

Forest Grove Historic Resource



2000 Pacific Ave - Johnson & Son Livery

Huston B. Johnson was born in Yamhill County, Oregon in February of 1850. He married Amy (b. Feb 1856 in Oregon) in 1874/75. Huston and Amy had three children live to adulthood, two of which lived with them in 1900: 19-year-old son Chester and 14-year-old daughter Vesta. [On the 1900 census, the only son listed for H.B. and Amy Johnson was 17-year-old Chester, however, one living child was not living with them in 1900 — this could have been Carl, who is credited with being his father's partner].

Johnson bought a farm just north of Forest Grove in 1880. In or about 1884 he purchased a lot at the southeast corner of Pacific Avenue and Main Street from Samuel Hughes. Hughes was a prominent citizen in Forest Grove, serving as justice of the peace, notary public, blacksmith and mayor from 1894 to 1896. Hughes was appointed to the State Legislature in 1897 and died in 1898.

A wood frame building sat on this lot before the present structure. Johnson used it to house his livery stable beginning in the 1880s. Johnson became active in civic affairs, becoming a member of the City Council in 1892. His wood building was then in violation of the brick- only provisions of the "Fire Control District" in downtown Forest Grove. This district was formed in 1890 to prevent the large destructive fires that so often swept through towns and cities of the American West, with their close quarters and wood construction.

Johnson finally replaced his wood building with the present brick structure in 1898. He moved his livery stable into the new building and operated the business as Johnson & Son, with his son Carl Johnson. While the livery stable gave way to a hardware business, car dealership, and variety store chain, Carl and his wife Kathryn retained ownership until their deaths.

In 1978, the first attempts were made at renovating the building, which had been altered to suit many different uses over the years. These previous alterations included the removal of two original dominant arches on the front elevation and replacement with a storefront supported by steel I-beams. Other alterations occurred in the 1960s to "modernize" the structure. The 1978 renovations involved the sandblasting of the brick surface to expose the original brick. Unfortunately, this process accelerates the deterioration and is not recommended for brick building renovation. In addition, some alterations were made to the rear elevation to provide for storage and a restroom.

Renovations in 1984 and 1985 increased the attractiveness of the building, but were also a lost opportunity to recapture some of the lost elements of the building. Instead, the renovations introduced elements which had not previously existed, including windows and entrances on the east elevation, four arches on the front elevation, and a large stairway entrance on the east elevation. While practical, these alterations introduced detract from the good work that was done in the 1984/85 renovations. A National Register of Historic Places nomination of the building made in 1985 was denied for these and other reasons. Still, the building is a very significant brick structure in the commercial area of Forest Grove.

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Sources:

US Bureau of the Census, 1900.

Brittall, National Register Nomination, Johnson & Son Building, 1985.

Forest Grove Inventory of Historic and Cultural Resources, 1985.