

At the foot of Weston Mountain

Weston Area Development Association Newsletter

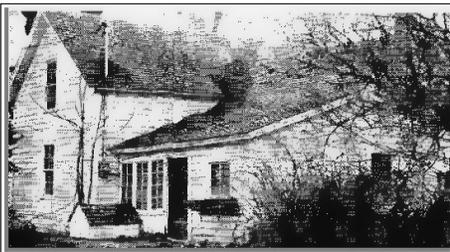
Summer 2022
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Key Family Century Farm

History of the
Joe and Ruth Key Farm
by Granella Ruth Key Thompson

Hezekiah Key was the first to go West. He was born in 1847, and was part of the Confederate Army. He married in 1866, and moved to Iowa and then to Sacramento, California. About 1875, he moved his family to Weston. Hezekiah and his wife had twelve children, but only six lived to adulthood.

He made a living by making and distributing whiskey to local saloons. In 1880, he acquired 160 acres from the U.S. Government, and bought 640 additional acres soon after. He returned to North Carolina for a visit, and the dream of success hit many Surrey County families like fire in their bones--including my grandfather. Families that moved to



the Weston area after Hezekiah's visit included the Badgetts, Yorks, and Bannisters. Many of these family's children married Hez's children. His sons-in-law had names of York, Badgett, Read and Wyland. Descendants today include the Beamers, Townes, and Fox. In 1888, my great-great grandfather came to Weston to visit Hez, got pneumonia and died here.



2022 Pioneer Days
Queen and Grand Marshall and
Jess and Granella Thompson

Joe and Ruth were owners of a small store in Mt. Airy, N.C. Just 21 years of age, Joe and Ruth decided to go to Oregon with their new baby girl, Ollie. They came on the train directly to Weston, in March 1889. After they arrived, they found out the land wasn't so available and that Hez had made it initially on whiskey. Ruth took in laundry and they lived on credit from the store. Joe got a job driving a supply wagon to a lumber camp at Tollgate

By September 29, 1891, Joe had purchased 250 acres of the steepest farmland we farm, the timbered breaks of Pine Creek and unfarmable land bordering La Marr Gulch, as well as a small flat near the creek. He put in orchards and they were totally self-sufficient there. Dad said he paid nothing down, but the deed said he agreed to pay \$6,300. Six children were born on Pine Creek, and one died there. My Dad, Grant Key, was the youngest, born September 27, 1906. In 1909, Joe bought the McKinnon

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Umatilla County Pioneer Days Edition

Welcome to
Pioneer Days and
Weston High School
Alumni



<https://HistoricWestonOregon.com>

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501c3 nonprofit
Tax ID: 88-0783039

WADA was organized as a non-profit to assist in obtaining grants, appropriations, donations, and other types of funding to work on historic preservation, economic development, and more in the Weston area — not just downtown.

Weston is in need of funding to restore the downtown buildings as well as develop economic opportunities for the community. WADA will work cooperatively with local, state, and federal government resources.

For more information:
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The Golden Jubilee

The Leader, Weston, Oregon
June 5, 1942

The golden jubilee reunion of The Umatilla County Pioneers Association May 29 and 30 at Weston was largely attended and proved to be a delightful and memorable occasion.

Walter Rayborn, vice president, presided in the absence of President Will M. Peterson of Pendleton, who is ill. Cecil M. Sly, president of Weston Chamber of Commerce, responded to the address of welcome Friday by Mayor H. Goodwin.

Friday afternoon's program was high-lighted by a beautiful and impressive ceremony -- the coronation of Queen Susan I (Mrs. Susan Coe of Milton.) Senator Lew Wallace of Portland gave an able address.

Memorial exercises by Neil Best Post, American Legion, of Milton-Freewater contributed much to Saturday's program. The audience listened with absorbed attention to an admirable annual address by Rev. Earle P. Cochran of Pendleton. The Ted Roy group from Pendleton took over Saturday afternoon, with Ralph Laumeister as master of ceremonies and gave a varied and entertaining program which charmed and amused an audience filling every seat in the large pavilion and overflowing at the edges.

In snappy uniforms of scarlet and black, Mac hi band of Milton-Freewater helped both days with stirring music.

The old reunion steam-roller was in good working order, and the following slat of association officers as put through without delay.

Walter Rayborn of Weston, president; Lawrence Lieuellen of Adams, vice president; S.A. Barnes of Weston secretary; T.A. Lieuellen of Adams, treasurer.

An Indian team from the Umatilla reservation defeated an all-star aggregation Saturday in a loosely-played but amusing baseball game, 16 to 8.

Large crowds found diversion in street sports.

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place where we now live. The kids attended La Marr School, and later moved to Weston, where Dad graduated in 1925. Joe owned land on both the east and west side of Weston. After one year at Oregon Agricultural College, Dad returned to farm the land with his Father and his brother, Roy. After Joe's death in November 1947, the farm was managed as an undivided estate for two years, with Dad in charge since Roy was not in good health.

Dad's sister, Lola, inherited the original hills, and Dad farmed those acres as well as his sister Vergie's land. In 1964, Lola sold her land to Dad. Dad's oldest sister, Ollie, had two sons, Clifton and Wendall Kirk, who both farmed until their deaths. Clifton's son, Sheldon, and Wendall's son-in-law, Ron Perrine, farm their own places. Three of Dad's siblings had no children. Lola lived in Portland or Long Beach, California, and had one son who died soon after his birth, and two adopted children but neither of them farmed.

When Dad reached the age of 70, I returned to the farm to help out. I am an only child, so I learned to drive combine, tractor, and did my share of spraying with a hand sprayer. But I am really a music teacher, not a farmer. In 1982, I married Jess Thompson, and he began farming the family farm. I manage the books and about once or twice a year, I spend a day in a wheat truck or tractor helping with the harvies. With four children, it's hard for me to help a great deal. Jess 's dad, Hank, helps him off and on with the farming.

Dad's sister, Vergie, left us her share of Grandpa's estate in 1991. Dad died seven months after she did. My mother and I own his land, including the original land of 1891. We farm 1350 acres dryland in pea-wheat rotation, all within three miles of Weston; all but 80 acres of it is family land.

The Joe Key genealogy can be traced to 1645 in Virginia and to Northern England before that. Most families with the Key surname are descendants of Joe's brother, Sam Key. Sam came to Oregon six months after Joe. Sam returned to North Carolina, then moved to Iowa, Montana, and back to Oregon (Basket Mountain) and to Idaho, Iowa, to Basket Mountain and finally Freewater.



Building No. 6
Saling and Reese Store
201 East Main Street, Weston,
Oregon

201 East Main Street (NE corner of East Main Street and North Franklin St)
Historic name: Saling and Reese Store
Common name: Weston Mercantile
Date of construction; c. 1874 (?); 1900-1905

Style: Italianate
Significance: Primary; addition compatible

Description: This single story building of locally made brick is understood to be the oldest brick building in Weston, having survived the devastating fires of 1874 and 1883. It is rectangular in plan with an approximate frontage of 40 feet on Main Street.

The facade is organized into four bays in which openings are recessed in deep reveals and were, historically, protected by iron shutters. The window treatment in these exceptionally tall reveals has been modified considerably, but the brick piers dividing the bays are intact. Segmental relieving arches articulate the spandrels above the window reveals.

The upper wall is articulated with a dentilcated string course and a tall parapet with inset panels of brick and a shallow stepped crest over the two central bays. The Franklin Street facade is similarly detailed in the front six or eight feet. The rest of the wall is unadorned and pierced by three small window openings.

Between 1900 and 1905 a single-story frame addition with an approximate frontage of 100 feet on Main Street was constructed on the east side. Because of the extensive alteration of the facade of the single story addition, it is separately classified for tax purposes, as compatible even though it dates from the secondary period of development in the district.