

Preserving Forest Grove

Newsletter of the Historic Landmarks Board

Welcome to Vernon, Oregon!

Forest Grove Names and Their Origins

By Monty Smith

Did you know that the original name proposed for Forest Grove was Vernon*? In 1851 the trustees of Tualatin Academy (Pacific University) rejected that name and chose Forest Grove instead, replacing the name that was in use for that part of the county - West Tualatin Plain. It's likely that J. Quinn Thornton, a homesteader arriving in 1846, suggested Forest Grove since that's what he called his homestead. The name wasn't officially changed until 1858, however.

The entire area had been called the Tualatin Plain, named after the Tualatin River which ran through it. Tualatin, or Tualatin Plains, apparently was the Indian name, meaning either "lazy or sluggish" (the river), "land without trees" (the plains) or "forks or forked" (the upper tributaries including Gales and Dairy Creeks). Many name variations were used throughout the 1800s, starting with Twaha-la-ti, and later Tuality, Twality, Quality, Falatine, and Nefalatine. The entire area was called Twality, while the areas of Forest Grove and Hillsboro were originally West and East Tualatin Plains, also indicating how North Plains got its name.

In 1850 the Tualatin post office was established just south of Forest Grove with David Hill as postmaster. Hill was the founder of Hillsboro (originally Hillsborough, but before that it was known as both Columbia and Columbus). The Hillsboro post office was also established in 1850, although no one knows why Hill's post office was so many miles away from Hillsboro. David Hill came to Oregon in 1842, and was the area's representative at the Champoeg meeting in 1843 where he was elected chairman of the three-man executive committee for 1843-44 - thus making him Oregon's first elected governor. He represented the Twality district in the provisional legislature in 1847, but died soon after in 1850.

The Tualatin post office was RE-established in 1869, but this time in the present town of Tualatin.

Don't we have a landmark north of town named David Hill? Yes, but a different man. That's named after Frederick W. David, who homesteaded there in 1876. His daughter, Mary David, married Harmon Thatcher, from whom the nearby town of Thatcher as well as Thatcher Road get their names.

**Just in case you were wondering, the name of Vernon had no bearing on the naming of Vernonia. Judson Weed and Ozias Cherrington settled the town, and Cherrington suggested naming the town Vernonia after his daughter in Ohio. Ironically, his daughter's actual name was Vernona!*

The name of Dairy Creek goes back before the settlers arrived - trappers from the Hudson's Bay Company had a dairy on the creek, although it's not known just where it was. Gales Creek was named after Joseph Gale, who came to Oregon in 1834, after careers at sea and trapping in the Rockies, and settled at the foot of what is now Gales Peak. Gale was also one of the three-man executive committee along with David Hill, overseeing the provisional government started at Champoeg in 1843. The town of Gales Creek was sometimes called Gales City, but apparently that never caught on.

Banks was named after the pioneer residents Robert Banks and his father, John Banks, but that wasn't their first choice - Turner was. In 1902 Ewell Turner was the first postmaster and they wanted to name the town after him, but there was already a Turner, OR in Marion County. Although Banks was their second choice, they liked it better than Greenville; the Banks post office only lasted two years, and then turned business over to the nearby Greenville post office. In 1907 the Greenville post office moved into the location of the old Banks office, but rather than accept the name of Greenville, local residents petitioned to restore the name of Banks.

Cherry Grove was another second choice. When August Lovegren moved here from Washington in 1911, he wanted to name the community after fruit. Appleton was the first choice, but like Turner, there was already an Appleton, OR. His cousin, Anna Ryberg, suggested Cherry Grove after her home in Minnesota. According to a rumor just started by this author, other names that may have been considered were Kumquat Corners, Strawberry Swamp, and The Peach Pit.

In 1845, when he was just 18, Colonel T. R. Cornelius came to Oregon with his family as members of Joe Meek's party, and settled on the Tualatin Plain. He served in the Cayuse War of 1847-48 and the Yakima War of 1855-56, and in 1861 raised a regiment of volunteer cavalry. He was a merchant, ran a sawmill, and even served twenty years in the Oregon legislature. By 1871 he and his family were well enough known that when they formed the post office (legitimizing the town) they named it after him.

Carnation Milk Products used to have a condensery south of Forest Grove, and the local store owned by Clarence L. Bump was the Carnation store. Bump became the postmaster when a post office was added to the store in 1905.

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The name was soon changed to South Forest Grove, but then changed back to Carnation in 1914.

In 1851, Henry Wilson drove cattle from the north Oregon coast into the Tillamook area and is credited as the founder of the Tillamook dairy industry. As an honor, local residents renamed the Georgie (or Georgia) River after him. In 1875 an effort was made to build a road inland, and three men explored the Kilchis and Wilson Rivers. They got lost and nearly starved to death, and the idea of a road was put aside for many years.

Blooming, although not an official town anymore, changed its name from 'the German settlement' to Blooming simply because the reverend of the Lutheran Church wanted a better name. He chose Blooming after the floral conditions and general pleasant prospects. At the turn of the century Blooming was an official town, legitimized by the Blooming

post office in 1895, but in 1904 it was closed because of the extension of rural delivery.

Laurel and Laurelwood are both, not surprisingly, named after laurel trees nearby. Although only five miles from each other, they began as separate communities founded 25 years apart. Laurel was named in 1879 at a town meeting when they established the post office, and Laurelwood in 1904 when the Seventh Day Adventists established the Laurelwood Academy. Ironically, the laurel stand for which Laurelwood was named was later determined to be madrone trees. (It seems this is not uncommon. Laurel Hill, the difficult section of the Barlow Trail outside Zigzag, was named after the laurels growing there, but these were actually rhododendrons).

The information for this article was gathered from Oregon Geographic Names, sixth edition, by Lewis McArthur.

What style is your house?

By Elizabeth Muncher

Forest Grove's building industry has passed through a number of eras characterized by one style of house or another. Those of us who live in older homes may find it of interest to know what style of house we have. But where to begin?

If you are starting with a limited knowledge of architectural styles the best place to start is to learn about differentiating characteristics of the different styles. This may

seem daunting given the number of styles but your search is at least limited to those styles common to the years since Forest Grove was founded. You can narrow your search even further if you know the year your house was built. The website <http://architecture.about.com/library/weekly/aa020700a.htm> gives tips on how to research the age of your house if you don't know it. Some styles found in greater Forest Grove area include:

Greek Revival 1830-1860



A.T. Smith House - 240 Elm Street

Queen Anne: 1880-1910



Austin-McNamer-Hughes House - 2039 18th -

Colonial Revival: 1880-1955



Congregational Church Parsonage - 2125 18th

Italianate 1845-1885



Benjamin Cornelius House - 2314 19th

The Craftsman Bungalow: 1900 - 1930



Loomis House - 1803 Main

Each type of house has specific characteristics that identify them. When you read about these characteristics you will soon become immersed in a new language. Oriel windows, cross gables, and verge boards are only a few of the terms used to identify characteristics of styles of houses. Any respectable book on house styles should include a glossary and there are websites that also provide definitions of these characteristics.

There are numerous sources for learning about house styles on the internet and in book stores. A list of resources is provided at the end of this article. However, there is another fun way to learn about house styles. Timber Press has a website for Portland walking tours that focuses on house styles between 1850 and 1950. You can download some of the walking tours at <http://www.timberpress.com/houses/Index.cfm> or buy the book *Classic Houses of Portland Oregon 1850-1950* by William J. Hawkins, III and William F. Willingham. The houses have their style identified as well as significant characteristics.

If your house doesn't seem to conform to any one style don't be surprised. At one point or another over the years your house may have been updated to give it a more 'modern' fashionable look or to provide better utility. Perhaps the roof was raised to add a level, the porch may have been 'updated', or rooms added. Any number of changes could have been made prior to your owning the house. This requires a little research to find the original floor plans. Here are some tips taken directly from the website *Architecture with Judy Craven* (<http://architecture.about.com/library/weekly/aa022100a.htm>)

1. Call your Realtor.
If your house was built in the past 50 years, the sales agents at your real estate office may be able to help you locate facts about its construction. Often they will know the local developers and be familiar with housing styles in your region.
2. Visit your neighbors.
There's a reason why that house across the street looks familiar. It may have been designed by the same person. Perhaps it is a mirror image, with minor differences in finishing details. Walking your neighbor's halls can be a good way to learn about the original floor plan of your own home.
3. Consult your Building Inspector.
In most cities around the world, builders must file for a permit before beginning new construction or remodeling an older home. Permits, often with floor plans and elevation drawings, are usually filed in the Building Inspector's office at your local city or town hall. These documents may not date very far back, but they can be useful for learning about modifications made to your house in the past 20 years or so.

4. Examine the fire insurance maps for your neighborhood.
While you are at City Hall, ask where you can see the fire insurance maps for your area. In the United States, many fire insurance maps date back to the 1870s. At the very least, these maps will indicate the construction material (brick, wood, stone, etc.) used for your home. A good bird's-eye view map will also provide a three-dimensional drawing of houses in your neighborhood. Sometimes there is enough detail to show the shape of the buildings and the placement of doors, windows and porches.
5. Dig into the city archives.
Many communities maintain archives with old photographs, building plans and maps. These records may be heaped in disorganized piles in the town hall attic... Or, they may be cataloged and shelved at your local library or museum. If you are lucky, there may be an official city historian who can advise you in your search.
6. Browse historic plan books.
If your home was built at the turn of the century, there's a good chance the builder drew his inspiration from a pattern book. In the early 20th-century, many American houses -- some surprisingly complex -- had humble beginnings as a Sears, Roebuck ready-to-assemble mail order kit. Others followed stock plans published by firms such as Palliser, Palliser and Company.
7. Read old advertisements.
Simple floor plans for your old house, or houses like it, may have been published in real estate advertisements. Check your public library for back issues of local newspapers. Also check farm journals and women's magazines for featured building plans.
8. Hire an expert.
Blueprints may not exist, but every modification made to your home left behind a trail of evidence. A building professional (usually an architect or a structural engineer) can use field measurements and other clues to recreate the original plans.

If you are new to the type of research described here don't be intimidated. Your journey will introduce you to new ways to find information and a new appreciation for the architecture you see in and around Forest Grove. And it could be the start of a fun new hobby.

Resources:

1. <http://www.vintagedesigns.com/architecture/links.htm> Links to Architecture Dictionary, Historic House Terms, Library of Congress resources on architecture
2. http://epreservation.net/Resources/Articles/Detail.cfm?Art_ID=13 Lists American Architecture styles along with identifying features.
3. The Architectural Character Checklist/Questionnaire, Nelson, Lee H., FAIA
This checklist can be taken to the building and used to identify those aspects that give the building and setting its essential visual qualities and character.
This Checklist/Questionnaire is included in Nelson, Lee H., FAIA. *Preservation Briefs 17: Architectural Character Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*, Washington, D.C.: Technical Preservation Services (TPS), National Park Service, September, 1988 (Web: Last Modified: Thu, Apr 25 2002 08:30:08 am EDT, KDW)
<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/brief17.htm>

4. <http://www.realtor.org/rmomag.NSF/pages/archindex?OpenDocument> Architectural index has clear diagrams of different styles of roofs, columns etc. as well as descriptions and sketches of house types
5. http://www.oldhouseweb.net/stories/Features/Housing_Styles/ is a webpage from The Old House magazine's webpage. It includes descriptions of several types of buildings as well as the time period in which they were commonly built.

6. [A Field Guide to American Houses](#), by Virginia McAlester, Lee McAlester, ISBN: 0394739698
7. [The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture](#), by Rachel Carley ISBN: 0805045635
8. [Identifying American Architecture](#), by John J. Blumenson, ISBN: 0393306100

Historic Landmark Board Openings

Interested in joining the Historic Landmarks Board? As a board member you'll help preserve the city's history while becoming much more familiar with and it, plus helping with the Preservation Grant Program as well as the quarterly newsletter.

Interested? Contact city liaison James Reitz at 503-992-3233 or city recorder Anna Ruggles at 503-992-3235.

The Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board Grant Program

Is your house on our local register? If it is - did you know that your house is eligible for restoration / rehabilitation grant funding? The Historic Landmarks Board has funds to help you with your projects. If you are planning any exterior restoration work such as restoring architectural features or if you have structural work to do such a foundation repair, we'd love to help. We fund projects up to 50% of the cost of the job per grant. Come see us! We can also help you find historically appropriate solutions to any problems you may have.

The Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board

- Scott Rogers (Secretary).....503-357-8265
.....SRogers@extensis.com
- Elizabeth Muncher.....503-357-6168
.....Elizabeth.A.Muncher@tek.com
- Mark Everett.....503-359-4392
.....hbrain@teleport.com
- Monty Smith.....503-357-7804
.....montys@orel.ws
- George Cushing.....503-357-3389
.....george.cushing@worldtravel.com

Preserving Forest Grove is a quarterly newsletter published by the Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board to help fulfill its duty of public education regarding the preservation of cultural resources. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please call James Reitz at 503-992-3233, or JReitz@ci.forest-grove.or.us.

**Historic Landmarks Board
City of Forest Grove
PO Box 236
Forest Grove, OR 97116**

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