



STATE OF OREGON INVENTORY
OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
State Historic Preservation Office
Oregon State Parks, Salem, OR 97310

Significance Primary No. 269
County Jackson
Theme _____
Name
(Common) "John Bilger House"
(Historic) John Bilger House
Address 540 Blackstone Alley
Jacksonville, Oregon 97530
Present Owner Scott, Edward L./Georgia Ann
Address P. O. Box 58
Jacksonville, Oregon 97530
Original Use Residential
Date of Construction c. 1863

Physical description of property and statement of historical significance:

The John Bilger House, constructed around 1863, is probably the only building in Jacksonville that displays definite features of the Federal style. The main portion of the building is two stories and rectangular in shape. A one story rectangular extension projects from the rear (east) elevation. The main block is unpainted brick with details highlighted in white, while the one story extension is wood frame painted white. Neither architect nor builder is known at this time.

The main (west) facade is three bays wide on both first and second floors. A four panel door is in the north end bay and is framed by three part side lights and a narrow, four part transom light. The two remaining ground floor bays are tall, nine-over-nine double hung sash windows. The three bays on the second floor are six-over-six, double hung sash windows. The north elevation has two, six-over-six, double hung sash windows on the first floor, and the south elevation is two bays wide on both first and second floors. All the openings have heavy, wood lintels painted white for emphasis.

The roof on the main portion of the Bilger House is a gable sloping to the east and west with a broad, brick chimney projecting from the ridge. The roofing material on the main two section is corrugated metal and composition shingle on the one story rear extension. A wood frieze and boxed cornice are returned into the gable ends of the main portion of the house to

Recorded by Gail E.H. Evans Date March 1980

Photographed by Gail E.H. Evans
Sources consulted (continue on back if necessary):

Please refer to footnotes

Please enclose map. Township 37 ^N _(S) 2 ^E _(W) Section 29, Cluggage DLC #37
Account No. 3600 (29DC)

suggest a pediment. The foundation appears to be brick.

The John Bilger House is situated on a flat parcel of land and is set back from Blackstone Alley approximately thirty-five feet. A wood post and wire fence runs along the front (west) property line. Abundant trees and shrubs proliferate in the yard and surround the foundation wall.

Arriving in Jacksonville no later than 1856, John Love and John Bilger were partners in one of Jacksonville's earliest and most successful stores in the town. It was in 1856 that "Love and Bilger [purchased] the tin shop [on California Street near North Third] from Kennedy,"¹ and within a year of the sale Love and Bilger were actively engaged in selling "tin plate and sheet iron works" to the public.² Although John Love died in the mid 1860's, John Bilger continued the operation of Love and Bilger's in the building at 150 West California Street, expanding his line of merchandise to "goods not only for the stove and tinware trade, but [to include] all kinds of hardware and farming implements" as the needs of the valley broadened.³ Bilger's success in business was reflected by his reported annual income of \$1,000 in 1868, which ranked him the wealthiest resident of Jacksonville at that time.⁴ In 1863 John Bilger was elected to the post of Street Commissioner of the newly-formed Jacksonville town government.⁵

It was around that time (1863) that the John Bilger House was constructed on Blackstone Alley. Although the property was owned jointly by Love and Bilger until 1867,⁶ overall photographic views of Jacksonville show the Bilger house in existence no later than 1864.⁷ When first constructed, a balustraded wood porch extended across the main (west) facade, and louvered shutters appear to be at the first floor window bays on the south elevation. (The north wall of the house is not visible.) The one story, wood frame extension in the rear (east) also seems to be in existence.⁸

John Bilger and Amanda Scheck, both born in Germany,⁹ were married in 1861.¹⁰ In 1877 John Bilger was "taken suddenly ill...with cholera morbus" and died.¹¹ At the time of his death it was said that he had been a resident of the community for twenty-five years and "was well known for his upright character and...integrity."¹²

With eight children¹³ to support, John's wife, Amanda, continued the operation of the hardware store under the name of "Pioneer Hardware"¹⁴ and "Bilger and Maegly" in the mid 1880's. In 1884 "Bilger and Maegly" was considered one of the three leading manufacturers of agricultural machinery and implements in Jacksonville.¹⁵

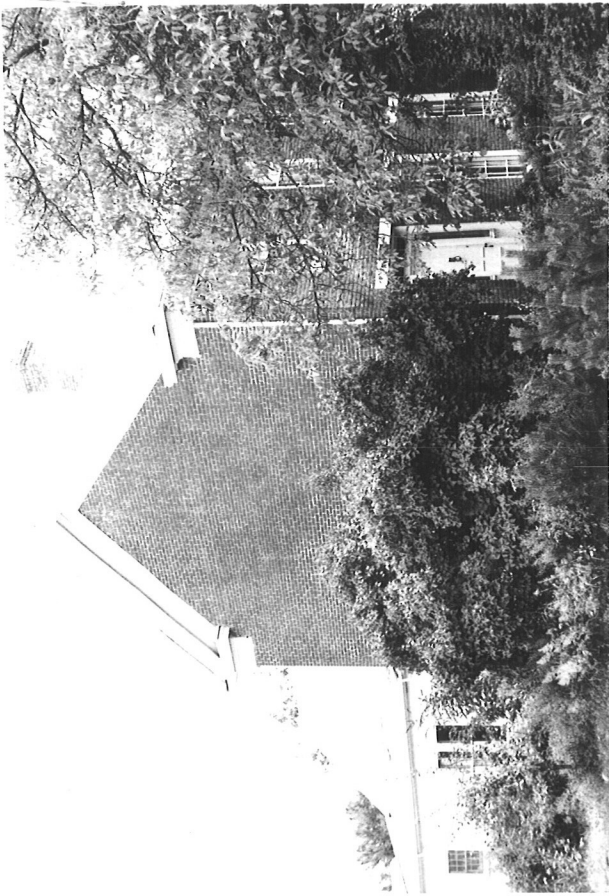
In 1889 Amanda Bilger and members of the Bilger family having an interest in the Bilger home sold the property to James H. Brown.¹⁶

Today the John Bilger House remains one of the few brick residential structures and is perhaps the only one built in the Federal style.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Table Rock Sentinel, October 21, 1856. (Marshall Lango)
2. Jacksonville Herald, October 10, 1857. (Marshall Lango)
3. The Oregon Sentinel, September 1, 1866.
4. The Jacksonville Reveille Weekly, July 4, 1868. (Christopher Owens)
5. Town of Jacksonville, Board of Trustees' Minutes, March 3, 1863, Oregon Historical Society, Ms. 916. (Historic American Buildings Survey - Ross/Owens)
6. Jackson County Deeds, January 28, 1867. (Christopher Owens)
7. J. M. Curley, "Map of Jacksonville," 1864.

8. Southern Oregon Historical Society, photographic collection.
9. Jackson County Census, 1870.
10. Marriage certificate, April 4, 1861, Ms. 271, Southern Oregon Historical Society.
11. The Oregon Sentinel, April 4, 1877.
12. Ibid., April 4, 1877.
13. Jackson County Census, 1880.
14. The Oregon Sentinel, April 15, 1878; January 21, 1880.
15. The Democratic Times, May 30, 1884.
16. Lot book, T37S, R2W, Section 32, Jacksonville, February 23, 1889; February 19, 1889; March 4, 1889; September 6, 1889, Jackson County Title Division, Lawyer's Title Insurance Company.



STATE OF OREGON INVENTORY
HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
State Historic Preservation Office
Oregon State Parks, Salem 97310

County Jackson
Theme 10-A
Name
(Common) Bilger (John) House
(Historic) (same)
Address 540 Blackstone Alley
Jacksonville, Oregon
Present Owner _____
Address _____
Original Use Residence
Date of Construction c. 1863

Physical description of property and statement of historical significance:

The John Bilger house is a two story, brick building with elements of the Classical Revival Style in its design. The building, which faces west, has a low, gable roof with boxed eaves, wide frieze boards, and partial eave returns on the gable ends. The building has three bays on the second and first stories on its front elevation. The northern bay on the first floor is the entry and has sidelights and a transom. The windows on the first floor are nine-over-nine, double hung sash; those on the second story are six-over-six, double hung sash. The building has an addition or "T" attached on its east (rear) elevation.

This house was built by Patrick Fehley and Linn about 1863 for John Bilger, a hardware merchant in Jacksonville. The walks in the yard are made of native sandstone blocks.

For more information on the architecture and history of this structure see the forthcoming publication:

Ross, Marion D. and Christopher Owens. "An Area Study of Jacksonville, Oregon: The Commercial District and the Churches and Courthouse."

(over)

continue on back if necessary

Recorded by Stephen Dow Beckham Date 28 August 1976

For Oregon State Historic Preservation Office Sources Consulted:

Please enclose map Township 37 ^N _S 2 ^E _W Section 29 Historic Jacksonville Oregon. n.p.: U.S. National Bank, [1976].

see p. 244 - Jacksonville survey vol. 2