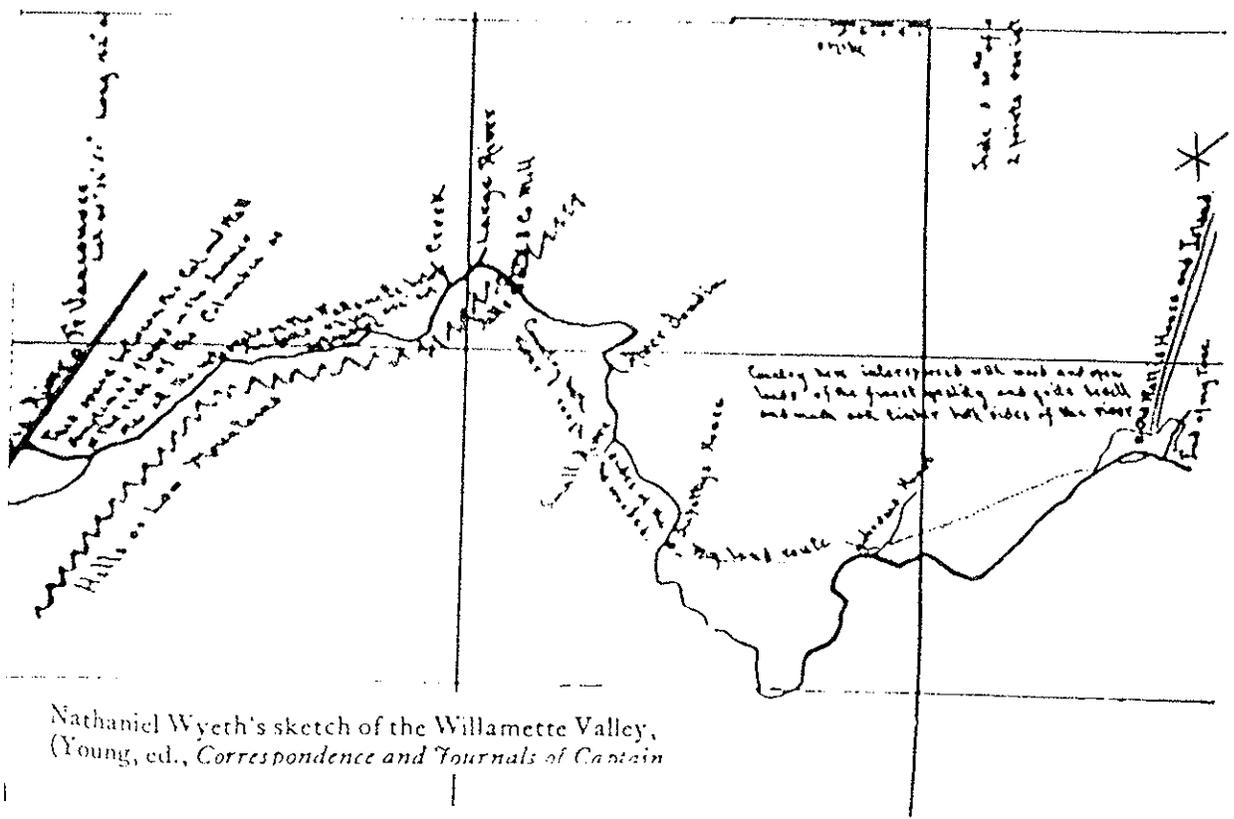


Background on Wallace House
Submitted by Vickie Hilgemann/ Don Upjohn

In the early 1800's the Astor Fur Company (also known as the Pacific Fur Company) settled along the Columbia River basing in Astoria. These fur trappers were the first "white man" settlers of the northwest. Eventually the Astoria Fur Company explored the Willamette River (called the Wollamut River at that time) sending 14 men up the river from Fort Astoria in November 1812 to establish a fur trapping outpost on the river. The leaders of the group were John Halsey and William Wallace, clerks for the company. This company built a trading fort, the Wallace house, on the banks of the Willamette River in early 1813. Various journal accounts speak of the area as "charming, abounding in beaver, elk, and deer." This outpost was established to provide provisions and fur pelts for the company based in Astoria. In May 1813, Halsey and Wallace returned to Fort Astoria with furs and dried venison from the area. Once these two gentlemen left Wallace House it is not clear what activities occurred at the fort. The house was mentioned in literature until early 1814 when the Astoria Fur Company was sold to the Northwest Fur Company. Historical literature indicates that the fort was visited in early 1814—March to May—by at least one group of three Astorians including Alfred Seton who spent three weeks at the Wallace House and wrote of the interactions with the local Indian tribes.

After 1814, the house was mentioned again when a map of the territory was drawn by Nathaniel Wyeth, a northwest explorer in 1832. The territory was referred to as Wallace Prairie after this time.



Nathaniel Wyeth's sketch of the Willamette Valley,
(Young, ed., *Correspondence and Journals of Captain*

Support for Existence of Wallace House

There is mention of the Wallace House in articles by historians: Charles H. Carey, Gabriel Franchere, Alexander Henry, Washington Irving, Alfred Seaton, and Nathaniel Wyeth. There is also mention in research articles of current historians: Helen E. Austin, J. Nielsen Barry, Nancy Battalie, Robert H. Jones and J. A. Hussey, and James P. Ronda. A few typical notations include the following:

"Kenzie (William McKenzie) made hunting and exploring visit to the Willamette (Wollamut) valley and in November, 1812, Halsey and Wallace, with a large force, were sent to establish the Wallace House, which was located near the present city of Salem." (Charles Carey)

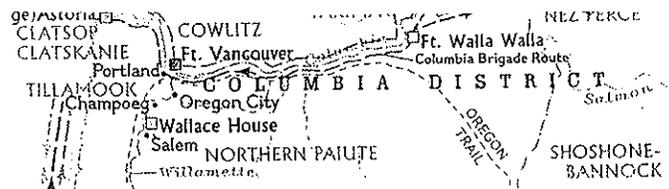
"On the twenty-third, Mssrs. Halsey and Wallace were sent with fourteen men to establish a winter trading post on the Willamette; ..." (Gabriel Franchere)

"A number of men, also, under the command of some clerks, were sent to quarter themselves on the banks of the Wollamut, a fine river which disembogues itself in to the Columbia, about sixty miles above Astoria." (Washington Irving)

"By the end of the year 1812, provisions were beginning to get low at Astoria, and as the valley of the Willamette was a veritable hunter's paradise, a party headed by William Wallace and J. C Halsey started for there on November 23, 1812. The party consisted of the two clerks mentioned above and fourteen men, and was sent for the express purposes of establishing a trading post on the Willamette." (Fred Perrine)

General Location of Wallace House:

The existence of Wallace House is well documented in the literature of the fur trapping time. The general location of the house is mentioned in a number of sources also. Also, a map from the "The Making of Canada" series of the *National Geographic* references the general location (see bibliography).



Some of the quotes include:

"Wallace and Halsey established a house near the present city of Salem in the fall of 1812. Wallace Prairie, near the city, derives its name from this source." (Franchere)

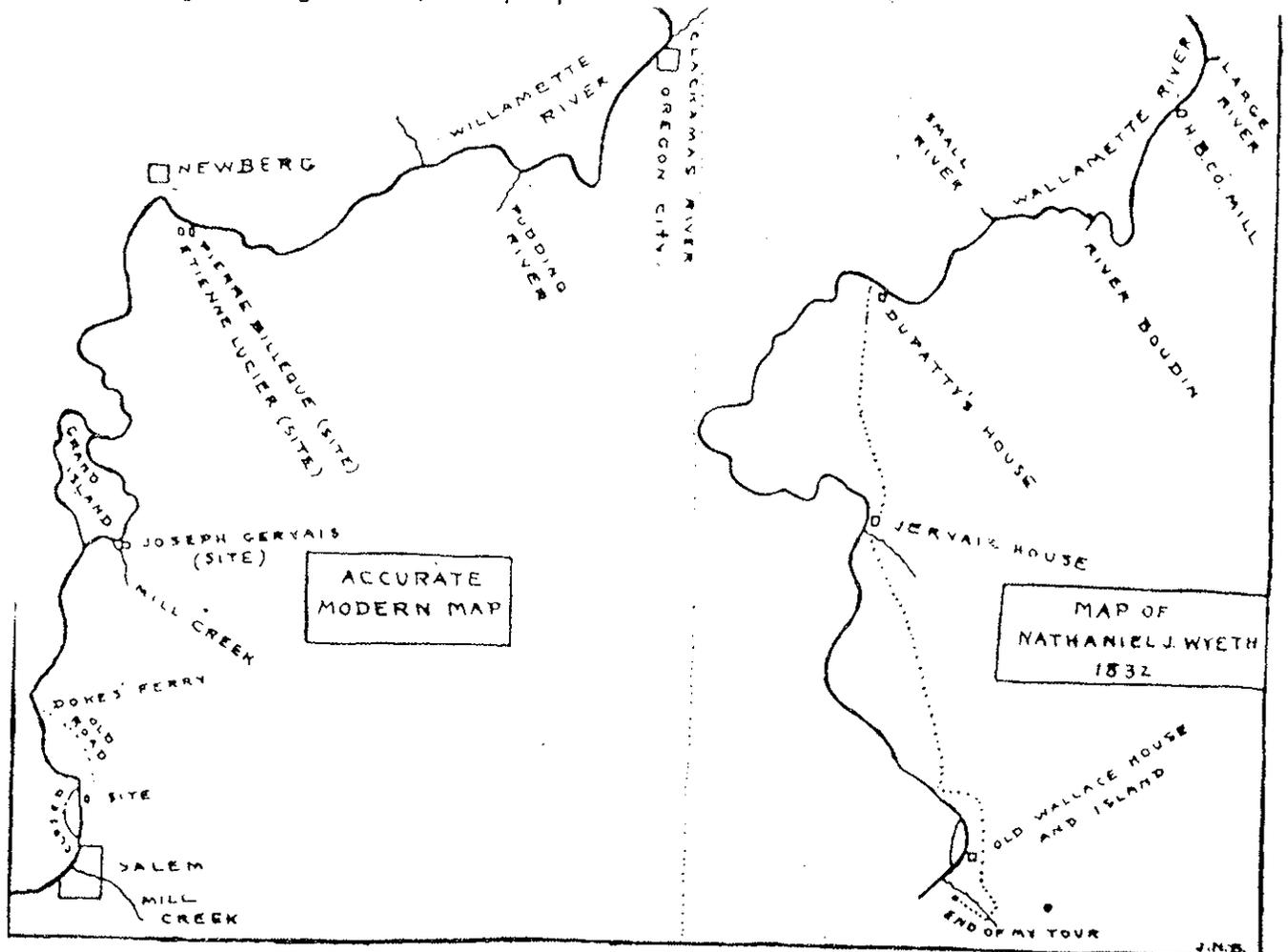
"William Wallace and John Halsey were directed south down the Willamette, where they would eventually build Wallace House near the present day Salem, Oregon." (R. Jones)

"As early as 1811, men from the Astor expedition had come to the Willamette Valley, and by 1813 William Wallace and John Halsey, along with others, had built two houses. The Wallace House on Wallace Prairie, near the north Salem city boundary, which site is not marked, and a trading post on the knoll near the river in the Northwest corner of Marion County." (Austin)

"McKenzie made a hunting and exploring visit to the Willamette Valley, and in November, 1812, Halsey and Wallace, with a large force, were sent to establish Wallace House, which is located near the present city of Salem." (Carey)

Research on Specific Location of Wallace House

The exact location of the Wallace House is harder to pinpoint. Comparing the map of Nathaniel Wyeth with the current topographical map of the Willamette River gives credence to the theory that the fort was located in the south section of Keizer in the River's Edge Park. In an article in the 1941 edition of the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, J. Neilsen Barry, northwest historian, indicated that he and a local archeologist, Dr. Burt Brown Barker of the University of Oregon investigated the exact location of the Wallace House. Using the Wyeth's map as the basis, they looked at modern conditions of the Willamette River with the U. S. Geological Survey of Salem, Oregon, Quadrangle, and airplane views of the U. S. Engineers. Early conditions were shown by township plats of the General Land Office and by donation land claim plats. They concluded that the land owned by S. C. Gottenberg Route 2, Box 18 was the land occupied by the Wallace House which is one mile north of the present city of Salem. The two gentlemen indicated they had searched the site for artifact and found cooking stones like those used by Indian cooks at this time. (Verified by Oregon Historical Quarterly and maps of Nathaniel Wyeth from University Press, Eugene, Oregon, 1899.) Barry map below



Wyeth's Map, 1832, showing Wallace House, compared with modern map

Support for this location is found in a letter (dated August 14, 1960) from J. Nielson Barry to Mary Eyre of Salem that states, "The Wyeth's map showed that the Astorian Wallace House location....Dr. Burt Brown Barker and I had all the maps, township plats, survey notes, airplane photos etc. and knew the whereabouts of the old road on the Wyeth map. From the shore they could not have seen the other channel. They had to be on top of the high banks to see the island, pointed at each end." Additional support acquired from Don Upjohn, researcher and lawyer from Salem, includes a memo from Frank Matson of city of Salem Parks Department in 1966 that indicated he had correspondence from J. Nielsen Barry about the Wallace House location. A memo from Frank Matson indicates that there was consideration by the city of Salem to purchase the Gottenberg Property (Wallace House location) for a city park site. Mr. Matson mentioned correspondence on this topic in the files of David Duniway, also with the city of Salem. At some point the property was purchased by the City of Salem for a park. Also, in the notes from Mr. Upjohn was a plat map of a city subdivision to be built on this land area that was to be called the "Fort Wallace Subdivision" dated 1947. This information was not shared with the city of Keizer when the land was sold to them.

Current tax records verify that the site of the Gottenberg farm (Property ID R 25691, Tax Lot 073w10DA9300) is in the south section of River's Edge Park in Keizer, Oregon. Prior to 1950 ownership by Mr. Gottenberg, the owner of the property was Diadema Cline (of the Weeks family) according to a warranty deed 399294. The original land grant deed for this land was obtained by T D Keizer in 1853. A quote from Statesman Journal reporter, R. J. Hendricks in that paper on November 9, 1935 supports the location of Wallace House on this site, it states: "The two and a half story house Mr. Keizur mentioned (above in the article) was erected, on Wallace Praire—on the exact site of the fort of the Astor party that was under William Wallace and J. C Halsey was built in the winter of 1812-13; combined fort and trading post and headquarters for the 14 hunters and trappers operating under Wallace and Halsey." (Hendricks)

Conclusion:

It is very significant historically for the first permanent settlement in the Willamette Valley to be in Keizer, Oregon. From the literature, it is very clear that the Wallace House existed and in great likelihood somewhere close to and north of the city of Salem. To accept that it is in the River's Edge Park you will have to accept the research of J. Nielsen Barry. In doing this research I found no other indicators that the location was in any other location.

Special Acknowledgement: The research on the Wallace House was begun by Don Upjohn, an attorney and historian in Salem. His interest and thorough research allowed for my continued search for documentation of this historical site. Keizer owes a debt of gratitude to him for his unearthing of this potential point of interest for our city.

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OREGON HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

VOLUME XLII SEPTEMBER 1941 NUMBER 3

SITE OF WALLACE HOUSE, 1812-1814 ONE MILE FROM SALEM

J. NEILSON BARRY

THE WALLACE FORT of the Astorian expedition was one mile north of the present boundary of Salem, Oregon. The location was estimated by the records, and is corroborated by natural conditions and material vestiges. The fort was important, not only as an outpost for furs, but especially for providing dried meat for Astoria. The abundance of provisions caused it to be the sojourning place for men returning from the interior.

On November 23, 1812, William Wallace and John C. Halsey, with 14 men left Fort Astoria to establish an outpost in the Willamette Valley.¹ When Donald McKenzie returned to Astoria, after abandoning his post on the Clearwater River, it caused unnecessary increase in the number of people to be fed at Astoria, where provisions were limited. A number of the "hands" were then sent to sojourn at the Wallace House, or fort.² John Reed and Alfred Seton, who had led that party, returned on March 20, 1813, with a supply of dried venison,

¹Gabriel Franchere, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast*, 168. William Wallace, of Canada, came on the *Tonquin*. He was clerk of the Pacific Fur Company, and was often mentioned. He refused to join the North West Company, so returned to Canada in 1814. There is allusion to his journal by Henry C. Hurlburt, in *The Chicago Earthquake*, 34. John C. Halsey was likewise a clerk. He came on the *Beaver* and left on the *Padley*, 1814. He witnessed a number of documents of the Pacific Fur Company.

²Franchere, 168.

and gave a glowing account of the Willamette Valley "as charming, and abounding in beaver, elk and deer." "A dwelling and a trading house had been constructed on a great prairie."³ This was subsequently called Wallace Prairie.

On May 25, "Messrs. Wallace and Halsey returned from their winter quarters with 17 packs of furs, and 32 bales of dried venison."⁴ The inventory, June 1, 1813, lists⁵ 621 beaver skins, 7 land otter, and 154 beaver skins from the free hunters, Alexander Carson and Pierre Dulaunay.⁶

By the Council at Astoria, June 26, 1813, Donald McKenzie was given charge of the Willamette district, and instructed to "pay every attention to procure a constant supply of that indispensable article" provisions.⁷ However, he seems not to have resided at the fort, and there is no record as to who was in charge. There is allusion to fresh meat spoiling on the way to Astoria,⁸ and a possible allusion to agriculture.⁹ The inventory, September 17, 1813, lists receipt of 7 beaver skins, 2,000 pounds of dried meat, and 100 pounds of tallow.¹⁰

Since the sale to the North West Company included returning to Canada such Astorians who might desire, the garrison at the Wallace House seems to have moved to the fort of the North West Company, near modern Newberg, Oregon. Early in January, 1814, three Astorians left that fort and spent three weeks at the Wallace House. Although they had but 6 traps, they caught nearly 80 beaver. They left Wallace House on

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*, 170.

⁵Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *John Jacob Astor, Business Man*, I, 531.

⁶Alexander Carson and Pierre Dulaunay were detached to trap, from the overland expedition to Astoria, on September 28, 1811. After many adventures they joined Donald McKenzie on the Clearwater River. Carson became a permanent settler in the Willamette Valley. He lost his life on Alec Butte, Yamhill County, Oregon; *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, (June 1900), I, 173, 175. Pierre Dulaunay was killed during the Reed expedition; Alexander Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Columbia River*, 278.

⁷Documents of the Pacific Fur Company in the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.

⁸Franchere, 223.

⁹Ross, 100.

¹⁰Porter, 532.

January 25, 1814,¹¹ and it was not again mentioned until depicted on the map of Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth in 1832, as "Old Wallace House and island."¹² The name Wallace Prairie was retained, and on it the original Oregon Institute was erected in 1842; but subsequently was moved to the present Salem, Oregon, and became Willamette University.¹³

Since the map of Wyeth depicts the fort east of the island and west of the trail he had traveled, the site was in Wallace Prairie, which early surveys show was only opposite to the northern part of that former island.¹⁴ Engineers have closed one channel. The field notes of surveyors mention the old road, westward of the modern highway. The site, therefore, is within a limited area. Natural conditions prevent any stream or spring, so that need for drinking water necessitate the site being near the river, where a fringe of trees has always existed. That provided fuel for drying so much meat, and lumber for the buildings. There was an extremely high freshet, apparently in the winter of 1813-14. That the fort still stood in 1832 indicates that it was on high ground. At only one place in the limited area is high ground, and at that one place are quantities of burned and broken cooking stones, yet no Indian relics. It is recorded that Pierre Dulaunay had a squaw, as presumably also did other Astorians at that fort, who would cook with heated stones. There would be no Indian relics where squaws of white men did the cooking.

¹¹Elliott Coues, *Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry*, 817, 818, 837. The three men seem to have been Richard Milligan, Moses Flanagan and Micajah Baker. They came on the *Beaver*, and left on the *Pedler*; Porter, I, 478.

¹²Frederick G. Young, *Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth*, facing page 178. The houses of Etienne Lucier and of Pierre Billeque were at the site of the fort of the North West Company, 1813-14. The residence of Desportes McKay seems to have been in that locality. The Wyeth map omits the mouth of the Tualatin River.

¹³Rev. Gustavus Hines, *Oregon and its Institutions*, 141 *et seq.*

¹⁴The site is on the farm of Mr. S. C. Gottenberg, Route 2, Box 18, Salem, Oregon. The cooking stones were found by Dr. Burt Brown Barker, Portland. Modern conditions shown by the U. S. Geological Survey of Salem, Oregon, Quadrangle, and also by airplane views of the U. S. Engineers. Early conditions are shown by township plats of the General Land Office, and by donation land claim plats.

Wallace House Park
(formerly River's Edge Park)

KPIC - signage, debris



Type Waterfront Park (planned)
Size 11.2 Acres
Status Undeveloped

Existing Facilities

- Signage; and
- Paved path (eastern boundary).

Description

Wallace House Park (formerly River's Edge Park) is an 11.2 acre undeveloped park on the Willamette River waterfront in southwestern Keizer. The park's boundaries are defined by the Willamette River to the west and single family homes to the north, east and south. The home located in the northeast portion of the park is privately owned is bordered by the park on three of its sides. Access to the park from the south is Willamette Drive and from the north Rivercrest Drive. A pedestrian and bicycle connection is made between these two streets by a paved bicycle path. Pedestrians can also access the park from the east off of N Garland Court.

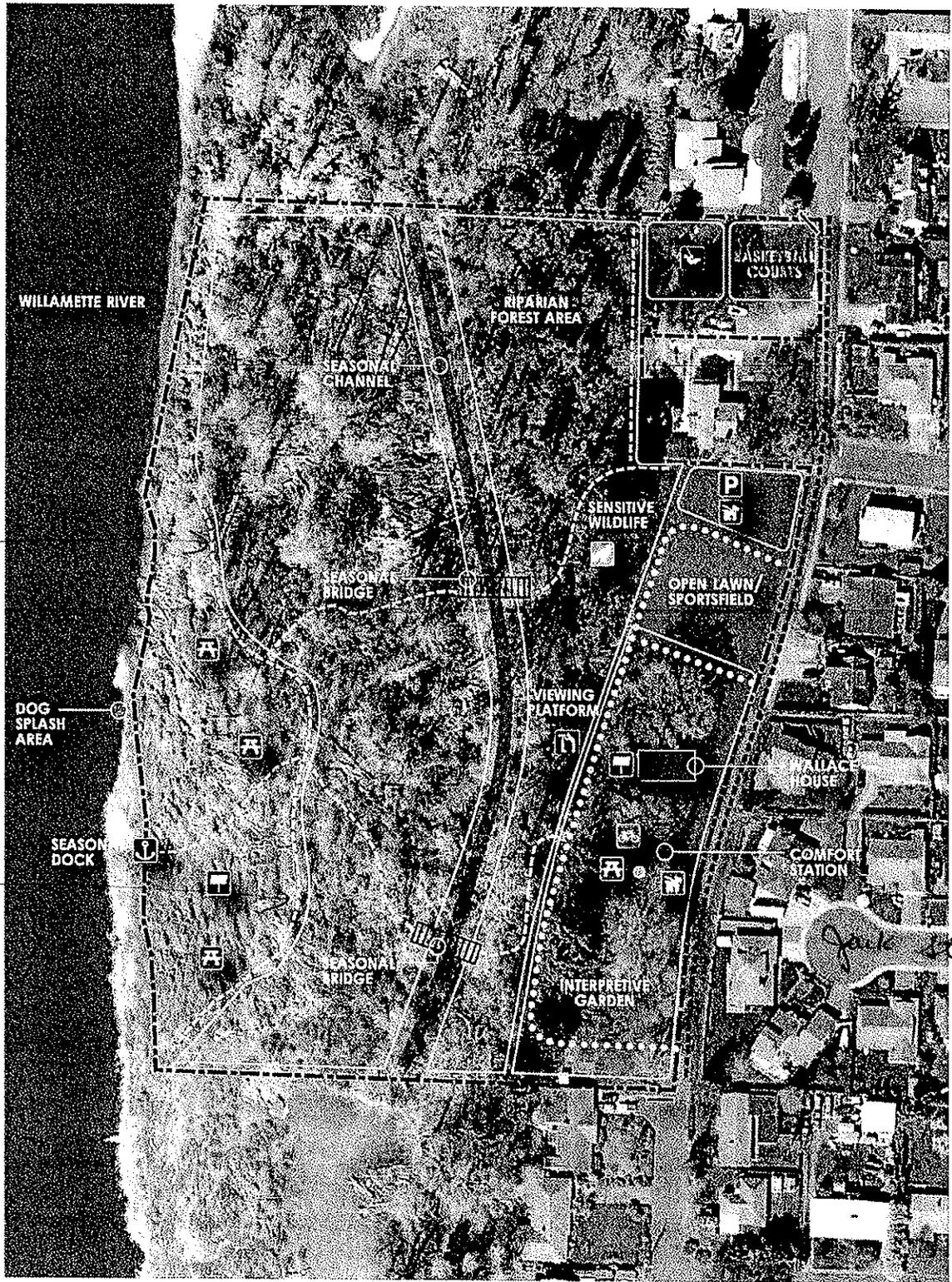
The site has a unique history within Keizer. Portions of the site served as a nursery and the cement foundations for the greenhouses remain covered by thick hedges of blackberry. The location is also the speculated location of the Wallace House, which was a fur trading post sometime between 1811-1813. The post was established by William Wallace who was sent from Astoria to gather furs.

Park History

1968: City of Salem/Regional Park and Recreation Agency acquires from the Weeks, Cline and Gottenberg families, 10.29 acres of property subsequently called Wallace House Park.

May 17, 1993: The City of Keizer purchases Wallace House Park from the City of Salem for the sum of \$20,000.00.

Existing & Recommended Park Facilities



WALLACE HOUSE PARK PLAN City of Keizer, Oregon December 07

parking lot	dock	play area	dog station	viewing area	park boundary	park sign	nature trail
bike rack	picnic table	wildlife area	portable toilet	interpretive opportunity	ADA path	bike path	

1 CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF KEIZER, STATE OF OREGON

2 Resolution R2006- 1676

3 ACKNOWLEDGING THE LOCATION OF WALLACE HOUSE/FORT WALLACE

4
5 WHEREAS, the first significant settlement in the Willamette Valley by fur
6 traders and trappers was the Wallace House (Fort) in the year 1813 and its site is
7 historically significant; and.

8 WHEREAS, in 2000 the Keizer Parks Advisory Board became aware that the
9 location of the Wallace House was potentially in Keizer's River Edge Park; and

10 WHEREAS, extensive research of historical reference materials by multiple
11 Keizer residents at the Oregon Historical Society, Marion County Historical Society,
12 Champoeg State Park Historical Society, and other libraries confirms that River's
13 Edge Park is either at or close to the location of the Wallace House site; and

14 WHEREAS, Dave Brauner, PhD, Department Chair and Professor of
15 Anthropology at Oregon State University also has reviewed historical documentation
16 and has visited the site and has opined that the Wallace House/Fort Wallace was at
17 or very near the current day Rivers Edge Park in Keizer, Oregon; and

18 WHEREAS, the Keizer Parks Advisory Board has determined the Wallace
19 House was at or near River's Edge Park. NOW, THEREFORE

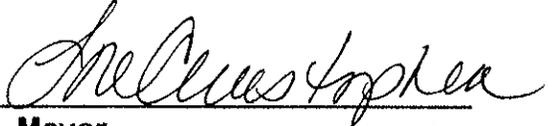
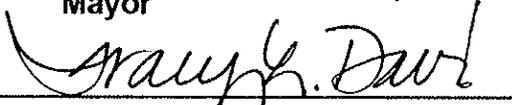
1 BE IT RESOLVED that the Keizer City Council hereby recognizes Rivers Edge
2 Park as being at or near the site of the Wallace House/Fort Wallace; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the City Council hereby directs the Keizer Parks
4 Advisory Board to continue to work further to authenticate the site through
5 archeological digs and continued historical research; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a task force shall be established to seek
7 "National Historical Designation" for the site and to plan for recognition of the
8 Wallace House/Fort Wallace on the site.

9
10 PASSED this 3rd day of April, 2006.

11 SIGNED this 3rd day of April, 2006.

12
13 
14 _____
15 Mayor
16 
17 _____
18 City Recorder

Parks presentation

Vickie needs no introduction it is suffice to say that she has been an active member of both the Parks Committee and KPIC. For over two years she has been the lead person and researcher to determine the answers to two questions:

1. Did the Wallace House or Fort Wallace exist?
2. And if it did exist where was it located.

Please listen carefully to the results of her research and to the evidence she presents.

When she is done with her presentation and answering any questions. We have seven specific actions that we want taken

1. We ask the Council by resolution to declare River Side Park as the Fort Wallace site. We would like this done as soon as possible.

2. Rename the Park Fort Wallace Park

3 As soon as it is renamed place a KPIC logo sign up.

4. Begin the master plan for the park.

5 KPIC should begin the process of obtaining National Historical Site recognition.

ARRANGE FOR A MARK. OLY.
6. A special adhoc comm. Should be formed to design the specific monument to recognize the site..

7 A special adhoc comm. Should be formed to plan a major community event to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Fort (2012) (seven years away)

Christine Emery

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On November 23, 1812, William Wallace and John C. Halsey, with 14 men left Fort Astoria to establish an outpost in the Willamette Valley.¹ When Donald McKenzie returned to Astoria, after abandoning his post on the Clearwater River, it caused unnecessary increase in the number of people to be fed at Astoria, where provisions were limited. A number of the "hands" were then sent to sojourn at the Wallace House, or fort.² John Reed and Alfred Seton, who had led that party, returned on March 20, 1813, with a supply of dried venison,

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A. Knowledge
Resolution to Designate Location of Wallace House

WHEREAS, the first settlement in the Willamette Valley by fur traders and trappers was the Wallace House (Fort) in the year 1813. This site is of significant historical note as it predates the settlement of the valley after the Lewis and Clark Expedition. *desert*

WHEREAS, in 2000 the Keizer Parks Advisory Board became aware that the potential location of the Wallace House was in the city of Keizer in River's Edge Park.

WHEREAS, research has been done with the Oregon Historical Society, Marion County Historical Society, Champoeg State Park Historical Society, and other known historical reference materials at various libraries to confirm the belief that River's Edge Park is the probable location of site of the Wallace House.

BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Keizer, Oregon:

1. To recognize River's Edge Park as the site of the Wallace House (Fort).
- further* 2. To *authorize* direct the Keizer Parks Advisory Board to continue work to confirm the site through archeological digs and continued historical research.
3. To create a task force to seek "National Historical Designation" for the site and to plan for recognition of the Wallace House on the site.

*Frost
Dec. 5.*

Jerry McGee, Keizer, reviewed the history of the Wallace House/Fort Wallace and the research done by Vickie Hilgemann regarding the location of the Fort – the first white settlement in the Willamette Valley. He reminded Council that a request had been made to:

- Develop a Resolution authenticating the location
- Rename River's Edge Park "Fort Wallace Park"
- Establish a "blue ribbon committee" to spearhead the effort towards registration on the State and National Historical Registries.

Mr. McGee stated that KPIC wishes to begin planning an event for 2012 (the 200th anniversary). He suggested that, if Council thought the research was not thorough enough, a professional researcher be hired for \$60-75/hour. He concluded that the Parks Board resolution includes "probable" or "potential" prior to "site" and encouraged the removal of that verbiage because it would hinder the process of recognition by the Historical Registries. Discussion followed regarding Dr. Brauner's dig, a 1941 dig and reference to the Fort on a National Geographic map. Mr. McGee requested that because the Parks Board has not taken action on this, the Council take action. Jacque Moir explained delays encountered by the Parks Board adding that the Board also feels the Resolution should be penned in a way that the Council vote would be unanimous. Mr. McGee responded that KPIC feels a unanimous vote is unnecessary. Councilor Walsh urged the solidification of evidence through professional research. Discussion took place regarding professional research, state assistance for funding the research, the process for putting something on the national register.

Council directed staff to research the process for getting on the National Registry, to approach Dr. Brauner about his availability to provide a professional opinion (for a fee) and to investigate the possibility of State grants through the Historical Society.

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1. To recognize River's Edge Park as site of the Wallace House (Fort).
2. To direct the Keizer Parks Advisory Board to continue work to further authenticate the site through archeological digs and continued historical research.
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