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FEATURED

Caples House to undergo restoration

Story and photos by Don Patterson Jun 17, 2017



Daughters of the American Revolution announced plans for a renovation of the historic Cap

House in Columbia City. DAR owns a portion of Dr. Charles Caples' original homestead and operates it as a museum.

The main house, built in 1870, has settled and its original post and pier foundation is deteriorated due to wood rot. As was common practice at the time, foundation timbers and the wooden structure rests on rocks. Siding on the building's south wall is deteriorated and moisture is seeping into the interior wall. The home's front porch and porch roof also need replacing.

"We're going to do everything we need to bring it back to its former glory," DAR member Cin Parnell said. She estimates the repairs could cost nearly \$200,000. The group hopes to raise necessary money through historic preservation grants and fundraising activities.

Parnell said they would like to have the repairs completed by the 150th anniversary of the home's construction in 2020.

DAR completed the first phase of renovations at the complex including a new roof on the main house, electrical upgrades and constructing a new gazebo last spring. "Now we're doing the bigger things," Parnell said.

The wooden farmhouse served as Dr. Caples' office and home. It was built on the site of the original log cabin constructed by Dr. Caples' father, Joseph Caples, in 1846. Dr. Caples is credited with founding Columbia City and figured prominently in early St. Helens.

A descendent of Dr. Caples, Dell Caples, lived in the home until 1959, when she donated it to DAR. Many of the artifacts contained in the museum came across on the Oregon Trail according to museum personnel.

Parnell said the group plans to lift the structure in the fall of 2018. Cost for the foundation repair alone is estimated at \$127,000. Work is slated to start Fall 2017.

DAR operates two museums in Oregon. The non-profit group operates the Caples House Museum with its historic farmhouse and outbuildings as a museum and rents the grounds for weddings and other functions. It also operates Newell Pioneer Village near Champoeg State Park. The museum complex includes the home of Robert Newell, a central figure in Oregon