

Lane County Historian



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LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mrs. C. A. Huntington, 740 West 13th Street, Eugene, Oregon 97402..... President
Stuart W. Hurd, Rt. 2, Box 345, Eugene, Oregon 97401 Membership Secretary

LANE COUNTY HISTORIAN

Inez Long Fortt (Mrs. James G. Fortt) Editor
3870 Watkins Lane, Eugene, Oregon 97405

The Lane County Historian is a quarterly publication of the Lane County Historical Society, a non-profit organization.

The editor will be pleased to receive manuscripts which deal with the history and life of Lane County, Oregon. Manuscripts submitted for publication should be typewritten and double-spaced. If author wishes manuscript returned, please enclose self-addressed stamped folder.

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Rhinehart Building, 1891, used as Fair pavilion prior to remodeling into 2 stores.

—Courtesy Lane County Pioneer Museum

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*Flowers, Vegetables, Baked Goods and Fancy Work,
Cows, Horses, Chickens and Pigs; the Midway*

The Lane County Fair *

by Olga Freeman

Thursday, September 25, 1884, was nervously awaited by the officers and members of the Lane County Agricultural Society. Would the public respond to the months of preparation for the first three-day county fair under their sponsorship.

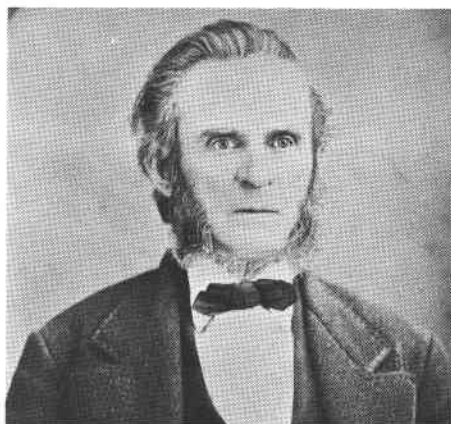
J. B. Rhinehart had made substantial additions to the building on the corner of Ninth and Oak Streets. He had erected two spacious new halls on the west and north of what was formerly a paint shop. The pavilion 50 by 100 feet would provide space for the exhibits of agricultural products, fancy handiwork, baked goods, machinery and manufactured goods. All exhibits would be enhanced by the recently installed electric lamps which gave out a brilliant light.

Throughout the year Mr. Rhinehart's facilities were rented out for social affairs, festivals, whist games, lectures and dances. The fair association was fortunate to obtain the building for the fair exhibits. Livestock would be exhibited on the north and east side of the public square. Space was also reserved for Cole's Circus which would entertain during the three days of the fair.

The association had prepared stalls for livestock in the western part of the city and a fine track where the races would be held. Horse races and bicycle races were popular. Pools on the races would be sold by R. M. Day and M. S. Wallis.

George Belshaw was president of the new association and J. S. Churchill was secretary. Other officers were as follows: Marshal of the Day, Rosecoe Knox; Marshal of Pavilion, J. H. Rhinehart with Mrs. F. M. Wilkins as assistant; Executive Committee, George Belshaw, M. Wilkins, Allen Bond, John Simpson, Roscoe Knox and J. S. Churchill.

Superintendents of the various departments were, Cal W. Yound, John Simpson, Sam Howard, John Tate, Frank Bond, Steve Martin, Mrs. H. C. Veatch, Mrs. Kate S. Munra, Mrs. L. G. Adair, J. M. Spores, Westley Shannon, F. T. Mayfield, Prof. G. H. Collier, Prof. Thomas Condon, A. V. Peters, J. B. Harris, and co-chairman, Mrs. Van Vrankin and Mrs. Kanoff. H. G. Hadley was in charge of the racing program. Departments in the fair



Mitchell Wilkins, 1848 pioneer, vice-president,
Lane County Agricultural Society, 1859

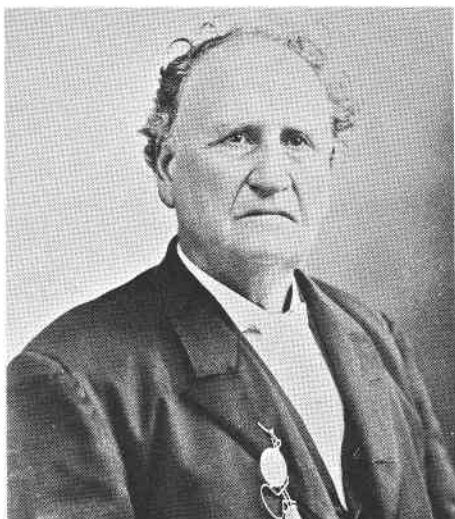
*All photographs used in Lane County Fair story courtesy Lane County Museum.

were horses, stock, sheep, hogs, farm products, machinery, furniture, butter, woolens, bread, cooked foods, fancy work, apples, birds, petrified wood and art work. There were no entry fees for the exhibitors.

On opening day, September 25, 1884, 1,000 entries were in place and by evening there were twice as many. The fair was an assured success. Outstanding entries were as follows: A squash which weighed 145 pounds; a Clydendale mare owned by O. P. Adams of Linn County which had a mane over seven feet long; a display by Skelton and Son's of yarns and socks manufactured in their woolen mills in the city of Eugene. The stellar attraction was George Belshaw's exhibit of cereal grains and wheat from his farm four miles west of Eugene—it had won gold medals at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition and at the Paris Exhibition. Regularly, the Belshaw exhibit won prizes at the state and Portland's Mechanics fairs.

Admission to fair was 75c for men and 25c for the ladies.

The second day of the fair was



Rev. I. D. Driver, Speaker, at 1884 Fair

reported as "a beautiful day, the sky overhead clear and the sun shining brilliantly, but not hot." In the afternoon foot-weary fairgoers were glad to sit down and listen to an address in the park by the Reverend I. D. Driver, the Association's speaker. A nightly feature at the fair was a concert by the city band.

Part of the success of the fair described as "having reached everybody's most sanguine expectations" was due to the cooperation of the Oregon and California Railroad Company through its agent in Eugene, J. G. Adair. Special round trip fares with a discount of 60% off the regular fares were in effect from Salem to Eugene on the north and from Roseburg on the south. Typical of the reduced fares were: Harrisburg, 90c; Junction City, 60c; Irving, 30c; Springfield, 25c; Goshen, 30c; Creswell, 60c; Cottage Grove, \$1.00 and Latham, \$1.10.

While the 1884 fair is usually considered the first Lane county fair, other fairs had been held much earlier. According to a report in the Oregon Historical Quarterly, a Lane County Agricultural Society was formed in September, 1858 with A. McMurray (no doubt this should be Fielding McMurray) as president; E. E. Haft, secretary. An exhibition of fruits, grains and livestock was held in Eugene on October 9th. The officers of the fair were W. S. Brock, president, and B. J. Pengra, secretary.

Another meeting of the Agricultural Society was held on April 7, 1859 to consider the advisability of holding a fair. It was decided to have a fair and award premiums of \$80.75 in twelve classes: stallions, mares and colts, matched and single horses, cattle, sheep, swine, butter, cheese, field crops, garden produce, fruit and manufacturers.



Lester Hulin, Sr., 1847 pioneer, winner of four premium awards, 1859 Fair

Permanent officers of the society were Avery A. Smith, president; C. E. Christman, Mitchell Wilkins, Isaac H. Moores and Albert F. Gaines, vice-presidents; Stuckeley Ellsworth, recording secretary; E. E. Haft, corresponding secretary and Fielding McMurray, treasurer.

The fair held October 11 and 12, 1859, brought out 44 individual exhibitors who were awarded 71 premiums. The leading award winners were George Belshaw with seven premiums, J. Southwall, five, and Lester Hulin, Sr., four.

The main address at the fair was delivered by John Whiteaker who was described as a practical farmer. He had been elected Governor, the first governor of the new state of Oregon and had assumed office on March 3, 1859.

Lane's fair in 1859 was the sixth to be held in the state. The first Oregon fair was held in Yamhill county in 1854, followed by fairs in Marion, Polk and Washington counties in 1855 and Linn county in 1856. All of the fairs were sponsored by county agricultural societies, organized to promote exhibi-

tions of agricultural products and farm animals.

The success of the fairs led to calling a meeting on December 7, 1859 of representatives from the various county societies to consider holding a state fair. A. A. Smith, Lane's president, was the county's representative at the meeting.

At another meeting on February 22, 1860, a state agricultural society was formed and a decision was made to hold a state fair in 1860. Election of officers resulted in Lane county's John Whiteaker named vice-president and A. A. Smith to the three-man board of managers.

The first state fair was held October 3-4, 1860, near Oregon City. In 1862 the board decided upon a permanent location at Salem.

The Lane County Agricultural Society held another fair on October 9 and 10, 1861. Details are lacking concerning this exhibition. Apparently no more fairs were held until 1884.

Spurred by the success of the 1884 fair, the agricultural society



The Honorable John Whiteaker, First Governor of Oregon, speaker at 1859 Fair

proceeded to incorporate and sell stock. The 1885 fair was held September 30 through October 3, one more day than the previous year. George Belshaw was in charge with J. S. Churchill as secretary.

Despite the addition of an extra division, newspaper reports indicate the number of articles on display in the pavilion were not equal to the previous year. The livestock exhibit consisted of 40 head of horses, 34 hogs, 20 sheep and 36 cattle. On Saturday at 1:00 p.m. 5,000 people witnessed the parade of stock. Major attractions at the race track were the bicycle races. Professor F. T. Merrill was featured in trick and fancy riding. A number of professionals and a large army of amateur cyclists from throughout the state performed.

Total receipts of the four-day fair were \$1,513.50.

The fair was not without incidents. According to the *Eugene City Guard* of October 3, 1885, a lunch stand collapsed from its weight; a young man accidentally discharged his pistol and shot off a portion of the heel of one of his boots; tin-horn gamblers were numerous and William Sheldon's home was burglarized while the family was at the fair and a silver watch stolen.

The 1886 fair opened on Wednesday, September 22. Heavy rains on Wednesday and Thursday kept the crowds small, but by Friday the weather changed to beautiful sunny skies and people quickly arrived.

The officers of the 1886 fair were President, Allen Bond, Irving; Secretary, H. M. Day, Eugene; Marshal, Roscoe Knox, Creswell; Marshal of the Pavilion, E. W. McClanahan, Eugene; Assistants, Mrs. J. S. Luckey and Mrs. H. Fry. The speed program was under the direction of E. R. Luckey. There were

seventeen divisions, each in charge of a superintendent.

An outstanding exhibit was that of the Brownsville Woolen Mills which consisted of blankets, yarns, shawls, boys' and men's suits, shirts, carpets, flannels, cloths and socks. It took first prize. Oregon pride pronounced the displayed goods better than any by eastern manufacturers.

The Belshaw exhibit of grasses and grains was a prominent feature. The livestock exhibit was described as "a good horse department, the cattle and sheep better than any previous fair—but that there was no entry in the swine department."

The 1887 fair was held September 21 through the 28th. George Belshaw was again president; J. R. Campbell, secretary; Miss Betty Day and Henry Baxter, assistant secretaries; E. J. McClanahan, marshal of pavilion; Mrs. J. S. Luckey and Mrs. T. H. Jackson, assistants; L. O'Brien, Pavilion doorkeeper; Henry Fry, ticket seller with J. S. Bristow, assistant, and T. J. Hundton, Marshal of the Day.

The weather was perfect for the Firemen's Band outdoor concerts. The young men of the town were attracted to other music. They thronged around the Whale and Gullicker exhibit of pianos and organs from Salem. Demonstrating the instruments were lovely young ladies who sang and played throughout the day.

People crowded around a glass blower who created small vases, intricate objects in the air. The women's department featured displays of choice flowers, all kinds of fancy work, jars of canned fruits, jellies, etc.

As usual the tin-horn gamblers were everywhere. A fight broke out at the races and the police

were called. There were arrests and fines imposed on seven.

The 1888 fair was held September 20-26 with the main exhibits again in Rhinehart's large halls. Hay and stalls were furnished free for the livestock at the west end of town on the agricultural society's grounds. The only entry fees charged were for the races.

Admission prices were as follows: season tickets for men, \$1.00; ladies, 50c, and children, 25c. Day tickets were 50c for gents and 25c for ladies and children.

Vegetable exhibits were described as of "size and excellence rarely equaled," art and fancy work of "merit and worth" and cut flowers "in handsome bouquets lent adornment to the pavilion."

Special exhibits included the dried fruit display of S. F. Gladden which won 1st prize at the state fair, another of bottled fruit by Mrs. Sladden demonstrated the possibilities of Oregon fruit and a display of corn in the cob featured large ears. Fifty-five cattle, mostly pure-bred, made up for the lack of horses.

B. F. Dorris had a unique collection of quartz from the Blue River and McKenzie mines. Commercial exhibits included manufactured mouldings, brackets, etc., by Dy-singer and Baker, the blue ribbon harrow by Messrs. Nelson and Harper, and stoves by Lambert and Henderson.

A man with a hand organ entertained the small fry and a clay bird shooting contest awarded prizes of \$10.00, \$5.00 and 100 Chamberlain shells. There was piano and violin music each evening in the pavilion.

The 1888 fair was labeled a success, its exhibits superior, the attendance excellent. But it marked the end of Lane county's annual fairs begun in 1884.

No Lane county fairs were held from 1889-1904 and again from 1905-1908. No adequate explanation is readily apparent. Doubtless the fact that the Rhinehart buildings, converted to other uses, were no longer available for the fair had a bearing. The theatre building had been remodeled into two stores, one a grocery. The second building became a theatre with a stage, more adaptable for theatre usage than the former building.

Another development which possibly discouraged the continuance of fairs in Lane county was the 1893 act of the Oregon Legislature which established a number of district agricultural societies. Among these was the Second Southern Oregon District Agricultural Society which consisted of Coos, Curry and Douglas counties. Officially launched on January 1, 1894, its governing body consisted of one citizen from each of the three counties, appointed by the Governor, and one member elected by each of the agricultural societies in the counties. The appointees of the Governor would hold office for two years and the elected county members, one year. \$6,000 was appropriated from the state treasury for payment of fair premiums in the Second District.

On Tuesday, September 11, 1894, the first Annual Exhibit of the Second Southern Oregon District Agricultural Society opened at the fair grounds near Roseburg for a five day period. Premiums of \$5,000 were offered. A major attraction was the horse races with entrance fees of 10% of the purse.

In 1895 the Lane County Agricultural Society was disbanded. In Lane county advertisements of the Second District fairs were circulated to attract attendance of county residents. Owners of race horses were urged to enter the

speed program. Dr. Tom Harris was one who frequently entered his horses.

During the years following the 1888 fair when Lane county no longer held its own fairs, exhibits from the county were much in evidence at the state fair. E. M. Warren was often in charge of the county's exhibits. On September 19, 1891, the Eugene weekly newspaper, the *Oregon State Journal*, reported "The finest display of wheat and other grains in the straw, on exhibit at the State Fair in Salem this year, is from Lane County, collected by Honorable H. Wilkins and Sons."

The hard times of 1893 affected the state fair. The *Salem Capital Journal* lamented "The people simply have not got the money to pay gate fees with, to say nothing of other incidental expenses attending visitors to the fair from a distance. Of course, all with free passes are present."

S. Meriau of Eugene who owned the park (approximately the area between Park and Knoop Lanes behind the row of decapitated fir trees) attempted to revive the holding of a Lane county fair and advertised in the *Oregon State Journal* of August 28, 1897, as follows:

"Mr. Meriau makes the following proposition to the farmers of Lane county and the people of Eugene: 'I will furnish grounds, camping privileges, wood, water, track, stalls, pavilion, out buildings, etc., all in good condition for a three or four-day county fair to be held this fall and will furnish the bicycle track; receiving for the use of the above 10% of the gross gate receipts and reserving all stand privileges and use of booths. S. Meriau.'"

Apparently the proposition was not taken up for there is no record

of a fair held that year. Later, the park was known as Bangs' Park when it came into the possession of Eli Bangs through a mortgage foreclosure.

In 1902 the merchants in Eugene, not the farmers, held a street fair and carnival September 26-29 in and around the park blocks. A. H. Hampton was president and M. S. Wallis, secretary. For the opening ceremony of the gala fair, a coronation was held. Marie Masterson was crowned Queen Marie and Helmus W. Thompson, King. The Fourth Regimental Band escorted the royal carriage to the park grounds and stood at attention during the ceremony. The queen was attended by maids, flower girls and pages. The royal pair led the grand march at the carnival ball which was held on Friday evening.

On Thursday evening there was a parade. The streets were gaily decorated with the carnival colors of crimson and cream. Featured in the parade was the Fourth Regimental Band which was engaged to furnish music at the state fair the following week. In the parade were militia marching units, the Cottage Grove Band, floats, hose companies, bicycles and the Midway performers from the Arnold Carnival Company.

On the midway were a Turkish theatre, a merry-go-round, a German village, the "ocean wave" (a side show) and a plantation show with lullabies, spirituals, etc., sung by "real negroes." Each day the Carnival Company furnished a free program on an erected platform.

There were various contests. A team-pulling contest consisted of seven teams each pulling 6,500 pounds, another, six contestants vied in shoveling gravel into a wagon. There were three teams of log-sawyers; the winner was

awarded a \$25.00 prize for his time of 46 seconds. A shooting tournament drew many contestants. There was even a baby show with 14 entrants.

Prof. Chris Nelson who made two balloon ascensions had his difficulties. On Thursday the big airship was cut loose before the professor had secured a firm hold on the trapeze. Unable to cut the parachute loose, he hung by one arm during the entire flight. Fortunately for the professor, the balloon traveled only to the west of Skinner's Butte and a sore arm was the only casualty.

On Saturday when the air ship was cut loose, a gust of wind caught it and swerved it enough to drag Nelson into a tree. Luckily, he was able to cut the parachute rope and emerged from the tree with only a few bruises and scratches. The balloon without its occupant sailed into the air, later to alight across the river in Springfield.

A special feature of the fair, witnessed by many spectators, was the public wedding of J. J. Murray, a citizen of Panther, and Laura Carletin of Eugene. The ceremony was performed by Judge Charles A. Wintermeier who took the liberty of kissing the bride. The bride was given a \$20.00 gift and her brother, Dr. Carleton, presented her with an elegant driving horse.

A carnival atmosphere prevailed on the last night. A masque ball was held and all in costume were admitted free. Confetti thrown liberally, added to the excitement and general confusion.

Among the distinguished visitors at the carnival was Governor T. T. Greer who was met by a delegation as he alighted from the train and was escorted to the park blocks.

There was criticism of the fair

for it featured few agricultural and livestock exhibits. The *Junction City Times* suggested that the street fair should be merged into a county fair.

In 1903 the legislature expanded the Second Oregon Agricultural Society District to include Lane county and provided for county representation on the Fair Board. An appropriation of \$1,800 was made for payment of premiums with the provision that none of the money could be used for trials of speed.

The agricultural society for the Second District voted to hold its 1903 fair in Eugene at Bangs Park from Tuesday, September 29 through Saturday, October 3. Cal W. Young was named Pavilion manager with the full responsibility of receiving and placing exhibits including livestock.

A feature of the fair was a pseudo Wild West performance with 50 Indians and 125 ponies. There were also Indian races. Schools were dismissed and all children admitted free. The horse races attracted a crowd of 1,200 to 1,500 every day.

The removal of the Second District fair from Roseburg to Eugene was considered such a success that the next fair, the 11th annual exhibition of the Society was again held at Eugene, from September 20-24 in 1904. H. L. Traver of Eugene was president of the Society. The printed list of premiums ran to 74 pages.

Only the racing events were held at Bangs Park. The exhibits were in the Eugene Armory on Seventh Street and the Midway shows were set up in the nearby streets. Each night there was entertainment in the armory. The first night the Eugene Band of 12 pipes played, on other nights there were recitations, soloists and quartettes and various musical numbers.

Exhibits varied from Navaho blankets to china painting. The \$1,800 received from the state legislature was awarded the premium winners.

Special commendation was awarded F. L. Chambers who furnished club and rest rooms "in palatial style" for the comfort of the fair patrons.

On February 22, 1908, the Lane County Agricultural Society was incorporated by Alten Hampton, Henry Hollenback and David Linn. The Society was authorized to promote agricultural, horticultural and industrial development in the county and to hold and conduct fairs for the exhibition of the resources and products of the county and the state of Oregon. Capital stock of \$49,800—166 shares at \$300 each—was authorized.

With the money raised from the sale of stock, the society acquired the present fair grounds from Samantha A. Huddleston, widow of James Huddleston. The kind of arrangement entered into is not clear since there are no recorded papers concerning the transaction. However, in 1917 a warranty deed was given by Mrs. Huddleston to the Lane County Agricultural Society to cover 57 acres more or less for a consideration of \$10.00. It was notarized on January 29, 1917 but was not filed for record until September 13, 1923.

Receipts from the sale of stock were also used to finance the building of a pavilion and grandstands. The pavilion was completed just in time for the Second District to again hold its fair in Eugene and for the first time at the present fairgrounds. The new pavilion was described to be in the shape of a cross with low eaves. The wiring which brought 20,000 watts of electricity to the grounds was com-

pleted just in time to open the fair on September 8, 1909.

A special event of the fair was a parade of school children. 520 children paraded down Willamette Avenue at 1:00 P.M. on Thursday, headed by county school superintendent W. B. Dillard, Col. J. M. Williams and bugler Verne Williams. Among the out-of-town schools represented in the parade were Junction City with 125 children accompanied by their school band and 18 from the Coast Fork school together with their band. The Eugene schools also had a band in the parade.

The Junction City school was awarded a "high grade" piano for the best exhibit in a contest by schools with three or more teachers. The Coast Fork school won an organ for schools with less than three teachers.

Among the exhibits which drew special attention were the Lorane exhibit of cheese and B. D. Inman's brown Swiss cattle.

The Arnold Amusement Company furnished the carnival attractions and side shows. Prof. Knowles entertained with a successful and "graceful" balloon descent, landing in the fair grounds. The horse races viewed from the new grandstand were a strong drawing card.

Admission prices for the 1909 fair had "gone up." Season tickets for men, \$1.50; women, \$1.00 and children, \$1.00. Single tickets cost 50c for men, women and children, 25c, children under 10 admitted free. Evening prices were low, 15c for men, women and children, 10c.

Premium awards totaled \$5,000 and race purses, \$3,000 for 20 races.

The year 1909 ended Lane county's association with the Second District Agricultural Society. The newly incorporated Lane County

Agricultural Society appointed a fair board.

On August 24, 1910, the board set September 21-24 as the dates for the first fair to be held by the society. On September 9, the board decided to send committees to various communities to persuade farmers and stock-raisers to exhibit at the fair. The first automobile load of committee members attended a grange meeting at Lorane.

Jack Rodman was president in 1910 and M. S. Wallis continued his long-standing commitment to fairs by serving as secretary.

Four granges, Irving, Pleasant Hill, Springfield and Spencer Creek sent attractive exhibits. School displays were a popular feature. Featured was a unique collection of 167 varieties of butterflies from all over the world by George W. Taylor.

James J. Hill, the railroad magnate, donated a large silver cup for the best exhibit of grains which was won by the Irving grange. A second Hill cup for the best exhibit of fruit was awarded to the Junction City Women's Improvement Club.

Featured in the exhibits of grains at the 1910 fair was the Felix Currin grain and forage collection from Cottage Grove. It consisted of 300 varieties of wheat, 20 kinds of vetch, 50 of barley, about 100 varieties of oats and samples of native Indian grasses. It was billed as an opportunity for Lane county people to see "the greatest exhibit in the United States, if not in the world."

The Arnold Amusement Company furnished the midway attractions and each day the grandstand overflowed with crowds for the races.

Friday the 23rd was both Grange Day and Eugene Day with a parade through the downtown area. A

huge Grange float decorated with corn stalks and various grains dominated the parade. After the parade, 400 persons gathered in the grandstand for the program.

Prince L. Campbell, president of the University of Oregon, gave the address of welcome. C. E. Spence, Master of the State Grange, spoke on "Grange Ideals." The last address was by William J. Kerr, president of the Oregon Agricultural College at Corvallis. He spoke on "The Relation of the Grange to the Agricultural College." He scored the schools for not teaching agricultural and industrial courses and lamented the stress placed on training for the professions.

Saturday was designated Children's Day and Springfield's Day. Between 800 and 1,000 children paraded who were later admitted to the fair free.

There were spelling contests for the children held at Eugene High School. Division A was won by Blanche Brown of the Springfield East Side School with Birdie Spence of the Springfield West Side School second. Division B was won by Ian Campbell from Eugene's Condon School and Dora Nelson of the Oak Hill School won second.

The gate receipts for the 1910 fair were \$3,284.15, somewhat less than the \$4,095.35 of the District fair the previous year. However, a counter attraction, a Buffalo Bill's show on Thursday cut into that day's attendance.

The best exhibits of the 1910 fair were sent to Portland for the Lane county display in the Chamber of Commerce Building as an advertisement of Lane county.

The early history of the Lane county fair ends with the 1910 fair. It marks the end of pioneer fairs and the beginning of our present day modern fairs.

A number of state laws also contributed to an increased popularity and assured the success of county fairs. In 1911 the legislature provided that county fair associations may apply to boards of county commissioners for grants to pay expenses and premiums not to exceed an amount of 1/10 of one mill on the dollar value of all taxable property in counties of over 50,000 population. The law also provided that county commissioners must be ex-officio members of said agricultural fair associations. Another law passed in the same year allowed the county court in each county to appropriate a sum not to exceed \$2,000 for a fair and to appoint the superintendent.

In 1913 the legislature passed a law which gave the county court the authority to appoint a three-citizen board for a three year term and which would be known as the County Fair Board. The board would have exclusive management of the grounds and all other fair properties and would have charge of the business management and financial affairs of the fair. Another 1913 law provided that state

funds in an amount not to exceed 1/20 mill tax on the state's assessed property be designated for fairs.

At the present time county fairs receive an apportionment from state racing revenues. State law also permits counties to levy 1/15 of a mill of the true value of taxable property within each county for a fair fund to be used by the County Fair Board.

In 1923 the Lane County Agricultural Society sold its fairgrounds holdings to Lane county for \$20,000. The deed was executed by D. E. Yoran, president and John M. Williams, secretary of the society.

In an editorial of September 10, 1910, the *Eugene Daily Guard* made a prediction which is a fitting conclusion to the early history of the Lane county fair. It foretold the successful continuation of the fair in years to come. "The interest shown by the people of Eugene and throughout the county may be taken to mean that the future of the fair is assured and it will become an annual event of real importance."

Lane County Fair Association

THE FIRST
ANNUAL FAIR

SEPTEMBER
21st to 24th, 1910

Complimentary

Pass *J. M. Douglas by J. M. Douglas*

JACK RODMAN, President M. S. WALLIS, Secretary

COMPLIMENTARY FAIR TICKET, 1910

—Courtesy, Lane County Pioneer Museum

*Recollections of Sarah Francis Zumwalt Hammitt**

Uncle Andrew (Zumwalt) had been at Luckiamute, Polk county, Oregon for three years when Father (Solomon Zumwalt) decided to join him. We left our old home in Missouri on May 6, 1850.

There were twelve of us children. My sister "Mosuria" was just three weeks old when we started out with our two wagons, four yoke of oxen and some cows. Brother Jackson, 19 years old, drove one wagon.

Our wagons were loaded with supplies to last the entire journey. Each wagon had a false bottom. The wagons were loaded with bacon, a barrel of hard tack, one of sweet crackers besides flour, other staples. Sister Mary made all the bread during the long trip.

Editorial Note: For accounts of Zumwalt-Harlow-Tandy Train see the following:

"Letter to the Editor from Andrew Jackson Zumwalt," Lane County Historian Vol. IV, No. 1, Page 13.

"Mahlen H. Harlow—Pioneer Builder" by Daye M. Hulin, Lane County Historian, Vol. II, No. 2, Pages 26-27.

"The Tandys, Pioneers of 1851" by Charlotte Mitchel, Lane County Historian, Vol. VII, No. 2, Pages 33-37.

"Reminiscences of the Hammitt Family" by Claud Hammit, Lane County Historian, Vol. XV, No. 3, Pages 53-60.

We followed the Oregon Trail, forded the Platt. Green River was too steep and rapid for fording. Father's wagon was pitched and caulked and used for ferrying the families across, ropes were tied at either end and pulled across by hand. It took the entire day and just as the last family was safely landed a terrific storm broke. The black clouds had hung over all day and seemed to be waiting until all were across. Some would surely have drowned had the storm

broken earlier. Father said it was the hand of Providence that was with us all day. As it was, we went to bed supperless and cold. The wind blew the fires out.

The next morning the sun was bright and all was fine. We went on. We were now in Indian country. Brother Jack was on picket guard one night after a long hard day and was almost asleep when he suddenly awoke. An Indian had crept upon him and was ready to strike. But Jack was too quick for him. He shot and ran, gave the alarm. The next morning they found he had killed the Indian and possibly saved the train from attack.

Several times at night we were fired upon. Mother would take her feather bed, make a barricade so the bullets would not reach us. The arrows and bullets could not penetrate the feathers. We would huddle together against the feathers and listen to the arrows sing over our heads.

At one time on our journey west, our train became divided and ready to split. Our Captain knew it was not wise to divide in the Indian country, so the night before they were to separate some of the young men in the train quietly stepped out and began firing their guns and yelling. The train thought it was an Indian attack. They barricaded themselves and made all preparations expecting a massacre but of course nothing came of it. However, the next morning nothing more was said about dividing the forces; all were content to stay together.

On the trail game was plentiful. We halted to get meat when our

*"Recollections," hand-written manuscript, dictated by Sarah Francis Zumwalt Hammitt. Hammitt Family Papers.



Grandmother Hommitt with grandchildren, children of Morvin Hommitt, approx., 1910

—Photo from Cloude Hommitt Collection

necessity compelled. While the hunters were out after game we rested our cattle, the women washed and all generally prepared for the next trek.

When the hunters returned, bringing back buffalo, they dressed the meat and then divided it among the families on the train. To divide it, they made as many piles as there were families.

Then one man was selected. He turned his back on the different piles of meat. The people stood around while the Captain would point to a pile and call out, "Whose is this pile?" The man would call out the name of a family and that family would get that pile and so he would name each family in turn until all were provided with an equal share and with no favors to anyone.

We saw evidence of lots of cholera in the wagon train ahead. We

also saw graves, many of which had been ruthlessly torn apart by the Indians and wolves.

We were very fortunate. There was not a fatality on the whole trip, a part of two years. Some cholera was prevalent. My brother Jack came near dying from it. Father rode all one night to another train ahead of us to procure the necessary cure and all came through. Without this medicine, Jack would surely have died.

As we traveled west, we saw evidence of much hardship, wagons broken down, abandoned, etc. We saw fine pieces of mahogany furniture, many valued and priceless heirlooms which were discarded after hauling all this long way.

At Fort Bridger some of the train went towards California* and the rest to Oregon. At Salt Lake we decided to winter as the season was advanced and it was

***Editorial Note:** The Donner Party. The wagon train enroute to California became the tragic Donner Party. Trapped in the Sierra mountains by weather conditions, blinding blizzards and heavy snows, the party was forced to set up camp on short rations. Remnants of the party, literally, become skeletons, were rescued only after unbelievable hardships; the survivors eventually were driven to cannibalism.

not considered safe to undertake the rest of the journey. Father built a one-room cabin with fireplace, a bed in the corner with a buffalo robe stretched underneath to the poles. The small children slept there and the boys slept in the loft.

Some of the Mormons were kind to us, gave us food, vegetables in exchange for work. We often saw Brigham Young out with his wives for outings. We left Salt Lake on March 1 and when we were safely out of the Mormon settlement we halted and there was a general jubilee, speech making and singing. We feared the Mormons as much as we did the Indians. On our way into the Salt Lake Valley, the women and children had huddled, trembling, inside the wagons.

For the trip from Salt Lake to Oregon Captain Harlow was in command. He was very good and it was through his wisdom we came through safely.

When we reached the Dalles on the Columbia, Father loaded part of the luggage along with Mother and the children in a flat boat and sent us on to Portland. The boys took the cattle and wagons on over the mountains. Our old dog, Watch, would not board our boat and would not follow the wagons, so he swam part of the time and followed us by land wherever he could, clear into Portland.

We landed there July 3rd, 1851. The next day being the 4th, we saw the first celebration ever held in that city. The people were kind to us poor immigrants and sent us a basket full of pie, cake, candy and other goodies. We surely did enjoy it.

We stayed in Portland one year. There was just one street along the waterfront with a few scattered houses. Father worked along the wharf and then worked fall-



Solomon and Nancy Zumwalt
—Courtesy, Lane County Pioneer Museum

ing timber at the site of where the city now stands.

In the spring we went to the Luckiamute. Father filed on a piece of land, stayed there one year, then decided he wanted a better farming place so we came to where Eugene later was located. He found a place with plenty of wood and water and level land and which was located where the station of Lassen was later established.

Father took out a donation land claim, built a log cabin and then our farm work began in earnest. Later on, he built a store where the bridge crossed the Willamet (Willamette) and sold groceries, tobacco and whiskey.

In April, 1854, Father held the first Sunday School in Lane county in his log cabin and organized the 1st M. E. Church. Noah Starr preached the first sermon, later became a famed circuit rider.

Editorial Note: "The Methodist Episcopal Church—this charge was originally organized in the spring of 1854 at the home of S. Zumwalt, situated about two miles west of Eugene City, the presiding elder being Thomas H. Bearne and Rev. Noah Starr, preacher in charge, but it was not until 1859 that there is any record of who composed the membership . . ."

—A. G. Walling's History of Lane County. 1884. Page 422.

We were real pioneers here in Oregon as far as the church was concerned as we had been in Mosuria* where the 1st Methodist sacrament was administered in 1807 by the Rev. Jessie Walker, the wine made by Mrs. Zumwalt "... from the juice of polkberries sweetened with maple sugar and the bread, the crusts of corn bread."

During the Indian Wars, people would fort up and use Father's house. They would bring their beds; the women slept in the house and the men out on the porches.

In Eugene, Huddleston had a saloon. Brumley built the first store about two years after we came. Later he built a grist mill. Shaw built the first sawmill, a whip saw. Blair, Skinner and the Ben Davis families were here before we came.

Editorial Note: . . . about January, 1851 . . . Hilyard Shaw dwelt in a little house that stood to the northern front of where the noble University building now rears its stately facade. Prior F. Blair and family occupied a big house a few rods from where he has his present dwelling; next to Blair's, Lemuel Davis, son of Benjamin Davis, had a cabin while the latter individual himself lived two miles and a half from the site of the town.

" . . . In the same year the mill-race was cut and later a saw mill erected by Hilyard Sraw and William Smith, while that summer, James Huddleston opened



FORT ZUMWALT*

—Courtesy, Lane County Pioneer Museum

the store on the river bank where the bridge is built and where Eugene Skinner started a ferry at that time . . .

" . . . In 1853 Thomas Holland and a Mr. Burton opened a grocery store . . . while that same fall, J. L. Brumley commenced trading where we now have Oak and Fifth Streets, whence he moved, shortly afterwards, to the southwest corner of Willamette and Ninth Streets . . . "

—A. G. Walling's History of Lane County. 1884. Pages 390, 391, 392.

Three years afterwards, brother Jack took up a claim, built a cabin to hold it and it was used for a school house. Sister Louisy taught school in the cabin.

I was married on Thursday, February 17, 1857 to Norman Hammitt.† We had a family of sixteen children, raised thirteen, three died in infancy.

*Methodist church at Mosuria: located at Fort Zumwalt, the home of Solomon's brother Jacob, now become Fort Zumwalt State Park, ancestral home of Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Chief of Naval Operations. Both Solomon Zumwalt and Elmo Zumwalt, descendants of Andrew Zumwalt who arrived in America in 1737 from Poland.

†February 17, 1858 is one of several dates given for the marriage date in the "Recollections." Possibly after sixteen children, she felt she had been married forever.

A Cabin Dedicated to the Past so the Future Will Not Forget

Dedication Speech by Mrs. C. A. Huntington

Chairman Newman, Honored Guests, Members and Friends:

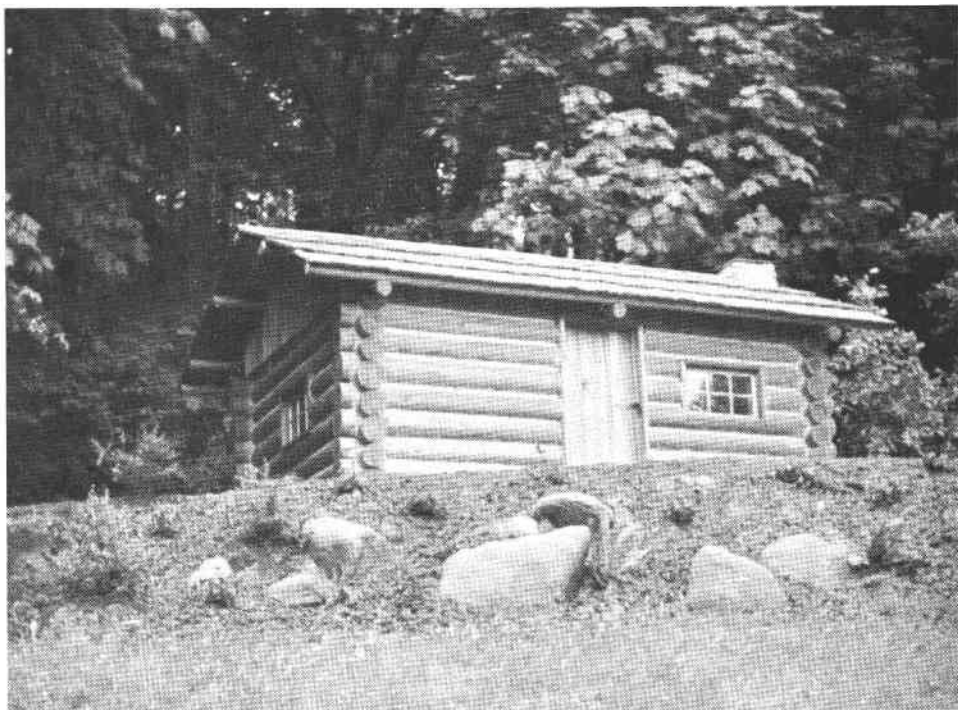
When Eugene Skinner stood on the Butte that bears his name in 1846 he made a prophetic statement. He said, "This is good enough for Eugene Skinner." He drove his stakes and built a temporary lean-to shelter. From there, later, he conducted a much needed "Holler Ferry."

In the late summer and fall of that year with the help of one man, he built a log cabin and then hastened to Dallas, Oregon, where his wife, Mary, was expecting the birth of their first child.

In the spring of 1847 the Skinners returned to the crude cabin and spent their lives improving the home which Eugene Skinner had chosen and the frontier town which he had accidentally founded.

Today, a dream has come true. The Lane County Historical Society, after many disappointments and frustrations, found three men who would undertake the difficult task of building a replica of the Eugene Skinner log cabin.

It is my very great pleasure to present the builders of the cabin; Lawrence Hills, grandson of Cornelius Hills who was a warm friend



—Photo by Mrs. Charles Huntington, Jr.

of Eugene Skinner, and his wife Wilma. Lawrence was head builder* and "spark plug" of the project. Next is designer and coordinator Jim White and his wife, Madge. Jim made many of the needed tools. The third builder is Bud Pickens, log peeler and general handyman, and his wife, Erie. All are of Oakridge. Without their dedicated interest, strong backs and willing hands, the task would have been impossible. Jim White also designed and built the hand-made furnishings. Additional articles have been donated by members and friends.

Wayne transported the completed cabin down Highway 58 and carefully placed it upon its permanent foundation. It was a valued donation of mechanized equipment and a skilled crew.

We wish to express our appreciation and deep gratitude to all the people who helped to make this cabin and this day possible. To the Oregon Lewis and Clark chapter of the D.A.R. for the fine bronze plaque which is being unveiled today.

The Eugene Skinner cabin is a memorial to our founding fathers who braved many hardships and trials on their trail west and in their pioneer way of life. There were no roads, no telephones, no electricity, practically no communications, other than an occasional horseman who dropped in for a meal or to stay overnight. Without

radio, TV and the instant communication of today, life was indeed different. But their motivation was strong. They wanted land and a home. No sacrifice was too great. The hardships which they endured were part of everyday living.

Today, we honor those steady, steadfast pioneers.

THIS LOG CABIN AND ALL THAT IT IMPLIES IS DEDICATED TO THE FUTURE THAT IT MAY NOT FORGET THE PAST.

As president of the Lane County Historical Society, it is my honor to present this emblematic structure to the city of Eugene, named for its founder EUGENE SKINNER and to the custody of the Eugene Parks and Recreation Department headed by Mr. Edwin Smith.

Mrs. S. J. Quam, Junior, past Regent, and Mrs. Helen Beach, of Oregon Lewis and Clark Chapter will now remove the tanned deer skin and unveil the bronze plaque which will permanently mark this historic spot.

Thank you, Mr. Newman, for the privilege to assist with this ceremony.

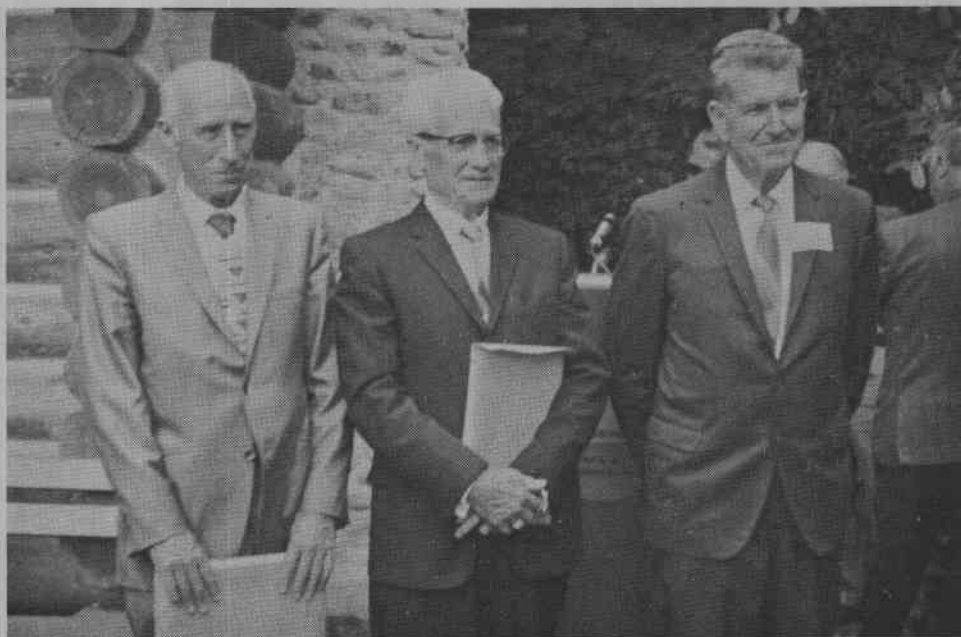
Editorial Note: The dedication of the Eugene Skinner Cabin in Skinner Butte Park was held on June 20, 1971. Ethan Newman was Master of Ceremonies.

The cabin was presented to the city of Eugene by Hallie (Mrs. C. R.) Huntington, president of the Lane County Historical Society which sponsored the project.

*Lane County Historian, Vol. XV, "A Twentieth Century Eugene Skinner Cabin."



EUGENE SKINNER CABIN



Builders of Eugene Skinner Cabin—Left to right: Bud Pickens, Jim White, Lawrence Hills
—Photos by Mrs. Charles Huntington, Jr.

LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
740 West 13th Ave., Eugene, Oregon

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The Eugene Bagpipers at Eugene Skinner Cabin Dedication

—Photo by James G. Fortt