

SALEM LANDMARK

Newsletter of the Salem Historic Landmarks Commission



Showcasing Our History:

The Joseph P. Stirniman House ~Ellen Miller, Commissioner

Alice and Robert Feskens own the most recently nominated house on the Local Historic Resource Inventory. They moved to the house at 170 Myers Street South in 1972 to be closer to town. They love the house and have enjoyed walking to downtown and Bush's Pasture Park.

Alice and Bob share the duties of maintaining the home. In the 40 years they have lived in the house they have only had to maintain the yard, hand wash the exterior (Alice washes up to the windows and Bob finishes the top of the house) and paint the exterior and interior. Because they have done such a wonderful job taking care of their house, they won a Neighborhood Beautification award from the South Central Association of Neighbors (SCAN).

The house is historically known as the Joseph P. Stirniman House. Mr. Stirniman, an auto mechanic in Salem, and his wife Hallie built the house within the Fairmount neighborhood in 1925. The house is a typical one-story Craftsman Bungalow with a basement. This informal style related to the ideals of the English Arts and Crafts movement as a reaction to the Victorian formality. The style is characterized by an open floor plan, the use of natural materials, and the simplicity of design. The style was very popular in Oregon in the early 1900's.

The Feskens became interested in historic designation for their home during the meetings held to discuss the possibility of the Fairmount Neighborhood becoming a registered historic neighborhood. They contacted Kimberli Fitzgerald, a senior historic planner with the City of Salem, who helped the Feskens with the research on their home and with their historic designation application. One of Alice's favorite historic findings was that Hallie Stirniman was a milliner and co-owner of Gibson's Bonnet Shop downtown on Court Street. Alice enjoys this connection with the original owner because she herself has been a hat model.

Alice and Bob hope to take advantage of the Residential Tool Box Grant program through the City of Salem's Historic Preservation Department. The funds could help to rehabilitate the brick on their chimney, paint the exterior of the house, or repair the zinc strip on their roof. With a little maintenance help, the Feskens hope to stay put and continue calling the Stirniman House home for years to come.



The Joseph P. & Hallie Stirniman House at 170 Myers Street S is the latest nomination to the Salem Local Historic Resources Inventory. (Photos taken in 2011)





Restoration Tip: Protecting Structural Integrity

~~Doug Lethin, Commissioner

Home restoration projects quite often fall into two categories--the glamorous, and the necessary. Most of us would prefer to focus on home enhancements like color, convenience, and livability. But prudent homeowners pay just as much attention to the less visible elements that give the house structural integrity.

The first line of defense against rain, wind, and pest infiltration is the exterior shell. If properly designed and maintained, the rest of the structure has a better chance to remain sound for decades. Openings in the shell such as windows and doors are the most vulnerable, especially on the south and west exposures. Should infiltration occur, damage is sure to follow. At that point, serious structural restoration may be necessary. However, by taking early action, expensive repairs can be avoided. An annual assessment of the roof, siding, windows, and doors is essential to guard against water infiltration.

Once the assessment has been done, steps can be taken to restore and maintain the integrity of the exterior shell:

- Install simple flashing details to prevent water infiltration
- Incorporate appropriate slope and drainage on all roof structures
- Apply proper paint or coatings and extend the life of completed restoration work
- Remove all roof and gutter debris to prevent water backup and seepage

If water damage is ever visible to the interior of a home, the extent of necessary restoration is likely much greater. In most cases, the damage could have been avoided by simple maintenance or preventive measures. A thorough annual check of the exterior shell, roof, siding, windows and doors could save a lot of expense and frustration in the future.

HISTORIC PLANNERS REPORT

~~Kimberli Fitzgerald, Senior Historic Planner

We've had a busy year! Early in 2011 we implemented a new notification process whereby potential buyers of historically designated properties are notified through the title process prior to purchasing the property. In 2011 we established a Residential Toolbox Grant fund, providing \$7,000 in grants to historic homeowners. We are getting ready to start a new grant cycle in a couple of months, with \$6,000 in funds available. If you are interested in applying for a grant, please contact me at kfitzgerald@cityofsalem.net. We also submitted and received a \$20,000 Preserving Oregon Grant for the restoration work on the Deepwood Estate house foundation.

Last summer we wrapped up our Downtown Historic Marker Program promoting preservation and increasing citizen awareness of the historical assets in the downtown historic district. Working with interested citizens and organizations, the City created a unique historical downtown logo which appears on historic markers that have been installed on thirty-three (33) historic buildings in our downtown district. In addition, the downtown walking tour brochure was redesigned and printed in both English (3000 copies) and Spanish (1000 copies).

A new website, the "Salem Heritage Portal," was created and includes a webpage which allows residents and tourists to explore downtown Salem online. Please visit it here: <http://www.cityofsalem.net/Residents/SalemHeritagePortal/Pages/default.aspx>

We went on to replace the historic marker memorializing Salem's old city hall, replace two historic markers on the recently renovated Union Street Pedestrian Bridge, and install an interpretive panel in the Salem Convention Center describing the significance of the key intersection of Commercial and Ferry Streets. Finally, the Preserve America grant provided a portion of the funds to install the new way-finding signs you can now see throughout downtown (see below). Whew!



HIGHLIGHTING SALEM'S HERITAGE: Early-Settlement Exhibits at Willamette Heritage Center

~~Joy Sears, Commissioner

The Willamette Heritage Center recently was awarded funding for a three-year, \$137,730 *Museums for America* grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The IMLS is a primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's national level work coordinates with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge and enhance learning and innovation. *Museums for America* is IMLS' largest grant program for museums, supporting projects and ongoing activities that build museums' capacity to serve their communities. Now the Heritage Center must raise its \$139,344 match through donations and grants to fund the effort to update and provide new exhibits for its three early-settlement houses: The Lee House, The Methodist Parsonage and The John Boon House.

Currently the three houses display pioneer living exhibits that were installed in the 1980s. While the new exhibits mean the temporary closures of each of the houses, the exhibits will be part of the transformation of the permanent exhibits to tell a broader and more complete story of the pre-history and history of the mid-Willamette Valley. Exhibits will explore subjects such as the native Kalapuya tribe and how they lived, creation of the Methodist Mission, the move of the mission away from its original location on the Willamette River to what would eventually be the city of Salem, life at the Mission, the



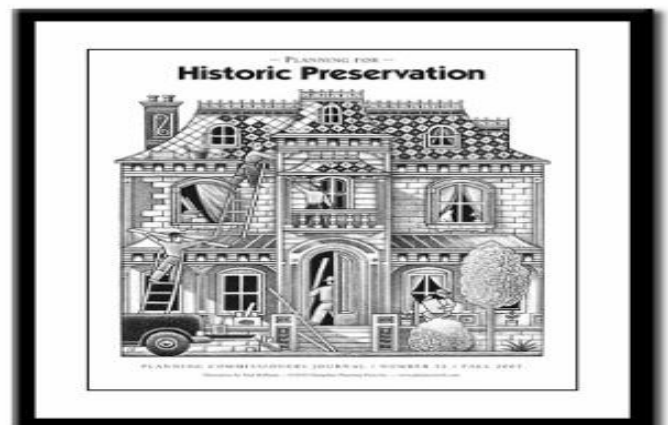
The Jason Lee House, c1841, was relocated to the Mission Mill Village (now Willamette Heritage Center) in 1965. (1992 Photo courtesy of Salem Public Library, Special Collections.)

Mission's failure after ten years, and the rise of circuit riders in the Northwest among other early history topics all related to the mission. Possibly the oldest remaining frame house in the Pacific Northwest and one of two remaining buildings from the mission, the Jason Lee House will be the first of the three houses to be closed for the new exhibits to be displayed. The public will get to enjoy the renovations when the house is reopened in late summer 2012.

HERITAGE CONFERENCE COMING TO SALEM!

The Northwest Archivists and the Oregon Heritage Commission will jointly conduct a 2012 conference April 26-28 in Salem at the Convention Center. The conference theme will be "Fertile Ground: Planting the Seeds for Restoration, Innovation and Collaboration." Using the fertile lands of the Willamette Valley as a backdrop, it will highlight the multi-disciplinary approaches that are strengthening and expanding the capacity of archives and other heritage fields in the Northwest.

The 2012 conference will include keynote speakers, panels, workshops, and behind-the-scenes visits to some of the area's heritage sites and historic buildings. The Oregon Heritage Excellence Award banquet and the Oregon Heritage Fellowship research talks are also scheduled.



Registration information will be available in February. For additional information please go to: <http://www.oregon.gov/OPRD/HCD/OHC/Conference.shtml>

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***From the Chair of the
Historic Landmarks Commission...***

This community has many interesting pasts and, fortunately for us, Salem has great institutions who tell these stories. During the gray, wet part of the year, take the opportunity to learn more about the community. The Willamette Heritage Center, Historic Deepwood Estate, and the Bush House Museum are all great indoor destinations where one can learn about the city's industrial past and some of its first citizens. For the hardy, consider exploring either the Jason Lee Cemetery on D Street NE or the picturesque Pioneer Cemetery on Commercial Street SE to visit with some of the region's most influential historic characters. If it's too blustery to leave the house, tour the Salem Public Library's fantastic online photo collection which tells our town's story in pictures, or visit the online blog SHINE (Salem Heritage Network) to learn even more about the Cherry City's historic places. The *Statesman-Journal's* page on Salem History is another great stop. Even before the good weather arrives, there is so much to do in Salem.

~~ Jan Johnson



We're on the Web!

www.cityofsalem.net/historic

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