

Forest Grove Historic Resource



2314 19TH AVENUE - Cornelius House

Description:

This is a two-story single-family residence with a composition shingle covered gable roof. It is a wood-framed, wood-clad Italianate style house. Windows are predominately four over-four double-hung sash. Long porch extends across the primary facade supported by boxed columns. There is a balcony on the porch. Deciduous trees shade this lot.

History:

The Classically-detailed Italianate style Cornelius House at 2314 19th Avenue was built around 1873 for Benjamin Cornelius, Jr., and his wife, Rachel McKinney Cornelius. Construction of the house is attributed to carpenter-builder Harley McDonald, reportedly, one of the first "architects" to work in Oregon. McDonald participated in the 1849 California Gold Rush before arriving in Portland around 1850. In 1853, he worked for Absolom Hallock in Portland. During the 1850s, he designed and constructed several buildings in Portland and also Forest Grove, including the original Congregational Church in Forest Grove that stood on the town square. By 1870 he had settled in Forest Grove where he designed homes, including his own (moved to a new location near North Plains around 1986). McDonald died in Forest Grove in 1903.

Benjamin Cornelius, Jr., and his wife, Rachel McKinney, came to Oregon as children in the 1845 overland migration. Their parents filed donation land claims northwest of Hillsboro. Rachel's father, James McKinney, helped found Hillsboro. Benjamin and Rachel were married in 1852 and filed for a donation land claim just north of present-day Cornelius. (Colonel Thomas Cornelius, Benjamin's brother, founded the community of Cornelius.) In 1852 Benjamin Cornelius distinguished himself by helping locate a southern immigrant route into Oregon. Benjamin and Rachel Cornelius moved to Forest Grove in the early 1870s, around the time the railroad was completed to a point south of Forest Grove. The Cornelius children enrolled in Tualatin Academy in the 1870s. The Cornelius family bought the land on which the house now stands in June 1872 from A.L. Johnson. In 1881 Benjamin Cornelius was murdered by his son-in-law.

From 1883 to 1898, Judge Granville H. Barber and his family lived in the house. Barber had also migrated overland to the West in 1845. He first settled in Oregon City and became prominent there, serving as county judge for three years. His first wife died in 1874. He and his second wife, Wilhelmina Drause, moved to Forest Grove in 1883. The Barber couple raised two daughters. Granville H. Barber died in 1898. One daughter, Josephine, and her husband, Duncan MacLeod, later acquired the house. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, the MacLeods allegedly moved the house about thirty feet back and southward from 19th Avenue to avoid the expanding root systems of two mature Sequoia trees planted by the Cornelius family and sited it on a new concrete foundation. A front porch was added at that time.