

Historic Preservation; “Know the Origin of Your Club Name”

From our archives 1976

Most garden clubs, during the early years of garden clubs, used the name of their town for identification, so of course, this club became the McMinnville garden Club when it was organized in 1926. Later it changed its name to the McMinnville Women’s garden club, Inc. because a Men’s club was started in town and mailings would get mixed up. (2017 note: the name was changed back when the Men’s club dissolved in the 1990’s.)

McMinnville, or the beginning of the town of McMinnville was made possible in 1844, when a young man, William T. Newby (24 years old), from McMinnville, Tennessee, looked over this valley and chose a land claim that was close to the old Indian trail. He was the first settle of what is now McMinnville. His nearest neighbors were 5-20 miles away.

Six years later (1850), Sebastian C. Adams, a newcomer from Ohio, was attracted to this region (later to be Yamhill County) because he had a brother there. He became a landowner by homesteading a claim four miles north of Newby’s claim. He did not like farming but opened a school, in a rush shack, and later became a town builder because he wanted more neighbors and community activities. He platted a town on some of Newby’s claim adjoin Newby’s Grist Mill (the site was located in what is now our city park). This took place four years before Oregon became a State. The town was named McMinnville in honor of its first settler, William T. Newby who was from McMinnville, Tennessee. The Indian trail was along Baker street, which is still the main highway through the town.

McMinnville garden club is truly one of the pioneers of the garden club movement in Oregon. It was one of the five clubs to form the State Federation June 1, 1927. Others who were founding clubs were Portland, Salem, Forest Grove and Astoria. The Oregon State Federation of Garden Clubs was one of the thirteen states who were founders of the National Council of garden clubs in 1929. There were only four State Federations at that time who were west of the Mississippi. St. Helen’s garden club (1929), from this District, was also federated at this time.