



Photo courtesy of the Keizer Heritage Center

Willard Savage, son of William and Alwilda Savage, with the Keizer View Dairy truck in 1932. The Savages owned the property and home on Verda between 1914 and 1948.

PLACE: Architecture, age lend to significance

(Continued from Page A1)
The Pughs landed in Scio after completing the Oregon Trail in 1845, and moved to the Keizer area in 1850. The Pugh family ended up in possession of four donation land claims and around the Chemawa-Verda-Dearborn corridor. John was a son of the family patriarch and took possession of the land in question likely due its ability to withstand flooding – much of the property is located on a rising incline.

By 1884, census reports suggest John Pugh was living in the “South Salem Precinct” and the home was sold to Benjamin Franklin and Mary Hall. An expert consulting on the ODOT report suggested that the home on the property most likely dates to the Hall era.

Architectural features of the home, specifically “a gable-front-and-wing” in the classical revival style, led to the belief that it couldn’t predate 1850 and likely not 1860.

After some changes in ownership, William and Alwilda Savage began renting the property in 1910 or 1911 and established the Keizer View Dairy. In 1914, the Savages purchased the property. The Savages moved on by 1943 and began renting the property to Joseph and Rosalie Herber, who purchased the property in 1948. The Herbers sold off their dairy stock and focused on vegetables and beef cattle. Rosalie lived on the property until her death in 2007.

TRIGGERING AN INVESTIGATION
Hearings to rezone the Herber property, to allow apartments to be built there, would likely have come and gone in the usual way if not for a public records request from Keizer resident Eamon Bishop inquiring about the ODOT report.

“That request directed our

attention and effort specifically to the paper trail. In hindsight, it would have been nice to have been more attune to the underlying issue, but it’s understandable that greater attention was given to the nasty implications than on the nuance of related information,” said Nate Brown, Keizer community development director.

Brown said city officials only discovered the report after filing the agenda for the city council meeting and it meant the issue had to be addressed on the spot during the June 20 meeting.

ODOT had to commission the report, which was filed with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), because federal funds were being used to install the roundabout at the intersection at Chemawa Road Northeast and Verda Lane Northeast.

“As part of that project, there is a federal law that requires agencies using federal funds – in the case the Federal Highway Administration – to figure out how the project may or may not affect historic properties,” said Ian Johnson, a historian with OPRD.

The report concluded that the roundabout construction would not impact the potentially historic home, but that the home itself might qualify for designation on the National Registry of Historic Places.

That designation comes with several requirements, the least of which are the home must be 50 years old and maintain the majority of its historic appearance, Johnson said. Other potential qualifiers include association with historic events and trends, historic persons, historic architecture or the ability to yield research (typically the latter is reserved for site of archaeological significance).

“The house in question meets the requirements of association with historical events and historical architecture and, possibly, historic persons,” Johnson said.

At this point, the ODOT report is the bare minimum required to answer the questions of the roundabout’s impact on the property. To advance to the next stage, a more thorough study of the home’s traits and its historical significance would be needed and a series of public hearings would be held on regional and state levels.

“In this case, they did some initial investigation that found a full investigation could be done,” said Johnson, who agreed with those conclusions when he signed off on the report. “There’s still quite a

bit of distance between what’s been done and what it would take for the home to be listed on the national register.”

The report also concluded

Anyone can apply to have the home recognized on the National Registry of Historic Places, but the owners can block the application.

that the home merited elevated significance because Keizer lacks other sites of historical significance within city limits.

A QUESTIONABLE FUTURE

Even with the preliminary report on the books, the road ahead is a bit murky.

“If (a redevelopment project) uses all private money, there are no restrictions on the home being torn down. If it’s all private funds on private property, they can do whatever they like within Keizer’s zoning code,” Johnson said.

The state law only applies to publicly-owned properties and the federal law applies to anything that is federally funded, permitted or owned. That’s not to say that some part of the project might return and result in a full investigation.

“If the developers were to get a federal grant or if they had to get a federal permit, such as covering a stream with a parking lot, they would have to get a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers, which would trigger a full investigation,” Johnson said.

Anyone, property owner or not, can also apply to have the home considered for inclusion on the national registry.

“However, the owner may object and block the nomination,” Johnson said.

Moreover, there are questions about the condition of the home.

“As far as the condition, we don’t have specific evaluation information just observations from what has been seen from the doorway, such as missing flooring and plaster, and complaints from the tenants about various issues,” Brown said.

In the recent past, the property has been the subject of complaints to the city including infractions such as: burning, solid waste disposal, chicken and turkey care, parking, housing codes and illegal habitation.

Brown is meeting with the rezone petitioners to hammer out the details of how to assess the home’s historical significance, and has reached out to State Historic Preservation Office to figure out the process moving forward.

The people made Verda house a home

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The Donation Land Claim Act is likely what brought members of the Pugh family to Oregon.

Enacted in 1850 by the U.S. Congress, the government offered 320 acres of land to every unmarried man and 640 acres to married couples willing to settle the Oregon Territory. Claimants were required to live on and cultivate the land for four years before becoming the outright owners.

The Pugh family camped on the Tualatin plains when they arrived in 1846, spent their first winter in Scio and migrated to Keizer where John Pugh (March 20,

1820–August 31, 1854) staked a claim that included what is now known as the cow pasture in the heart of Keizer. At the time, Pugh’s property stretched from Chemawa Road Northeast to Greenwood Avenue Northeast.

He married Sarah Ann Claggett in 1854.

They would eventually donate 1.5 acres of land, where the Schoolhouse Square Shopping Center now sits, for the construction of the town’s first school. The first teacher was Nina McNary.

The home that currently sits on the property at 4845 Verda Lane N.E. is believed to have been constructed after 1860 when a devastating flood hit the area. Neighbors reportedly told the Pughs to build on high ground and large rocks were hauled from the Santiam River to make the foundation.

After John’s death, the house and 300 acres were sold to Benjamin and Mary Hall. It is possible that the home

was either reconstructed or remodeled during this period. The property changed twice more before William and Alwilda Savage purchased it in 1914. They named their farm Keizer View Dairy, and milk was delivered in the family car – first a 1923 Star and, later, a 1929 Chevrolet van. A large volume of the milk produced by the dairy went to Chemawa Indian School.

After raw milk fell out of favor, the land was used for pole bean farming. Joseph and Rosalie Herber were living in South Dakota when they decided to respond to the Savages’ ad looking for someone to run the dairy.

The Herbers brought their first child and rented the land for five years before buying it in 1948. The family stopped milk production when the price of equipping the farm for pasteurization proved too costly.

Rosalie continued to live on the property until her death in 2007.

Member spotlight Keizer Heritage Foundation

The Keizer Heritage Foundation, Inc. was formed in October, 1988 to move and restore the old 1916 Keizer Schoolhouse and convert it into a multicultural center and museum, serving Keizer and surrounding communities.

Today the Keizer Heritage Center does just that. We are proud to associate with the Keizer Heritage Center as members of the Keizer Chamber of Commerce.

In a recent conversation with Anna Scheler, Publicity and Events Manager, I learned of the rich culture stored in the Keizer Heritage Museum, the vast array of events hosted at the Center and about the little gem of a public library housed in the old schoolhouse.

Visit local artifacts from area historians and local families. Exhibits are rotated—there’s a Lego collection at the museum right now! Are you looking for an old McNary High school chum? Visit the McNary room in the museum, you might just find information about them there! Are you looking for a one-of-a-kind gift? Visit the Art Gallery for work by local artisans or just stop to admire their work. And, with summer here, stop by for an easy-read in the library. For only \$10 a year you and your family can enjoy the public library.

The Keizer Heritage Center is run by volunteers. JoAnne Beilke is the building manager and coordinates events for the center. With a beautiful gazebo on the premises and a venue for your wedding or meeting, don’t miss out on the opportunity to host it here. The Center has become the cultural heart of the Keizer community. Money raised including room rentals, help to finance on-going maintenance and renovation of one of Keizer’s few historic building.

This year is the building’s centennial; the foundation has two upcoming events connected with celebrating this occasion. The first one is Back to School Night with Wine Tasting (for all those who are kids at heart) on August 18th. The other is a Keizer School Reunion (November 12th) for anyone who attended classes in the schoolhouse. The foundation is also looking for photos or other memorabilia from Keizer School Alumni.

There’s lots to see and do at the Keizer Heritage Center. Contact JoAnne Beilke for more information.

Keizer Heritage Center
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keizerheritage.org



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