

Forest Grove Historic Resource



2020 Main St - Caples and Thomas Building

The Thomas and Caples [Grove Furniture] Building is one of the best-preserved buildings in downtown Forest Grove. One of the many structures built in or around 1893, the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

The building was first owned and occupied by merchants Arthur B. Thomas and John W. Caples. Thomas was born in 1848 in Iowa, his wife Mary was born in 1847 in Illinois. Caples was born in Ohio in 1840. Caples came to Oregon in 1850 and then worked as a merchant in Washington Territory. He married his wife Harriet [Glisan] in 1866 and came to Forest Grove in the spring of 1883.

By 1905, the building housed Hoffman and Allen Company general merchandising store. A. G. Hoffman had bought out Allen's former partner Mr. Waltrous. (A Miles Waltrous [b. 1869 in Pennsylvania] shows up as a day laborer in the 1910 census. This may not be the Waltrous who partnered with Allen). Marion S. Allen was born in Iowa in 1862. He married Lulu in a second marriage for both of them and took in her two children.

In February 1913 A. G. Hoffman bought out the entire interest of the store and changed the name of the business to A. G. Hoffman Co. Hoffman renovated the building after acquiring it outright and expanded its operation.

Hoffman was born in 1859 in Colfax, Indiana. He attended public school in Indiana and Missouri. He attended college at Vapriso Normal and Purdue University. He taught school and worked at banks in Nebraska before turning to the mercantile business and stock raising. He moved to Forest Grove in 1904, whereupon he joined forces with Allen in the mercantile business. He built an eclectic Queen Anne/Craftsman style house at 1703 Main Street in 1905.

Sources:

Forest Grove Inventory of Historic and Cultural Places, 1985.

US Bureau of the Census, 1900.

US Bureau of the Census, 1910.