker, according to newspaper stories in Lila Jackson's files, reads in part: "Mill Stones from Old Kinney Mill, which stood on this site, built 1853 by W. T. Newby. Owned by Robert Crouch Kinney 1860-1868."

The story continued, "Standing beneath tall trees through which streamed bright rays of sunshine, early pioneers paid their last tribute to Robert Crouch Kinney" Lila Jackson also has a copy of that July 20, 1929, unveiling program, with familiar McMinnville names thereon: Mrs. E. C. Apperson, Mayor W. T. Gray, Mrs. William Dielschneider, Mrs. W. D. Wisecarver.

Lila Jackson recalls a conversation at a Kinney family reunion with Robert Crouch Kinney's son, Alfred, one of eight Kinney children who lived to maturity, and one of two Kinney sons who became well-known doctors. Alfred helped establish the Oregon State Board of Health, was the first and the 50th president of the State Medical Society and performed the first surgical operation at St. Vincent's Hospital in Portland in 1875.

At that family reunion, Alfred told Lila how much he disliked the long trips that he, as a kid, had to make to Oregon City taking grain to the grist mill. Said Alfred, "I dreaded those trips. I always hoped that I wasn't the one who had to make the trip."

Since that 1929 dedication, one mill stone has been lost to vandals, the other has been reset and relocated at the Cozine Creek overlook in Upper City Park.

If you have never done so, one day when Oregon rain is not a deterrent and "sun streams brightly through the trees" as it did on that 1929 millstone dedicatory event, take the path through Upper City Park, to the Cozine overlook. And there you will see the relocated millstone, read the history of City Park mills and see the diagrams of how water power from Cozine and Baker creeks made those millstones turn. And you will be reminded that this is how McMinnville began.

Elaine Rohse is a longtime McMinnville resident who shares a love of traveling and golf with her husband, Homer.

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A walk on the mild side

Feb 13, 2010 

A walk on the mild side

By KARL KLOOSTER

Of the News-Register

Unlike Christmas, Valentine's Day seems to trigger relatively little resentment about commercial hype. That may be because being reminded to do something nice for that special person in your life isn't a half bad idea.

sender is hoping to convey can be found for a few bucks.

Flowers - with a dozen red roses topping the romance meter - are one step up the ladder price-wise.

Candy is dandy, but it's not as sweet at the cash register. That's especially true for fine chocolates, which command a princely price.

Many of us love to dine out. Many of us also relish good wine on such occasions.

It may be a bit self-indulgent, but what better way to justify upscale imbibing than a candlelit dinner with one's spouse or significant other on Valentine's Day. Restaurateurs love it, particularly when they present the check.

And let's not even talk about jewelry.

Cupid may motivate a husband to make tracks for the local baubles bazaar, particularly if a milestone birthday or anniversary falls anywhere near the Valentine time frame. The downside is that such a brilliant purchase is absolutely guaranteed to deplete the pocketbook.

So which among all the ways that a couple can celebrate their love and commitment doesn't involve any cash expenditure? How about simply taking a nice, leisurely walk together?

Where could you go that is quickly and conveniently accessible, offers natural beauty and serene surroundings, and, as a bonus, affords a close-up look at one of the most significant pieces of local history? Answer: McMinnville's City Park.

It's a 13-acre piece of gloriously green real estate in the heart of the central district. And how it came into being is a fascinating story - one that deserves re-telling.

In fact, if you and your sweetheart decide to take that pastoral stroll, you'll likely come across an attractive overlook in Upper Park where permanent signage has been installed giving a brief history of the city and the site.

Just west of the library and adjacent children's playground, the semi-circular plaza features tile-patterned paving, iron fencing and a sweeping view through the trees to Lower Park below.

Grassy lawns and interconnected concrete pathways run the length of a long narrow, open greenway, flanked on either side by trees of many different species, planted on the steep slopes that form Lower Park's boundaries.

Most of the park's acreage is bisected from north to south by Cozine Creek, whose year-round flow has worn a deep groove into the lowest point of what is essentially a deep ravine.

f anything, Newby was entrepreneurial. Not only did he recognize a need and seize the opportunity to fill it, he went on to use the immediately prosperous business to further his personal fortunes.

In 1857, he sold the mill for \$8,000. He bought it back three years later for \$3,000 when the buyer moved to California. He then turned around and sold it again for another tidy profit.

Changing hands twice more over the years, it remained in operation on the site until 1882, when then-owner John Sax, an immigrant from Switzerland, built a much larger brick mill on the western slope of the ravine.

Sax called his company Star Mills and built the "Star" brand into a regional leader. His mill became one of the city's most successful businesses, changing hands four times, to the enrichment of each succeeding owner, until finally losing in 1921.

The mill's final private owner, a stock company organized by local residents, sold the building to the city in 1927.

Unfortunately, the public investment didn't pay off so well. Shortly after being put to use later that year for apple storage, the old mill burned down.

Bricks from the mill were used to construct stairways and other features around the park.

And what of the creek that runs through the ravine? History buffs will be pleased to know it was named for Samuel Cozine, a blacksmith and close associate of Newby's, who moved to Yamhill County in 1845 and remained until his death in 1897.

Of further interest to history-minded strollers is the fact that the park harbors a remnant of its pioneer roots. A section of the brick flume that delivered water from Baker Creek to Cozine Creek, powering both mills, is located near the top of the park's west slope.

Partially overgrown by vines, it can readily be seen from Diversion Point, a viewpoint adjacent to the stairway. The site is so named because the diversion gate that directed water either to the mill or creek was located there.

As signage in the Upper Park states, the park had its beginnings back in 1906 when 22 local citizens contributed a total of \$2400. That, coupled with \$7,100 in local bond money, allowed the purchase of the original eight acres.

Initially, a pond and playground were developed. In 1907, \$3,000 in park bonds were authorized for further development, including a zoo with bears, deer and other animals.

In 1908, a large pavilion was built on the site of the present day Aquatic Center. A bandstand was built in 1910.

The pavilion served as a hub of community activity, hosting basketball games, meetings, dances and concerts. It was demolished in 1922.

western section of the park.

With this purchase, City Park reached its current 13-acre total.

At that time, the Soper Fountain was erected. It still stands today in the Upper Park plaza, between the library and aquatic center.

Walking hand in hand, you can consider this historic nexus or simply take in the calming pulse of the place. Let its cocoon-like environment embrace you and enjoy its separation from the hustle and bustle of a world that lies mere steps away.

By the way, have you ever wondered why local movers and shakers haven't given City Park anything other than its boringly generic name? Has the possibility ever been considered or brought into the public arena, officially or otherwise?

Newby Park, Cozine Park, Founder's Park and McMinnville Meadows come to mind. It's a thought that bears further consideration.

Residents of the county seat already take pride in their municipal park, even when Cozine Creek shows a bit too much overflowing affection. Would they find it even more endearing if it's name were elevated from brand bland status and bestowed with some personality?

Let's get some dialogue going on this. A bit of input would be most appreciated.

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Article additions

Mar 13, 2010 

Article additions

Writers appreciate receiving commentary from readers. Whether delivered by phone, letter or e-mail, it's gratifying to know they're not only reading, but interested enough to express their feelings and opinions, or bring additional information to light.

Following are several such comments, as well as addenda, in regard to Connections features and Out & About columns from the past few months.

Both a boon and a bane, the beaver population is apparently stable these days. But the critters don't always take up residence in the most advantageous places - at least for humans.

That being the case, researchers are studying how relocating some might help both them and us. In the meantime, some rural residents, like Willamina dentist Gary Brooks, can look out the window of his home in the coastal foothills and gaze over half a dozen dams.

"Come out and visit my beavers sometime," Dr. Brooks said, estimating that there are as many as 15 dams on his property.

Taking him up on the invitation is "dam" tempting. But to see them, he advised I'd have to come well after the sun goes down.

What a life

Community leadership was a forte of Patsey Apperson Miller, as readers discovered in the Jan. 16 story, "It's been a great life." Miller co-founded the McMinnville City Club and the local chapter of the League of Women Voters.

A longtime school teacher and tireless volunteer, she is descended from an early McMinnville family. The heritage started with her great grandfather, Jacob Apperson, who became a prominent local banker in the late 19th century.

Perhaps Miller's own enduring legacy is the host of friends she has made over the years. They endlessly praised her good works and cherished knowing her.

One such admirer, Traci Yocom, now lives in Anchorage, Alaska, and still subscribes to the News-Register. She e-mailed to say:

"Thanks so much for the wonderful article on Patsey Apperson Miller. I always knew she was a fascinating and intelligent person, and your feature was a splendid example of 'A Great Life.'"

High-wattage

In response to the two-part story on the history of McMinnville Water & Light, Nov. 14 and 28, Lucien Gunderman e-mailed to say that his grandparents were the first customers of the utility's new hydro plant on West Baker Creek Road following its completion in 1910.

"They also supplied cord wood for the hydro plant," he said. "The yearly contract was for 400 cords, which was cut on our farm by a crew of six to 10 men, pretty much on a year-round basis. Wood was hauled on wagons in good weather, and sleds pulled by horses in the winter months.

Gunderman, co-owner of Crown Hill Farm on West Baker Creek Road, made particular note of a latter-day postscript to that original Water & Light connection

"This would not have been possible without the support of the Water & Light Commission, prior to our construction of the system. We were actually the first net-metered contracted supplier of renewable energy to the utility."

And that's what I found out while not OUT and ABOUT - receiving valuable nuggets of information on previous stories while doing nothing more than moving the mouse and pressing a few keys on my computer.

Carl Klooster, the News-Register's regional editor, can be reached by e-mail at kklooster@newsregister.com or by phone at 503-687-1227.

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Mac, way back: Into a new century

Oct 23, 2010 

Mac, way back: Into a new century

By KARL KLOOSTER

Of the News-Register

By the dawning of the 20th century, McMinnville had firmly established itself as the seat of county government and center of local commercial activity.

Perusing Telephone-Register editions of the time confirmed the dynamic nature of the city's business climate during the new century's first two decades. In fact, an evolution of the publication itself reflects that vitality.

In 1902, the newspaper consisted of column after column of short items, all set in small type. They were placed one after another, seemingly without regard to subject matter.

Examples include a Salem man's purchase of 300 bales of hops at a seasonal high of 12.5 cents per pound. What followed was a death notice for Prof. T.G. Taylor, who "died at his home a few miles east of the city last Saturday, aged about fifty years."

A meeting of the McMinnville Women's Christian Temperance Union, enhanced by the attendance of Mrs. Courtney, the county president, appeared just above a recap of an exciting "basket ball" game between McMinnville and an unnamed visiting team.

Down 8 to 2 at the half, the home team licked its wounds and got back in gear. As the reporter said, "The fireworks were touched off and it was the visitors turn to be dazed. When they came to the game was lost."

The final score? Mac 17, "Visitors" 12.

A listing of recent probate court actions for estates and guardianships was followed by an announcement that the Chamberlain pharmaceutical company was experiencing a run on its marvelous cough remedy.

In fact, the interspersing of these local news tidbits with pitches primarily for questionable health remedies, as well as the obviously self-serving name mentions, appeared to be a calculated reason behind the randomness.

Headers included: "Will it cure me?" "Deafness cannot be cured." "Secrets women keep at the price of suffering." "Aching joints?" "Drunkenness is a disease, not a weakness." "Do you want to make money?"

1 "Mr. J.A. Simmons, the popular real estate agent of North Yamhill, was transacting business in this city on Friday."

1 "Go to LA. Hanning for a fine line of staples and fancy groceries."

1 "Married at the residence of the bride's parents in the city, Aug. 9, 1902, Miss Sally Gaunt and Mr. A. L. Brown. Judge Rhodes officiating."

1 "Remember, the Grand feed sheds are the cheapest and most convenient place to feed your horses while in town."

And so it went in those times. There were no large headlines or photos, no sections organized by subject. But there were plenty of retail display ads, which utilized logos, a more creative arrangement of type and some form of formal sales pitch.

destined to skyrocket more than ten-fold within 15 years. Its closest competitor, the McMinnville National Bank, placed a respectable second, declaring \$50,000 in capital.

A few years later, Portland's United States National Bank would bring its considerably larger assets to the fray.

Local businesses founded during this time included W.T. Macy & Son in 1904. In addition to serving as undertakers, the Macys sold furniture.

Longtime jeweler Delschneider's, succeeded by Timmreck & McNicol, was another. It started out selling shoes.

Substantial companies of the time that later went by the wayside include Star Mill, the McMinnville Planing Mill and the Home Telephone Company.

Fraternal orders were a very important component of the community then. The Masons' McMinnville chapter was established in 1867, and Elks Lodge 1283 opened in 1912. Numerous other clubs had a strong local presence as well.

The Knights of the Maccabees - later reinvented as an insurance company - installed 27 candidates into its Yamhill Tent No. 24 in 1912. As the article stated, "Many of the new members are representative businessmen of the town."

The Sells Floto Circus came to Mac on May 29, 1912, making a big splash with a free "Third Street Parade" featuring 250 horses, nine bands, several elephants and a couple of camels. The price of admission was a princely 10 cents.

Mayor Arthur McPhillips served his single year in 1912, presiding over a six-member council, with two members representing each of the city's three wards. City officials included a recorder, treasurer, marshal, night watchman, street commissioner, water & light commissioner and set of school board members.

Yamhill County was governed by a clerk, sheriff, assessor, treasurer, recorder, surveyor, coroner, school superintendent, judge and two commissioners.

The amount of taxes collected by the counties on behalf of the state lent some perspective to the pecking order.

In 1912, Yamhill County's population was 18,285 and it remitted \$70,372.75. The biggest chunk of the state total of slightly more than \$3 million came from Multnomah County, which remitted almost \$1.1 million on behalf of its 226,261 residents.

By 1917, the Telephone-Register looked much more like a newspaper of the mid-20th century. It boasted sizable headlines, feature stories and a fair number of black and white photos, which were slowly but steadily replacing black and white illustrations.

The most dominant new additions, advertising-wise, were ads for car dealers - or agents, as many of them called themselves in those fledgling days of automobile retailing - and moving picture theaters.

Also, since the earliest horseless carriages were too costly for the average wage earner, the arrival on the local scene of so many dealers spoke to the area's relative affluence.

The first brand advertised in the local newspaper was the Dort. Sold by Briedwell & Tilbury, it featured Westinghouse starting and lighting and cost \$795.

We'll have more in a coming installment on prominent and highly successful early car dealer Gilbert Tilbury. Besides getting into the car business, he did a little acting on the side. His credits included a starring role in the local production of a famous stage play, "The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains."

Directly competing against the Dort in cost was the Overland. Distributed locally by Turner & Christensen, it featured "a snappy 32-horsepower motor that gave it real getaway speed."

Frugal comedian Jack Benny's car, the Maxwell, sold for \$635. Touted as "the world's best motor car value," it was carried by DeHaven & Sons.

At the upper end of the price spectrum came the Studebaker.

The four-cylinder model ran \$1,105 and the six-cylinder model \$1,380. Both versions could be found at Dixon's Auto Service Station at Third and B streets.

J.D. Scott sold the Saxon Six, a big touring car that seated five, out of his office. Meanwhile, the Yamhill Auto Co. began offering the still thriving Dodge Brothers brand from quarters at 217 Fourth Street.

When folks jumped into their horseless carriages, one place they might end up was a motion picture show. The silver screen was silent until 1928, but that proved no deterrent to a public already smitten by Hollywood's growing star power.

Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin and Rudolph Valentino led the list of America's film royalty. Two McMinnville theaters duked it out weekly in the Telephone-Register's pages, using the big stars as a lure to draw more patrons.

The Imperial and the Rainbow, a theatre and a theater, respectively, went to great lengths to outdo each other.

In March 1917, the Imperial featured a one-night-only showing of "Civilization," a million-dollar spectacle, charging 25 cents rather than the usual dime. The Rainbow countered with Jules Verne's classic "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea."

Back to reality, national calls for mobilization brought the European war close to home in the spring of 1917. In January 1918, some 264 local men were drafted by lot.

Thankfully, "the war to end all wars" came to a close that November. The local lives lost in the conflict are

Look for the next installment of *Mac, way back - the 20s and 30s*, and the rest of the series, in coming weeks.



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Science whiz, story weaver

Jun 18, 2011 

Science whiz, story weaver

Scientist's book filled with facts about growing up in McMinnville

It always lifts my spirits to learn about local folks going on to do great things.

Such is the case with Ralph W. Macy. A Yamhill Valley boy through and through, he became a highly respected university professor and a renowned entomologist.

Over the course of his long life - Macy lived to the age of 94 - he achieved enough professional breakthroughs to fill a sizable book. Of course, it would have to include expressions, terms and references only a handful of fellow experts could fully comprehend.

Macy began his mastery of complex scientific pursuits at Linfield College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1925. He began his graduate studies at Oregon State University, then transferred to the University of Massachusetts, where he earned a master's degree in 1931 and a pair of doctorates in 1934.

He began his career as a parasitologist with the Champion Animal Food Co. He went on to teach zoology at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn., for 13 years before returning to Oregon in 1955.

Following a short stint as chairman of the biology department at Reed College, Macy became head of medical parasitology at the Oregon Health Sciences University. He served as chief investigator for numerous studies funded over the years by the U.S. government, conducting medical research in Alaska, Egypt, Finland and Portugal.

He went on to become head of the biology department at Portland State University. By the time he retired in 1972, he had served terms as president of the American Academy of Sciences, Society of Systematic Zoology and Oregon Entomological Society.

To gain a more complete picture of the man behind the scientist and scholar, we need only refer to his book, "Wooden Sidewalks: Growing up in Western Oregon," which was published in 1983.

The book provides a colorfully descriptive, fascinatingly detailed and often drolly humorous account of Macy's upbringing, both on family farms in the Muddy Valley and with his grandparents while attending school in McMinnville.

Born on July 6, 1905, Macy was a part of the Paul Macy clan, which included the well known Macy & Son Funeral Directors branch.

The family operated a modest furniture business in turn-of-the-century McMinnville. Before deciding he preferred farming, Macy's father, Walter, worked there.

He crossed a wooden footbridge over Cozine Creek on his morning walk to the store. It was located on Third Street, which locals referred to as Main Street.

He lived at the residence of his maternal grandfather, Isaac Lambert. The house was located on Brockwood Hill, which was named for another branch of the family, the Brocks.

Not really much of a hill, Brockwood is a rise west of Cozine Creek and south of Second Street, where Tanglewood

Newby's grist mill. And an uncle, William T. "Will" Macy, served as mayor from 1906 through 1908.

The Macys were among McMinnville's civic and social elite, if such a distinction could be made in a town that counted only 3,000 inhabitants in the 1910 census. The family even had a Scandinavian maid who struggled with English.

Ralph Macy's recollections of those times included a nostalgic nod to those wooden sidewalks that augmented the blocks of a downtown district whose streets consisted of nothing more than packed dirt.

Given the length of the rainy season, the sidewalks could themselves become quite muddy. But being mostly covered by overhangs, they still offered a little respite from the frequent downpours.

Ralph recalled the names of retail stores and the occupants of professional offices that lined Third Street. He remembered how you could find your way to the livery stable simply by smell.

When automobiles first arrived on the scene, the city dealt with the speedy menaces by declaring, "Vehicles propelled by petroleum products, steam or electricity are prohibited from going more than 10 mph on Third and more than 15 mph on other streets."

The Model T Ford drew a fair bit of comment from Macy.

"They had no windshield wipers and no battery, so the headlights only worked when the engine was running," he said. "The tires were of poor quality and the inner tubes required constant repair.

"The 10 gallon gasoline tank was directly under the front seat, so it had to be removed before the tank could be filled. When roads began to be graveled, other vehicles would kick up rocks that shattered the windshield, since it didn't have safety glass."

Other than that, he concluded, the "Tin Lizzie" was a terrific vehicle.

Despite the lack of electricity or indoor plumbing, the young man's early days on the farm in Muddy Valley may have been among the most rewarding of his life. He enjoyed the outdoors immensely and found fascination in the area's natural flora and fauna.

That early introduction to nature may, in fact, have inspired his future career. While attending McMinnville Junior High, he did so well in biology that he was sent across the street to the senior high school to take classes in the subject there.

In the process of completing his master's degree in 1931, Macy was the first to scientifically describe the Fender's blue butterfly, which has appeared in the press recently because of its endangered status.

Readers may recall that the species, once thought extinct, was rediscovered in 1989. Populations have been

known for its Fender's Blue habitat.

And that's what I found out while OUT and ABOUT - flitting around in Dr. Macy's wondrous worlds of flying insects and local recollections.

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centenarian's birthdays few and far between

Feb 29, 2012 

centenarian's birthdays few and far between

Lifelong McMinnville resident and former longtime postmaster Robert "Bob" Ballard is marking his 25th birthday today - and turning 100.

As a Leap Day baby, he's only been able to celebrate on his actual date of birth every four years, or only 24 times prior to today. "Well, I guess I'm not really 100 years old," he said.

He has celebrated his birthday on Feb. 28 in non-Leap Years. This year, even though there's a Feb. 29, his family is planning a reception at the First Christian Church for Saturday, March 3.

On the brink of the century mark, Ballard retains a keen sense of humor and sharp memories of 10 decades of McMinnville life.

"This has been a great place to live," he said. "A wonderful little city, just the right size, a safe environment and very friendly."

In 1912, Ballard joined about 2,400 people who called McMinnville home. The city wasn't large, but it was lively.

Horses and buggies moved people and goods on streets of dirt or gravel.

There were several livery stables, including one at Fourth and Evans where the Elks Club now stands and another near the current city hall. Ballard's father ran the latter.

Visible for miles, the Pioneer Hall bell tower rose over the campus of McMinnville College, which would be renamed Linfield a decade later. Several churches and many large homes, which would still be standing a century later, dotted the city.

A "huge, big flour mill," Star Mill, stood on the west bank of Cozine Creek. On the downtown side of the Cozine, two-year-old City Park featured a bandstand and a small zoo with bears and deer.

Back then, Ballard recalled, the winters seemed vicious. "I remember snow on Third Street, piled up on the sides of the street so high you couldn't see out from the sidewalk," he said.

Ballard started school in a wooden building across the street from what is now Walgreens, a forerunner to the brick Columbus School that fell victim to the Spring Break Quake of 1993. He attended junior high in what is now the Adams Campus.

By that time, his family had relocated to a farm north of town. He rode his pony five miles from home to school each morning.

While he was in class, he left his pony "parked" in a stable on Yamhill Street, marking the west edge of town.

Ballard graduated from McMinnville's high school, then known as Lincoln High, in 1930. That school was located where the Baker Street Square shopping center now sits.

"You couldn't buy a job with a college education," he said. "I had a devil of a time."

As a teen, Ballard had filled in at the post office - then located on Cowls Street - during the Christmas rush. Desperate to find work, he took the postal service's Civil Service exam.

He was hired as a clerk in the financial section. His job included fingerprinting all aliens who came through town.

He also helped set up a postal branch at a labor camp near Dayton and a substation on the Linfield campus.

One day, he noticed a pretty young woman mailing a letter. He asked Nona Mendenhall for a date.

They married two years later, on May 23, 1937, her 23rd birthday. Since then, he said, "We've done everything together."

The Ballards will celebrate her 98th birthday and their 75th wedding anniversary this May.

Ballard had graduated from college as a commissioned officer in the Army and joined the reserves. In 1940, as war was growing in other parts of the world, he was called to active duty.

Nona and the children came along as he was transferred from base to base in the U.S. - Camp Adair first, then camps in Colorado, California, Texas and New Jersey. They returned to McMinnville to wait when he was sent overseas to World War II's European Theater.

In the spring of 1945, Ballard and his unit reached the west bank of the Elbe River in Germany as the Russian Army reached the east bank. "We had the squeeze on Germany when the war ended," he said.

The troops stayed on their respective banks until mid-summer. Ballard recalled watching the Russians get drunk and party every night.

One night they invited the Americans over for a big dinner, serving the first fresh meat the soldiers had eaten in many days. "They just took German cattle whenever they wanted it," he said.

The Americans reciprocated. But for their dinner, they served the Russians venison, which Ballard and a couple of other hunters provided.

Ballard had been an avid hunter and fisherman since childhood.

After the war, he continued his pastimes with Nona and his sons at his side. He shot moose and caribou in Canada in addition to hunting deer and elk in the U.S.

For 45 years, he and three local friends - attorney Roy McCurry, sawmill owner Emanuel Linke and assistant postmaster Carl Ricer - made an annual trek into the Eagle Cap Wilderness to hunt. They packed eight miles into the

'red hat" chairman, charged with helping improve relations between landowners and sportsmen.

He won numerous prizes in contests sponsored by O'Malley's Sports Shop - so many, he joked, that the store owners didn't want to see him coming any more.

The Ballards even bought a place on the Salmon River, just inland from the coast, so they could spend time fishing and enjoying outdoor recreation undisturbed.

As for work, Ballard resumed his career at the post office when he returned from the war. The retiring postmaster recommended him as her replacement, and he filled that position until his retirement in 1975.

"I enjoyed it a lot," he said. "I enjoyed meeting the public and trying to solve their problems."

Ballard served as president of the Oregon Chapter of the National Association of Postmasters one year.

He always enjoyed the state postmaster conventions, which were held throughout Oregon. "I made lots of friends through work," he said.

Many stayed friends after retiring, as well. By now, he said, he has outlived most of the other postmasters of his day.

"I'm still hanging around," he said.

Ballard credits his longevity largely to his active lifestyle. In addition to hunting, fishing and other activities, he did a great deal of walking.

When he was postmaster, he walked back and forth to work from his home near Mac High. He made two round trips a day from the post office at Fourth and Cowles, which now houses the Yamhill County Clerk's Office.

In addition to being active, he said, he has had the good fortune of rarely being ill. And he made good choices, he said.

"I never smoked, except briefly in the Army," he said. "And I never abused myself with liquor."

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A park for every purpose

Apr 4, 2012 

A park for every purpose

McMinnville has big parks and small parks. Parks that everyone knows and parks that are off the beaten track. Parks for organized sports and parks with play structures that stretch a child's imagination. Parks for strolling and parks simply for relaxing.

The two tiniest - Bend O'River and Taylor - are just one-third of an acre each. But they offer plenty of room for pushing your toddler on a swing, spreading out a picnic or just watching the clouds drift by.

bat or kick a ball with your team, hike along a cushy trail or practice your skateboard skills.

Between the smallest and the largest are popular parks like Discovery Meadows, with its water feature and climbable castle; Wortman, a Mecca for disc golfers, walkers and picnickers; and Rotary Nature, great for birdwatching and native plant viewing.

Long, narrow parks on the west side are a big hit with walkers, joggers and cyclists. There's even a park that's not primarily intended for people: a dog park, off Riverside Drive near Water & Light headquarters.

But the crown jewel remains City Park, featuring 17.38 acres on two levels.

Bordered by Adams and West Second streets, it's McMinnville's oldest park. As such, it's the one that set the stage for the community's long love affair with natural public spaces.

"The city founders thought families had the desire and that a community of McMinnville's size needed a place to recreate and come together," said Jay Pearson, director of the city's Parks and Recreation Department. "That's been proven over time and it's still valid."

Voters approved a bond issue in 1906 to cover acquisition of the old Star Mill site on the west side of Cozine Creek. And several residents later donated money to expand the park, situated in the heart of McMinnville.

"It's always been a value to the town," said Pearson, pointing out that bond measures, donations and grants continue to support the acquisition and maintenance of parks.

Over the years, the park has undergone numerous changes.

A bandstand and fountain pool once were focal points in Upper City Park. Lower City Park once featured cultivated gardens, waterfalls and even a small zoo.

The old bear pit remained until a few years ago, when workers finally removed the crumbling bricks.

But the original stairs remain in some places. They were built of bricks salvaged from the mill.

The Carnegie Library was built on the east side of Upper City Park in 1912. Nearby, probably in the area now occupied by the Aquatic Center, a huge wooden community hall reigned until the mid-1920s.

Today's Aquatic Center isn't McMinnville's first, or even second.

At one time, the city operated a pool west of the Cozine above Lower City Park. Later, it built both an outdoor and indoor pool at the corner of Fourth and Adams, the latter located in a corrugated steel building featuring Quonset hut styling.

the Third Street Bridge. As a result, going to the park became a habit.

"Parks provide spaces for people to gather," said Pearson, who has been with Mac Parks and Rec since 1977.

"Local people and visitors from all over use them. They're like the city's living room."

Pearson lives near Discovery Meadows, which was an immediate hit when it opened in 2005.

The 21.45-acre park attracts people from all over McMinnville - and other cities as well, for that matter. Pearson said he knows a family from Independence that comes monthly to use the water feature, for example.

It's also a focal point for the surrounding neighborhood.

At each segment of the day, a unique group of users can be found at Discovery Meadows - walkers in the early morning, young mothers before noon, school kids in the later afternoon, etc. "To me, it's incredible to watch the breathing of the park," Pearson said.

He's seeing the same kind of impact with McMinnville's newest park, four-acre Chegwyn, which opened in 2011 near Grandhaven Elementary School.

Like Discovery Meadows, it is changing things for the better, Pearson said. "It's brought that neighborhood alive," he said.

Pearson said his department tries to make sure there's a park within 1/4 to 1/2 a mile of most residents so they can walk or bike there.

"I love neighborhood parks," he said. "They're places you can enjoy a quiet moment. I think that's exactly what our forefathers wanted."

Rotary Nature Park, opened in the late 1990s as a cooperative effort between the city and its two Rotary clubs, also has brought new life to the north part of McMinnville. The parking lot on North Baker Street is often full as people stop to enjoy walking through its almost 33 acres of wetlands.

Valen McBee Airport Park, named for Pearson's predecessor, is another site beloved by those who favor nature walks. A rustic pathway winds through the woods.

Sometimes walkers can see a beaver dam. In the spring, trilliums bloom.

Families also come to the 13.5-acre park for picnics or to visit the whimsical concrete sculpture of a mushroom secreted amongst the trees. "There are great hidden pieces in all the parks - little surprises," Pearson said.

Like Airport and Rotary Nature, 21.43-acre Wortman Park also draws people from all over the community. Its users

groups come for outdoor learning. Walkers stroll the paths through an old-growth fir forest.

Picnic sites can be reserved at Wortman - as they can at Discovery Meadows as well - during the May 1 to Sept. 30 busy season. The rest of the year, it's first-come, first-served.

The McMinnville Lions Club hides eggs on the McDaniel Lane side of Wortman Park at Easter. This year's version of the free egg hunt will start at 10 a.m. Saturday.

Meanwhile, disc golfers make Wortman a destination year-round. "They're always there, playing, and they have big events, too," Pearson said.

One of the newest types of park is the linear park, a long, narrow stretch perfect for walking or biking. McMinnville has two - the Cozine Greenway, which includes several disconnected segments, and a south-to-north Westside Greenway Park, a 12.98-acre ribbon that starts near the electrical substation on West Second and connects to Baker Creek Road.

They are "terrifically well-received," he said.

Pearson said it's his dream to someday see all the pieces of the Cozine Greenway connected. He also dreams of establishing a path for walkers and bikers that runs along the Yamhill River, connecting with Joe Dancer and Airport parks along the way.

He also wants to see development of the 13-acre park site on Old Sheridan Road, near the McMinnville Grange. It will be a great addition on the southwest edge of town, he said.

Getting those things done will take the backing of an advocacy group, Pearson said.

That's how the four-acre dog park on Riverside Drive came about. Citizens not only asked for it, they became involved enough to see it through, he said.

For more about McMinnville parks, or to make reservations at Wortman or Discovery Meadows, call the McMinnville Community Center at 503-434-7310.

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Stopping by 090418 'Swimming was what I did'

Sep 4, 2018 

By STARLA POINTER
Of the News-Register

After a day spent picking beans or other crops, teenager Connie (Howard)
Harris used home to shower and grab her swimsuit

pool, a concrete square located on Star Mill Way just west of McMinnville's Lower City Park.

She joined other youngsters splashing in the water.

"There was always a group," she recalled. "We loved it."

Sometimes they played a game called Dibble Dabble.

Someone would take a Popsicle stick, swim down to the bottom of the pool's 9-foot deep end, and let the stick loose. Kids on the deck would vie to see the stick pop up. The winner was the first one to notice, shout "Dibble Dabble!" and jump in to retrieve it.

"It was a silly little game, but we played it over and over," all summer long, Heim said.

She spent many summer afternoons at the pool, which was built in 1934 with support of the Works Progress Administration, a work program designed to bring the U.S. out of the Great Depression. But by the time she graduated from McMinnville High School in 1958, the city had new swimming facilities.

Opened in 1956, they included a 30-yard outdoor pool and a 20-yard, year-round pool covered by a quonset-hut like building. The McMinnville Kiwanis and Frank and Ralph Wortman led the effort to build the new facility, and voters passed a \$175,000 bond measure to pay for the project (which ended up costing \$205,000 to construct).

Swimmers entered from the Adams Street side of the building, located at the

they used the heated indoor pool.

In fact, that first indoor pool still exists as the smaller, recreation pool that's currently in use. It was configured differently back then, though, with a deep end and diving board on the west.

The bottom was altered when the McMinnville Aquatic Center was built in 1986. Now the recreation pool is shallow at each end, dipping to 5 feet in the center, making it perfect for users who like to stretch or walk in the water.

Heim may be a little envious of today's pools, which are heated to make them comfortable. Back in the early '50s, she said, she and her friends dove into water that was heated only by the sun and the bodies of swimmers.

Pool workers changed the water on Mondays, she recalled. "We hated the next day, because it was really cold," she said. "But it was still better than a pond."

A pond was the basis of McMinnville's very first public pool, also located in city park. About 1917, ducks and water plants were cleared out and a concrete bottom added to make it usable by swimmers.

But not on Sundays, a 1918 rulebook proclaimed. Whether that rule still stands or not, the current pool is open only Monday through Saturday.

Another 1918 rule is definitely defunct: Back then, swimming sessions were divided by gender, with boys on some days and girls on others. Coed swimming came into vogue long before Heim's time, though, and remains the standard today.

women-only and men-only sessions on alternate nights, as well as family swims.

Heim's friend Tom Miller, also remembers the water temperature of the pool in which he swam in the early '50s.

"Oh, boy, that water was cold!" he said. "You had to swim across quick, or you'd freeze."

Once, he said, he was involved in a game in which swimmers had to race across the pool, light a candle, then race back. He couldn't strike his match because he was shivering from the cold.

In addition to plenty of games, the pool offered canoe safety courses and other Red Cross training, Miller said. Lifeguards Joyce Mahon and Janet Wilder treated youngsters well.

While both he and Heim loved swimming, socializing was what really drew them to the pool.

"That was Facebook in those days," Miller said.

For him, the pool was close to home. He rode his Schwinn — the same bike he used for delivering three Oregonian routes — over to the pool from his house on Brockwood Hill. After swimming, he might continue on to the Parvee shop for a nickel ice cream cone.

He often was accompanied by his brother, George. Two years older, George was "a real waterdog" who later became a lifeguard.

.....
Athletic Club, as did her friend Maryann Snyder.

In contrast, Miller said, “I was the mean little kid.” He recalled searching the pool grounds for cigarette butts to smoke, and practicing his cussing, too. He turned out all right, though: graduated from Linfield College in 1968, served in the Navy, and worked for CC Meisel for 37 years.

Heim lived in the country at the far end of West Second, so she didn’t see her schoolmates much during the summer — except at the pool.

She and friends such as Linda (Robbins) Tuggle would pull on their bathing suits and hop into the water.

Most of the girls wore one-piece suits back then, but Heim — tall for her age — found a better fit with a two-piece that included boy shorts and a modest top. However, she noted, both one- or two-piece styles provided more coverage in those days than most modern suits.

She and her friends turned into swimwear models on one occasion. For the opening ceremony at the new indoor pool, they were asked to parade across the deck in their bathing suits.

A few years earlier, Heim and her siblings learned to swim in the outdoor pool. So did most of McMinnville’s children, just as kids do today — although they didn’t have the “Survival Swim” program that teaches today’s third-graders how to stay safe in the water.

Former aquatic center director Ron Kam started the Survival Swim program in the late 1970s. The week of basic swimming and safety lessons has

pool complex.

Mary (Skophammer) Wolfe, who learned to swim in the 1956 version of McMinnville's public pool, taught swimming lessons and worked as a lifeguard later on. She said she's "thrilled" that the Survival Swimming program is going strong.

"Everyone should learn to be safe in the water," she said, adding that learning to swim builds coordination and confidence, as well. (See related story about Wolfe.)

Porter cited studies showing swimming lessons decrease the chance of drowning. So does having lifeguards on duty at pools or beaches where swimming takes place.

He also sees a connection between taking lessons and becoming a lifeguard.

Many of the guards he hires are graduates of the Survival Swimming program or other swimming lessons at the McMinnville Aquatic Center, he said. Many of the swimming teachers also are alumni.

"They're contributing back to the community," he said, noting that the aquatic center is one of the area's biggest employers of high school and college students.

Porter learned to swim in a facility similar to McMinnville's aquatic center, out in the Kent, Washington, area. His first lifeguarding job was in nearby Auburn, Washington. He also competed on his high school swim team. And he met his wife while working at a public pool.

swimming lessons or getting ready for the next family swim session.

The aquatic center really was, and is, as advertised when the newest version opened in 1986: "A Pool for Everybody."

Starla Pointer, who believes everyone has an interesting story to tell, has been writing the weekly "Stopping By" column since 1996. She's always looking for suggestions. Contact her at 503-687-1263 or spointer@newsregister.com.

CUTLINE FILE

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Sidebar 2 Stopping By 090418 From wading to a championship

Sep 4, 2018 

As a child, Tim McDaniel went wading in McMinnville's second city pool -- a shallow outdoor pool that had been built in Upper City Park in 1927.

it. That was just right for small children on a warm day.

The Soper Fountain originally stood in the center of the wading pool. It was later moved to its current location, between the library and the aquatic center.

Swimmers had a deeper pool across the ravine from the wading pool — adjacent to Star Mill and Wallace Road. A bridge took people across the ravine, above Cozine Creek, from the downtown area to the west side. It later was replaced by fill, creating the West Second Street we know today.

By the time McDaniel was old enough to take swimming lessons, the city had built a new double pool on the east side of the park. Swimmers entered at Fourth and Adams streets, changed in locker rooms on the Adams Street side, then jumped into the 20-yard, indoor pool.

In warm weather, the outdoor pool was open, as well, on the side closest to the library. It was much larger, a good 30 yards long, as McDaniel recalled. But it was fairly shallow, only five feet at the deepest, he said.

“It was extremely sunny and fun,” he said. “Always a lot of kids playing, or playing water polo.”

When McDaniel started lessons at the age of 5, he didn’t know he was becoming a lifelong swimmer. But he took to the water quickly, and soon was swimming competitively, as well as for fun.

“Pat O’Malley came to run the pool, and McMinnville started getting champions,” he recalled.

Denman and Don Blankenship. They swam the 4x400 freestyle, FAST, winning the state championship for McMinnville High School.

They competed in the 20-yard pool — what swimmers today know as the recreation pool — even though it was smaller than regulation size. Each leg of the relay was 100 yards, or five lengths. If they were to compete in McMinnville's current 25-yard competition pool, they would each swim four lengths.

Swim team members worked hard, he said, but they had time to play as well. Water polo was a favorite activity after practice — just for fun.

Half a century after his swim team days, McDaniel remains a regular at the pool — the version erected in the 1986, with the 20-yard pool in which he once competed at one end and the competition-size pool at the other. He's there five days a week at noon for his one-mile swim.

"I love the camaraderie. We talk politics or whatever," he said of seeing his fellow swimmers.

Although he enjoys socializing, he likes to find an open lane for swimming, if he can.

"I don't like to run into people," he said. "Although their heads are no harder than mine."

— Starla Pointer