

Forest Grove Historic Resource



1648 ASH STREET - Mills House

Description:

This is a one story single-family residence with a composition shingle covered hip roof. Wood-framed, and wood-clad Revival style. The windows of the primary facade are large, fixed picture windows. The house is architecturally distinguished by its Queen Anne architectural details including eyebrow dormers on the primary facade, arched porch roof supported by twin round columns and sidelights on the front windows. A wall dormer on the south side has a jerkinhead roof with a fireplace chimney. There is a large deciduous tree in the rear.

History:

The Mills House at 1648 Ash Street was built in 1924 for Ralph I. and Bessie J. Mills. The Mills couple bought the property on which the house now stands from Elizabeth C. Littler and her husband (who had owned it since 1913). The Mills owned and, presumably, occupied this house until 1944.

Ralph Ira Mills, born in Arnold, Nebraska, in 1894 came to Forest Grove with his parents, Ernest and Bertha Mills, and graduated from Forest Grove High School. After attending Pacific University, he graduated from North Pacific College of Dentistry in Portland. In 1915 Mills married Bessie Martin in Forest Grove. After first practicing dentistry in Willamina and, then, Portland, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Dental Corps during World War I. After returning from service in France, Mills started his dentistry practice in Forest Grove in 1919 with Dr. Sam Todd. Ralph Mills retired in 1946 and moved to eastern Oregon. He returned in 1948 and took up residence in Cornelius. Ralph Mills died at age seventy-three in 1967; his wife, Bessie, and son, Gerald Mills survived him (Hillsboro Argus, March 9, 1967).

In 1944 L.L. and Florence E. Twinam bought the Mills House. They owned it only two years before selling it in 1946 to Clyde and Hazel Walker. (The Walkers rented the Ebert/Walker House at 1810 Birch Street before purchasing the Mills House.) Clyde Walker, born in Nebraska in 1901, graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1924 and received his master's degree in 1930. He taught agricultural engineering at Oregon State University in Corvallis from 1928 to 1943. For eighteen months, Walker served as a supply pastor for the Methodist Church in Alsea, Oregon. From 1945 to 1948, Clyde Walker worked with R.M. Wade and Company, an agricultural supply company, in Portland. He owned Walker Tractor Company for two years. The Walkers owned the Mills House at 1648 Ash Street during this time. In 1950 he joined Portland General Electric in Portland as public relations and educational director. In 1952 the Walker family spent two years in Jordan where Clyde Walker was a technical assistance in farming for the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the Point Four Program. Throughout his life, Walker was a prominent layman in Methodist Church activities throughout the Northwest. Walker was about to retire when he died from injuries sustained in a car accident on the Beaverton-Hillsboro Highway in 1968.

Between 1949 and 1955, Kate Gardner, a widow, owned the Mills House. She sold it to Oren and Maude K. Grabill.