

Forest Grove Historic Resource



2126 17TH AVENUE - Roe House

Description:

This is a 1-1/2 story, vernacular farmhouse with Queen Anne details. Cross-gable roof with front gable roof dormers covered with composition shingles. Front porch shed roof adorned with stickwork at the eaves. Windows are one-over-one double-hung sash. Carport on the east side; bay projection on the west side. Picket fence surrounds large front yard. Footprint resembles a rectangle.

History:

The Thomas and Mary Ann Roe House, built around 1872, stands at 2126 17th Avenue. Thomas Roe, a native of Cayuga County, New York, was born in 1826 (or 1827) to Thomas Roe from Northampton, England, and Anna Burnett from Bedfordshire, England. Thomas Roe, Jr. moved to Palmyra, Michigan, in 1848 to work in a sawmill. He traveled to the California gold mining region in 1850. He arrived in Oregon soon afterward and took up a donation land claim on the Cowlitz River. Keenly interested in education, he served as Cowlitz County School superintendent. Thomas Roe married May Ann Ostrander in 1857. She had come overland to Oregon with her parents in 1852. Thomas Roe later operated a store in Monticello, Washington Territory. He served in the Washington Territory Legislature in 1856. In 1870 he and his wife round to farming for a livelihood; they came to Forest Grove the following year to farm and give their sons an education at Pacific University. The Roe couple bought about 500 acres of land near the town to raise hay, horses, and cattle. Thomas Roe later invested in the town's cannery and electrical plant.

In 1871 the Roes purchased a sizeable parcel in the town of Forest Grove from Marie L. Clarke. The Roe family built a vernacular farmhouse on a portion of this large lot, around 1872 (now 2136 17th Avenue), that remains standing in 2000. Thomas Roe died in August 1908. He was survived by his wife and three children: Barnett V. Roe, a lawyer, Charles O. Roe, and furniture dealer and undertaker in Forest Grove, who built a house in the same block (at 2120 17th Avenue), and Mrs. Willis Goff, who also lived in a house near her parents (at 2138 17th Avenue) (Washington County News Times, August 13, 1903; and Beckham, "Oregon Inventory," 1976).