

SPRING
2010

Cultural Heritage

C O U R I E R



Nature
HISTORY
Discovery

Quarterly News & Information from Heritage Programs – Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

2

Courier goes quarterly

5

Oregon City's "Main Street"
is a historic gathering place

6

Governor's directives support good
uses for historic downtown buildings

8

April Regional Roundups
to focus on "vitality" report

9

The importance of historic resource
surveys and how digital technology
can help

12

Cape Meares Lighthouse
suffers major loss

13

Spring maintenance checklist
for historic houses



The gravesite of John ("Johnnie") Alvin Ray—an Oregonian, pop singer and great-grandson of an early Willamette Valley pioneer—overlooks a broad expanse of land bordering the Willamette River where once flourished a major wheat growing industry. Today, there is hardly a trace of the river towns that facilitated that late 1800s boom and bust economy.

Treasures in a Wheat Field

by George Edmonston Jr.

In the 1950s and 60s, anyone who followed pop music knew Johnnie Ray. Johnny Carson knew Johnnie Ray. Andy Williams and Frankie Lane knew Johnnie. Johnnie Ray was best man at Judy Garland's fifth marriage to night club tycoon Mickey Dean, the marriage she promised would put her over the rainbow. This was three months before Mickey found her on the bathroom floor of their London home dead from an overdose of barbiturates.

Johnnie's break-through moment came in 1951. His recording of "Cry" went to No. 1 on the *Billboard* charts for 11 weeks. The flipside, "The Little White Cloud That Cried," was No. 2, helping the record become one of the biggest two-sided hits in music history.

Not unexpectedly, there followed a 20-year span in which Johnnie enjoyed other hit records, along with appearances on national television and at the best nightclubs in the country.

[Continued on page 3](#)

Courier goes quarterly!

by David Bogan, Editor, Cultural Heritage Courier

Plans are set to publish four on-line issues of the *Cultural Heritage Courier* during 2010. This provides us with an opportunity to focus on some specific topics that work best in installments, similar to SHPO Historian Ian Johnson's three-part series on post-war architecture last year.

Look for preservation specialist Joy Sears to bring *Courier* readers a seasonal list of helpful reminders for maintenance of historic properties. Main Street coordinator Sheri Stuart will be highlighting a selected community in each *Courier* issue that is successfully participating in the Oregon Main Street program.

And we are excited to feature the initial installment of a four-part series of cover story articles by George Edmonston Jr., now retired from his long-standing post as editor of the *Oregon Stater*, the alumni magazine of Oregon State University.

Dyed-in-the-wool Southerners from Louisiana and Mississippi respectively, George and I arrived in Oregon about the same time in the 1980s to accept media-related jobs at OSU, and we've been friends since then.

During a recent outing with him to collect photographs for this issue's cover story, "Treasures in a Wheatfield," George turned to me and said something to the effect of, "How is it that an LSU Tiger and an Ole Miss Rebel ended up here in Lincoln, Oregon, telling stories about Willamette Valley history?"

One reason has to be that both of us have adopted Oregon and the Valley as our permanent home, he residing in Yamhill County and me in Benton County. Of course, like a lot of folks who delve into the cultural heritage of where they live, George and I find pleasure in discovering the interesting connections that reveal otherwise unknown facts about a particular place that once existed.

George is an artful storyteller. Whether in person or in his writings, he vividly pictures the everyday lives of people who once walked the ground he's decided to explore, and he peppers his tales with stone-turning surprises. Consider yourself lucky if you go ever go on one of his tours of the Oregon State University Historic District.

George Edmonston's signature opening paragraphs of articles that I have enjoyed reading over the years cause me to immediately (and smilingly) wonder where his readers are being led, for I know in advance that he's setting us up with a dash of wit surely to be followed by a bushel of wisdom. "Treasures in a Wheatfield" is delightfully no exception.



Historian George Edmonston Jr. standing near the site of the now vanished Willamette River wheat shipping town of Fairfield, Oregon.

TREASURES IN A WHEAT FIELD . . . continued from page 1

Born in 1927 in Hopewell, Oregon, Yamhill County, John Alvin Ray, his real name, is back home now, at rest in a small cemetery that sits just off the Willamette Valley floor on the eastern slopes of the Eola Hills. The location, about two miles west of the Willamette River near a small church, is where state highways 153 and 154 come together. Standing here and looking east, the view is magnificent, across the Valley to the snow-capped Cascade mountains in the distance.

It's easy to see why Johnnie didn't want to be buried in Los Angeles, or why his great-grandfather, the legendary Oregon pioneer George Kirby Gay, decided to end his world travels near Hopewell and settle down to farming. Born in England, Gay would live to be 72 and carve a permanent place for himself in the early history of the state: as a member of Ewing Young's Willamette Cattle Company, as a voting delegate at Champoeg in 1843 to help form a provisional government for Oregon, or as builder near Hopewell of the first brick house west of the Rocky Mountains.

With Johnnie's grave as a starting point, we now begin a journey to visit some of Oregon's history off the beaten path. Over the next four issues of the *Courier*, our sojourn will take us to places now forgotten and stories that sit like faded paint on the sides of old buildings.



A plaque on this stone marker in Yamhill County not far from the old Lincoln, Oregon, town site tells about settler George Kirby Gay building the "first brick house west of the Rockies." Gay was one of the early pioneers who voted for the establishment of Oregon's provisional government in 1843 at Champoeg, and he was also the great-grandfather of the 1950s-60s pop music crooner Johnnie Ray—a fact important only because connections like this provide us with richer stories of our past.



Still operating today, the Wheatland Ferry—Daniel Matheny V—is the oldest and busiest ferry service in the state and crosses from near the site of Wheatland, a long gone Willamette River town where by the 1880s thousands of barrels of flour were shipped each year from a local mill.

This first installment is about something else we can see from here, a stretch of land that was once the Saudi Arabia of wheat for western Oregon. Beginning as steam boat landings on the Willamette, towns grew up around them as important to that generation as Salem, Corvallis, Eugene and McMinnville are to ours.

Sporting the names Fairfield, Wheatland, and Lincoln, they became points of departure for the wheat and livestock local farmers shipped to Portland and the world markets beyond. Their rise was meteoric, the fall a bit slower, each one eventually put out of business by soil exhaustion, the railroads that began crisscrossing the Valley starting in the 1870s, and the ability of other river towns like Salem, Albany and Corvallis to better diversify their economies. These failed locations live now mostly on the pages of old yellowed newspapers hidden away in county museums, or in the memories of the descendants of long-gone residents, each town a ghost-like reminder of what was once the Wheat Empire of the Willamette Valley.

[Continued on page 4](#)

TREASURES IN A WHEAT FIELD . . . continued from page 3

Even though the growing of wheat has never been confined to one particular part of the Valley, the area most important to this story is that bounded on the north by St. Paul and the south by Willamette Mission State Park, and on the east and west by the River Road and Highway 221 respectively.

Through this luscious farmland runs the mid-section of the Willamette River. From the 1850s up to about the 1880s, along both banks of what would become a wheat superhighway, one could find large clusters of grain storage facilities and cattle pens, the towns that built them, and scores of riverboats of various sizes servicing them.

We begin at Fairfield, located on the east side of our imaginary rectangle, 10 miles south of St. Paul in the vicinity of Marthaler Road.

As early as 1852, it was a considerable jumping off place for wheat, rivaling and eventually surpassing Champoeg as the principal shipping center closest to Portland. Fairfield grew simply because area farmers didn't have to travel as far to get to the boats. Also, the bluffs were higher, meaning the town escaped the destructive flood waters of 1861 that took out Champoeg and other low-lying river towns all the way to Corvallis and beyond.

Taking less than a decade, Fairfield could boast of a Presbyterian church, three stores, a saloon and sawmill, a cooperage, a brickyard, numerous private dwellings, a school, and several large grain houses. Docks for the cargo boats stretched along the river banks.

By the early 1880s, Fairfield was past its zenith. In the 1940s, one could still see the church, school house, a saloon turned house, and a decaying pile of squared timbers. Except for a cemetery a mile beyond Marthaler (not visible from the highway), nothing for certain survives from the town in 2010, although local tradition suggests that a building now sitting on private property in the area is the Fairfield store from 1856. A mile south on the River Road is the 1929 Fairfield Grange, which was not part of the original town.

Outside its steamboat landings, Fairfield's claim to historic fame is in the fact that Samuel L. Simpson spent considerable time here as a youth. Later an Albany attorney and newspaper editor in Corvallis, Oregon's 19th century poet laureate became one of the Northwest's most popular writers after penning the immortal poem, "Beautiful Willamette," in 1868, a syrupy concoction many Oregon students in the 1880s and 90s had to memorize.

Pioneer Daniel Matheny began the town of Wheatland in 1847 with a public sale of lots. Its location was on the west bank at mile marker 72, and a mile north of Jason Lee's Mission Bottom on the opposite shore. He had wanted to call the town Atchison, but it never stuck with the locals. The site had first been put to use in late 1843 as the Beers and O'Neil ferry crossing, which was taken over by Matheny when he bought the land claim of James O'Neil in 1844. The boat that came with the sale was the first of the pioneer period with size enough to haul a wagon and ox team. Today, the Wheatland Ferry, the oldest and busiest ferry service in the state, still crosses at this point. The diesel-powered vessel in use is named the *Daniel Matheny V.*



Near the old town site of Fairfield, the inner construction of this building will be examined by experts in western Oregon historic buildings to help answer the question— Could it be the 1856 Fairfield store, most likely the only structure still standing that dates to the era of the Willamette Valley wheat empire?

[*Continued on page 11*](#)

[VIEW COVER PAGE](#)

Oregon City's "Main Street" is a historic gathering place

by Sheri Stuart, Main Street Program Coordinator

Established in 1829 and incorporated in 1842, Oregon City was the first incorporated city west of the Mississippi and rivaled Portland for early supremacy in the area. During the 1840s and 1850s it was the destination for those wanting to file land claims after traveling the Oregon Trail and served as Oregon's territorial capitol from 1848 to 1852.

Historically, downtown Oregon City was a bustling commercial area providing goods and services to the surrounding rural areas of Clackamas County, which continued into the 1970s. The next two decades saw a continual decline in retail shopping opportunities and the rise of government offices downtown. More recently, many of these offices have relocated out of the downtown area leaving vacancies, which now has brought forward a focused effort to bring new life to the one of the district's key assets—its historic buildings.

With the establishment of the non-profit Main Street Oregon City in 2008, the district is indeed seeing a rebirth. Working comprehensively in each of the four areas of the Main Street Approach[®]—Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring—the group is reporting that positive incremental changes are occurring.

In 2009, fourteen new businesses opened in Oregon City's downtown compared to just one business that closed during the same time period. "Historic Downtown Oregon City is a great place for unique businesses," said Lloyd Purdy, Downtown Manager for Main Street Oregon City. "From coffee shops to professional offices, and creative firms to restaurants, we saw a nice mix of businesses open last year."

Much of this new business growth has been driven by more than \$1.2 million in investments in building upgrades and improvements.

Main Street Oregon City leveraged a \$14,000 grant from Oregon Main Street and \$10,000 from the Urban Renewal Commission to provide matching grants for 16 signs. The first business to install a new sign with the support of the sign fund was Ruud's Jewelers, a family owned business since 1967. The City's Urban Renewal Council also expanded its downtown façade improvement program as a result of advocacy by Main Street Oregon City. Public sector improvements are on the way after the City approved Main Street Oregon City's request to fund a \$270,000 streetscape improvement plan.

Main Street Oregon City's recently launched marketing and business recruitment campaign called "Blue Collar Creative" is targeting creative entrepreneurs and artists who are interested in historically authentic downtown spaces. The centerpiece of the campaign is a 90-second [web video](#) (produced by *funnelbox*, itself a business located in downtown) that introduces



Oregon City's historic downtown was a busy place from earlier times up until the 1970s. Now after many years of decline, new businesses have moved back, thanks in large part to the efforts of Main Street Oregon City.

[Continued on page 6](#)

[VIEW COVER PAGE](#)

OREGON CITY'S "MAIN STREET" IS A HISTORIC GATHERING PLACE . . . continued from page 5

viewers to the creative potential of historic downtown Oregon City. The video features downtown employees, entrepreneurs, and business owners at work in downtown Oregon City and invites viewers to consider the historic downtown as the right location to choose when they are ready to grow their business. "This video captures the creative spirit, historic significance, and growing optimism of downtown Oregon City in brilliant fashion," said *funnelbox* CEO Robb Crocker. The video will ultimately be paired with a dedicated website highlighting the benefits of the authentic historic urban locale of downtown.

A strong core of energetic and committed volunteers has been key to the success of the revitalization efforts of the district. Main Street Oregon City has found an engaging way to recognize the many ways individuals are contributing to downtown, starting with the "Golden Light Bulb Award." The first Golden Light Bulb Award, highlighting a creative thinker with a bright idea for downtown, was presented to Sheri O'Brien owner of Hand Crafted for You. She received the award for creating and getting business support for the "Oregon City is Charming" promotional campaign featuring unique charms at twenty-five participating businesses.

New events are also enhancing the sense of liveliness in the district. On the first Friday of every month, downtown Oregon City becomes a place to explore the local art scene, enjoy a meal, and visit with neighbors. Working with the Three Rivers Artist Guild, Main Street Oregon City is committed to producing a monthly series of these events. "This event is a great way to cultivate the commerce and culture of downtown while celebrating the creative side of Oregon City," said downtown manager Lloyd Purdy.

Governor's directives support good uses for historic downtown buildings

by Roger Roper, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Historic downtowns usually aren't the first place government agencies look to when searching for office space. But they should be. That's what Governor Kulongoski said on January 13, 2010, when he signed Executive Order 10-1 at a ceremony in downtown McMinnville. President Bill Clinton said much the same thing when he issued Executive Order 13006 back in 1996. Both chief executives were convinced that good things happen when state and federal agencies "go downtown." (Editor's note: *Governor Kulongoski's and President Clinton's executive orders are posted on the [SHPO website](#).*)

For preservationists, the benefits are obvious: historic buildings are put to productive use as offices, and downtown districts are invigorated by state-worker customers. But as Governor Kulongoski pointed out, this directive generates other "wins" for Oregon:

- Existing infrastructure is tapped, eliminating the need for sprawl development that gobbles up precious open space and farmland.
- Re-using old buildings is recycling writ large. It extends buildings' useful lives for many decades and keeps tons of demolition debris from clogging already overtaxed landfills.

[Continued on page 7](#)

[VIEW COVER PAGE](#)

GOVERNOR'S DIRECTIVES SUPPORT GOOD USES FOR HISTORIC DOWNTOWNS . . . continued from page 6



Gov. Ted Kulongoski signed Executive Order 10-1 in downtown McMinnville on January 13, 2010. The order, recommended by the Task Force on Historic Property, directs state agencies to utilize office space in Oregon's historic downtowns whenever feasible. Also pictured is McMinnville Main Street coordinator Kris Gullo (far right), McMinnville Mayor Rick Olson (second from left), and three members of the Task Force: (from left to right) Barbara Sidway, First Lady Mary Oberst, and Roger Roper.

SHPO, will be working with historic downtown organizations to take advantage of both the state and federal executive orders as much as possible.

Another feature of the executive order is its expectation that state agencies favor historic downtowns when selecting conference venues and overnight lodging. State agencies, in their effort to carry state programs throughout Oregon, are a significant player in the travel and convention business. There are many historic hotels and meeting spaces in the state that offer unique, first-rate facilities at competitive prices.

President Clinton's 1996 executive order, which is still in effect, has been successful in getting federal agencies to relocate in historic downtowns. In truth, though, it has not been highlighted enough, especially in recent years. Savvy local downtown promoters would do well to invoke this executive order as they woo federal agencies to become tenants in downtown historic districts. The

Good things happen when government agencies reside in historic downtowns. Historic buildings and districts win, but the benefits ripple far beyond historic preservation's goals.

- State office proximity to shops and restaurants promotes walking instead of driving, reducing both traffic congestion and vehicle emissions.
- Local businesses, the heart and soul of Oregon's local economies, are given a shot in the arm.

Executive Order 10-1 was one of the recommendations of the Task Force on Historic Property. The primary purpose of the Task Force was to study the Special Assessment of Historic Properties program and make recommendations for its reauthorization, which took place in the 2009 legislative session.

The success of this executive order rests largely on the shoulders of the cities and downtown associations that feature historic properties. They will receive leads on state office needs through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and then it will be up to local promoters to make a case for their properties. The Department of Administrative Services, which coordinates state office leases, will do its part to ensure that qualified historic properties are given their due in the selection process. And Oregon's Main Street program, based out of the

April Regional Roundups to focus on "vitality" report

A draft "Heritage Vitality Report," which features results of the recent heritage Assessment survey, will be one of the centerpieces of the Oregon Heritage Regional Roundups.

Perhaps the first report of its kind in the country, the draft Heritage Vitality Report will be presented publicly for the first time at the Roundups. The report will describe the current financial and organizational health of heritage and heritage organizations in the state. It will also include both quantitative and qualitative information, as well as break outs of data compiled by county.

The Regional Roundups are substituting this year for the Oregon Heritage Conference, which will resume in 2011. The Roundups will take place April 9 in Oregon City, April 22 in Jacksonville, and April 29 in La Grande. "Opening Doors in the New Decade" is the theme of the roundups. Attendees will participate in seminars and workshops, as well as shape plans for their organization and for statewide heritage efforts.

"We think the report and the information in it will prompt lively and thoughtful discussion at these meetings about the many serious heritage issues facing our state," said Kyle Jansson, coordinator of the Oregon Heritage Commission, which is developing the report. "It will also give Oregonians facts on which to build long-term plans for communities, regions, and the state."

The report is based in part on surveys about archives, archaeology, certified local governments, Main Street programs, museums, and historic preservationists in the state. More than 300 survey respondents provided information about both current operations and potential future challenges.

In addition to the Heritage Vitality Report presentation, the Regional Roundups will also include sessions on key concepts and resources to connect with tourists and the tourism sector, and a hospitality workshop to help participants build plans and relationships to make their organizations, facilities, and communities more accessible and welcoming to both community members and tourists.

A final workshop will enable participants to identify community and regional resources to strengthen their heritage organization.

There will be two additional events at the Oregon City conference, including the 2010 Oregon Heritage Excellence Awards presentation that will highlight people, projects and organizations that have accomplished much with their available resources.

Also, the three university students selected as Oregon Heritage Fellows will make presentations about the Oregon history topics they have researched. The students were chosen in a competition last fall and reflect the best of upcoming heritage scholars.

2010 Heritage Excellence Award Recipients

Five Oregon Heritage Excellence Awards will be presented to the recipients at the April 9 Roundup in Oregon City.

"In Pursuit of a Dream,"
a documentary and educational project of the Oregon-California Trails Association that is exemplary of immersive experiential learning about Oregon history.

Marlene McDonald, for her enduring contributions and commitment to Philomath and Benton County history.

"Oregon Century 1.5," a year-long series created by Ron Brown and KDRV-TV of Medford and Klamath Falls that educates and entertains Oregonians about their history during the state's sesquicentennial year.

Pacific Railroad Preservation Association, a nonprofit Portland organization that for the past 30 years has promoted Oregon railroad history and restored historic train equipment and facilities.

Union Street Railroad Bridge Project, which preserved a 1912 bridge over the Willamette River at Salem and converted the span to the transportation of bicycles and pedestrians.

The importance of historic resource surveys and how digital technology can help

by Cara Kaser, SHPO Survey & Inventory Program Coordinator

As part of its mission, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is committed to an on going state-wide survey to systematically collect information about above-ground historic resources for use in preservation planning activities by local, state, and federal agencies. Overall, survey of historic resources is a straightforward concept: if communities don't know what resources exist, then how can they be preserved?

Historic resources are classified differently depending on who's asking. For survey purposes in Oregon, the term "historic" is applied to those resources that are around 50 years old or older, regardless of how much original footprint or building material still remains. In its most general sense, the term "historic" simply describes a building or structure that is old.

However, there are differences between these "old" resources depending on if the resource has what is called "integrity." Essentially, if a building has integrity, it will look and feel pretty much the same as when it was first constructed, excluding minor alterations. Historic resources that have integrity are classified and treated differently than those historic resources that don't have integrity.

Generally, surveys answer such questions as: What historic resources exist? Which historic resources have integrity? Where are they located? Are they significant? What are the character-defining features? How do they need to be treated? It's this identification and classification of historic resources captured through survey that aids in local and state preservation planning.

Many historic resource surveys have been completed over the past forty years in Oregon and valuable information recorded. But the task of surveying has been relatively time-consuming, cumbersome, and, in some cases, expensive. Beyond that, resource lists often resulted in a "greatest hits" compilation of properties in the state, and it's evident that not everything has been inventoried.

Recent advances in digital technologies now offer new ways for conducting historic resource surveys that, hopefully, will allow for more resources to be surveyed and inventoried more quickly. Digital technology such as Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for use in preservation planning has become more accessible and affordable to preservation amateurs and professionals. Feature-rich and easy-to-use software that aid historic resource surveys is available online often for free or at a low-cost.



New digital technologies could make time-consuming and often expensive methods for surveying historic resources much faster and cheaper for communities.

[*Continued on page 10*](#)

[VIEW COVER PAGE](#)

THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEYS AND HOW DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP . . . continued from page 9

One of the largest historic resource surveys to date dubbed the “[SurveyLA](http://www.preservation.lacity.org/survey)” <<http://www.preservation.lacity.org/survey>> project utilizes tablet computers and GPS in the field.

Likewise, the City of Greensboro, NC, hired local cultural resource firm [Circa, Inc.](http://www.circa-inc.com) <www.circa-inc.com> to complete survey work that employed a portable geodatabase to seamlessly collect and integrate field data into the city and SHPO record sets. Use of these digital technologies has enabled preservationists to more systematically and accurately identify and document historic resources quickly and accurately.

There are other examples where improved data collection and entry using digital technology has been successful. In the [Boise Architecture Project \(BAP\)](http://thsaphistory.info/Architecture/index.php) <<http://thsaphistory.info/Architecture/index.php>> students from Boise were inspired to document historic and architecturally interesting buildings in their community and solicit anyone for information about buildings they find important and want to document.

Free or open-source software is also available to improve documentation of historic resources, like 3D modeling and methods similar to computer-aided-design (CAD) programs. Google SketchUp is free software that can be used to create 3D models of anything, including buildings and other historic resources. Building models can then be imported to Google’s 3D Warehouse for inclusion in Google Earth’s 3D building layer.

Because identification, documentation and evaluation is the first step in preserving and interpreting historic resources, the SHPO has begun to preliminary field-test new survey methods using easily available digital technologies. By utilizing these new methods, staff hopes that historic resource surveys can be completed faster and more accurately without an increased financial cost to survey sponsors.

In addition, the SHPO hopes that baseline information collected through historic resource surveys utilizing digital tools also can be applied in new ways to create engaging historic preservation and public history projects.

Below is a list of links to various types of digital tools that may be useful in helping to complete historic resource surveys.

The Oregon Map—<http://www.ormap.org>

Google Sketchup—<http://sketchup.google.com>

Google Earth—<http://earth.google.com>

Google 3D Warehouse—<http://sketchup.google.com/3dwarehouse>

Google Building Maker—<http://sketchup.google.com/3dwarehouse/buildingmaker>

Photosynth—<http://photosynth.net>

Download [National Register historic district information](#) for Google Earth

TREASURES IN A WHEAT FIELD . . . continued from page 4

The lots did sell, a warehouse was constructed, and a town quickly began to develop. With the arrival of the steamboats in the 1850s, Wheatland soon enjoyed a growing number of business concerns, including shops, mills, saloons, a shingle-making plant, warehouses, two hotels, a school, churches and dwellings. The hotels, the Occidental and the Wheatland House, were said to have the best accommodations on the river between Oregon City and Salem. Boats landed daily, bringing freight and settlers upriver, later returning to Portland with livestock, grain, and other farm produce for export.

By the 1880s, over 320 residents populated the area and the local flour mill was shipping 40,000 barrels of flour annually. Wheatland was large enough to have upper and lower sections until the 1861 flood took out the lower. Carried away were whole structures and thousands of bushels of wheat.

Originally known as Doak's Ferry after founder Andrew Jackson Doak, Lincoln on the west bank was the largest wheat port on the upper river. In a single year, shipments could run as high as 350,000 bushels, a record surpassed only by Portland. The east bank landing opposite the town was known as Spong's Ferry or Spong's Landing.

As wheat production on the west side surpassed that of French Prairie, the row of warehouses and wharves at Lincoln extended half a mile. It was not uncommon at these facilities to have a hundred farmers waiting in line to be served. Many had traveled from as far away as Willamina or Rickreall, often bypassing closer shipping points for the advantages afforded here.

The town was named for Abraham Lincoln by Jesse Walling of Salem in 1860. Walling laid it out in an old apple orchard formerly owned by Ben Windsor. Even to the 1890s, when river commerce was but a shadow of its former self, Lincoln yet enjoyed six boats a day, three each way. Travel time from Portland was about eight hours. The record was five and a half hours, put in by Miles Bell, captain of the steamer *Ruth*.

Lincoln's grist mill had grinding stones imported from Scotland and boasted of a sawmill that could cut 5,000 board feet a day. Unlike Wheatland, with its fine hotels, Lincoln was never really a place of residence. If someone wanted to spend the night, it was usually on a bedroll in one of the warehouses. Records show that no more than 20 or so homes ever graced the town, the finest of which was the ostentatious Abrams house, named for Lewis Abrams, the most prosperous shipper on the river.

With the building of the railroad through McCoy, only eight miles west of Lincoln, the town that Howard Corning so aptly described as the "Metropolis of Wheat" in his book *Willamette Landings*, began to dry up. By the late 1880s, as few as 50 residents lived in the once-thriving area. Nothing survives of Lincoln except a sign on Highway 221 marking the approximate location.

Further reading: For a history of the Willamette River during the years 1830-1900, Howard McKinley Corning's masterpiece, *Willamette Landings: Ghost Towns of the River*, is a must-read. Also: No trip along western Oregon's back roads is complete without packing a copy of Ralph Friedman's fun-filled *In Search of Western Oregon*. Friedman's *This Side of Oregon* has a chapter on the landing at Fairfield. These three titles are readily available in book stores and public libraries all across the state.

George Edmonston Jr. is retired editor of the Oregon Stater, the alumni magazine of Oregon State University and currently serves as the history and traditions editor for the publication. He co-authored Tales from Oregon State Sports in 2003 and has published hundreds of articles sharing Oregon's fascinating history in area newspapers and magazines. He lives with his wife Lucy and their chocolate Lab "Billy" in Newberg. George has also been known to play a mean blues guitar.

Cape Meares Lighthouse suffers major loss

by Ross Curtis, State Parks Historic Preservation Specialist

In the darkness of night on January 9, 2010, one of Oregon's iconic coastal beacons was the victim of serious damage when vandals shot several holes in the lantern and lens of the Cape Meares Lighthouse. Fourteen of the lantern window panes were shattered and several of the bullets also went through the rare Fresnel lens causing the destruction of many sections of glass prism.

The lighthouse was constructed in 1889 and served as an aid to navigation for many years before being decommissioned by the Coast Guard in 1963 and its First Order Fresnel lens projected a light that could be seen for twenty-one nautical miles at sea. This special lens was manufactured in Paris, France in the 1880s by the firm of Henry-Lepaute. The lens was shipped to Oregon around Cape Horn, and then hauled up the steep cliff face over 200 feet for placement on the cast iron and brick tower.

Fresnel lenses were made by a variety of firms in Europe in the 19th century, but there are only 17, Henry-Lepaute First Order lenses remaining in America. Many of these have been removed from their original lighthouse setting, and now housed at visitor centers and similar museum facilities. What makes the senseless destruction of the Cape Meares lantern and rare lens even more tragic is the fact that only five lighthouses in Oregon had First Order lenses, but the only one with a lens by made by Henry-Lepaute company.



Friends of the Cape Meares Lighthouse are raising funds to assist the US Coast Guard in repairing the rare lens, a victim of gunshots fired by vandals.



The heavily damaged First Order Fresnel lens at Cape Meares could be seen by ships at a distance of over 20 nautical miles. First Order is the largest and most powerful of the six lens "orders" used in the past by the Lighthouse Service

Since the vandalism, the extent of the damage has been assessed by personnel from Oregon State Parks, the U. S. Coast Guard, and a specialized team of lighthouse conservators. Because of the extensive damage to the Fresnel lens, the repairs are estimated to be approximately \$500,000. The Coast Guard has assumed responsibility for repairing the lens, but since it is currently not an active beacon it is likely that the repair will end up on their maintenance backlog with an undetermined timeline for repair.

It is anticipated that the Coast Guard will be assisted in raising funds to repair the lens by the Friends of Cape Meares Lighthouse and other interested groups, but a plan for this has yet to be formally assembled. Vandalism of this type is fortunately fairly

[Continued on page 13](#)

CAPE MEARES LIGHTHOUSE SUFFERS MAJOR LOSS . . . continued from page 12

rare in Oregon, yet in this instance, the lighthouse is closed to the public for the foreseeable future.

One month after the vandalism occurred, two alleged suspects were arrested by the Oregon State Police in Oceanside at a worksite where the men were employed; both were in their mid-twenties. No matter the outcome from criminal proceedings in this case, the 120 year-old Cape Meares Lighthouse and its irreplaceable lens will never be the same.

Luper historic cemetery vandals sentenced

Kuri Gill, Historic Cemeteries program coordinator, has received information that the three men and one woman who were arrested for vandalizing the Luper Cemetery last October were sentenced on March 9. Each of them was ordered to perform 400 hours of community service, pay \$5,100 in restitution to the cemetery, and about \$800 in fines, plus probation. The woman involved with the vandalism has already completed 44 hours of work in the Eugene Masonic Cemetery.

Spring maintenance checklist for historic houses

by Joy Sears, SHPO Renovation Specialist

Now that the rains of winter are subsiding (fat chance!), at least springtime fragrances are in the air, and with this new season comes an opportunity to start addressing the on-going maintenance needs of historic houses. These tips, and similar ones that will follow in subsequent 2010 quarterly editions of the Courier, should provide owners of historic houses with a framework for assessing maintenance needs well in advance of next winter.

- Check foundation walls for cracks. Mark hairline cracks with tape and check them again in a few months. If they've worsened, call a structural engineer. If they're stable, fill them with an epoxy-injection system. For do-it-yourselfers, fill in holes in siding and foundation walls with expandable foam or caulk that can be trimmed flush and painted.
- Check that the ground around the foundation slopes away from the house (about 1 inch per foot).
- If any concrete is touching the foundation, make sure that joint is caulked tight so water does not infiltrate the interior.
- Clear gutters of debris and check them for corrosion, joint separation, and loose fasteners. Flush out downspouts and unclog leader pipes. Leaders or extensions should extend at least 5 feet to direct water away from the foundation.
- Leaks typically occur around an inadequately flashed chimney, skylight, or other opening. They're easiest to spot in the attic; inspect the rafters for water stains. Patching leaks is best left to a professional. While the contractor is on the roof, have him clean leaves from roof valleys.
- Examine the siding under roof eaves, and the ceilings in the rooms below, for water or discoloration, indications that ice dams might have created leaks along the roof edge.

[Continued on page 14](#)

SPRING MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST FOR HISTORIC HOUSES . . . continued from page 13

- Inspect the roof for cracked, curled, or missing shingles. Fix if needed.
- Inspect trees for broken branches or overhanging limbs, especially if they are touching the roof. Call an arborist if the job is extensive, or do the trimming yourself, but be extremely careful on ladders.
- Nip pathway and driveway cracks in the proverbial bud before weeds take hold. Home centers and your local hardware stores sell patching materials and fillers designed for asphalt and concrete surfaces. These DIY fixes might not do the trick on surfaces that have ruptured from the effects of frost heaving.
- Switch out and store removable storm windows or energy panels for screens.
- Wash windows.
- Check house for peeling or bubbling paint.
- Trim bushes and plantings at least 18 inches from the house.
- Examine the weather stripping on doors and windows. The cold weather of winter may have caused damage. If it looks like there is any damage, caulk it.
- Finally, don't forget to clean your air conditioning units and clear debris away from them. It may also be time for a more complete check-up or tune-up.

Stay tuned for the Summer issue of the *Courier* which will include another one of Joy's seasonal maintenance checklist for historic houses and buildings.