

The John R. Jackson House was the first American pioneer home north of the Columbia River. John Jackson built a small cabin on the property in 1845. Jackson married his wife, Matilda Koontz, in 1848 and shortly thereafter built the now-standing Jackson House. With its real glass windows, split-cedar floor and staircase leading up to the sleeping loft, the house was considered luxurious for the mid-19th century in the pioneer west.

The small log house was a gathering place for neighbors as well as travelers, who would spend the night and enjoy the Jackson family hospitality. The house was an important meeting place during the organization of the Washington Territory and also used as a post office and voting place. In 1850, the U.S. District Court convened there, earning it the name "Jackson Court House." Caring for increasing numbers of travelers eventually led Jackson to apply for a hotel license. Among the well known who passed through the Jackson home were Ulysses S. Grant and Isaac Stevens, who became Washington Territory's first governor.



Two bedrooms were added to the house, and future additions to the site included buildings that formed a courtyard. By the early 1900s, the buildings were dilapidated, and all but the 1848 family house were torn down. The St. Helens Club of Chehalis did much of the early renovative work on the house. In 1915, the Jackson House site was donated to the State of Washington, and the Washington State Historical Society continued the renovations.

Most of the furniture and tools in the house belonged to the Jackson family. Among the antiques are a spinning wheel, fireplace kettle, cradle scythe, tanning boards, various tables and chairs and a rug braided by Matilda Jackson. Pieces of original wallpaper still remain intact.

The Jackson House continues to be a memorial to John and Matilda Jackson and other pioneers of southwest Washington. This heritage site is just south of the junction of U.S. highway 12 and Jackson Highway, approximately two miles east of I-5, between Toledo and Chehalis.



**Lewis & Clark State Park**

4583 Jackson Highway  
Winlock, WA 98596  
360-864-2643

**Washington State  
Parks and Recreation Commission**



P.O. Box 42650  
Olympia, WA 98504-2650  
(360) 902-8500  
www.parks.wa.gov

*Commission members:*

- Ken Bounds
- Mark O. Brown
- Patricia T. Lantz
- Steve S. Milner
- Douglas Peters
- Rodger Schmitt
- Lucinda S. Whaley

**Agency director: Don Hoch**

*All Washington state parks are developed and maintained for the enjoyment of all people.*

To request this brochure in an alternative format, please call (360) 902-8844 or the Washington Telecommunications Relay Service at (800) 833-6388. P&R 45-4500-1 (08/16)

*John R. Jackson House*



**HERITAGE  
AREA**

*JRJ*

# The John R. Jackson House



*John R. Jackson*

**John R. Jackson** was born Jan. 13, 1804, in northern England and came to the United States in 1823. He farmed in Illinois and in 1844, while still a bachelor, traveled west serving as a driver for a wagon train headed for the Oregon Territory. From Oregon City, near present-day Vancouver, Wash., Jackson made several trips north toward the southern end of Puget Sound. He finally settled in the area that became known as Jackson Prairie, about seven miles south of Chehalis. Here he built his first crude cabin. During these first years in the area, Jackson was occupied with farming and extending his holdings, but he also had time for public service. He was appointed sheriff, served as a territorial legislator and census taker, assessed land, collected taxes and was elected justice of the peace.

*RJ*

**Matilda (Koontz) Jackson** arrived in Oregon City by the fall of 1847, where she met John Jackson. The Koontz family traveled the trail by wagon train from Missouri. Matilda's first husband, Nicholas, drowned in the Snake River while attempting to help oxen cross. This tragedy resulted in Matilda giving birth prematurely to an infant daughter who died several days later. Matilda and her four young sons were taken to the Dalles Mission to recuperate. Several weeks later Matilda, although still weak, took a canoe down the Columbia River to Oregon City. Her sons came on horseback later. John and Matilda were married in 1848 and had three children of their own. Over the years Matilda became known for her warmth and for the welcome care she gave weary travelers. "Grandma Jackson" died in 1901 at the age of 90.

*MLJ*



*Matilda Jackson*