

## Jason Lee House saved as mall constructed

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### 1965 World Events

- The United States goes from advising the South Vietnamese government to active military offensives against the Viet Cong.
- President Johnson pledges a "Great Society" to end poverty and racial injustice; Medicare Bill is passed in Congress.
- Voting Rights Act passes forbidding discriminatory practices.
- Watts neighborhood in Los Angeles burns.
- Malcolm X is assassinated.

### Salem in 1965

A new commercial center downtown, The Salem Center, is created with the first construction, the preservation of our oldest residence is assured — after a logistical problem is solved.

In 1841, Jason Lee and other Methodist missionaries built the first residence along Mill Creek for a town that would be named Salem. The house stood at 960 Broadway, disguised with many alterations, as the city grew upcreek around the Oregon State Capitol and Willamette University. Due to the preservation activities of the Marion County Historical Society, led by David Duniway, the house escaped demolition by being stripped of the additions to the original house and moved to a temporary refuge on Front Street.

By July 1965, a home for this historic structure has been established at Mission Mill Museum. The move goes well until the transport reaches the Center Street Bridge ramp that it must pass under. The carriage and house are too high and progress stops until one of the movers finds a solution: air is let out of the truck tires and house continues its move.

### When you visit

The Jason Lee House is one of four historic buildings moved to the campus of the Mission Mill Museum, now Willamette Heritage Center. Since its move to the Mission Mill property, it has been furnished with period furniture and open for tours. In January 2012, the house was closed



**Statesman Journal File**  
Raymond Goesser, 16, plays his fiddle near the Jason Lee House at the Mission Mill Museum.

to tours as the interior exhibits are redesigned to tell a more inclusive story of Salem's early history.

The other three historic structures that have been moved to the campus are the Methodist Parsonage, The John Boon House and the Pleasant Grove Church. In all, the Willamette Heritage campus has 15 buildings, but the most important is the mill complex itself, a former American industrial site that can be toured to see the manufacturing process as it took place. This property has been designated as a National Register Historic Place and has received an award as an American Treasure. It is adjacent to both Willamette University and the Oregon State Capitol.

#### Other 1965 events in Salem

-J.C. Penney constructs a new store on the corner of Liberty and Chemeketa streets. The grand opening takes place in January. By December, the foundations are being laid for other retail stores in the Salem plaza, now Salem Center mall, a block away.

-On State Street, Northwest Pacific Bell completes a new building in the International style, designed by local architect, James L. Payne. In 1996, it will be purchased by Willamette University with a portion remodeled as the Hallie Ford Museum of Art.

Produced by Virginia Green, SHINE is a website and blog that recalls economic and cultural events that have shaped Salem. To contact Green, email [vagreen9@gmail.com](mailto:vagreen9@gmail.com) or go to <http://salem-heritage-network.blogspot.com>.