

Preserving Forest Grove

Newsletter of the Historic Landmarks Board

The Forest Grove History Room

We need you . . .

by Ginny Carlson and Kim Montoya

We are coming around to the end of the second year of committee meetings for the Forest Grove history Room. Many people have wondered "what is the History Room?" First of all be aware that an undertaking of this size needs to be careful structuring and a great deal of time went into the initial organization. Once that was accomplished to the satisfaction of the committee consisting of members of FHFG and the FGHLB, it was time to set a new goal.

The committee agreed that utilization of the historic surveys that were done in 1985, 1993 and 1998 is vitally important to the function of the room. In order to make this material usable it was necessary to put the 3 surveys into a common database format. Access is the chosen database format.

The 1985 survey had been typed (yes, on a typewriter!!). We did some test scanning of the records but this was unsuccessful and the only solution was to transcribe all the information into a computer. We were lucky enough to have Herb Drew allow his secretary, Melodie Richardson, to use some spare office time to transcribe all 132 surveys into the database that Dave Morelli set up. Tom Carlson, Ginny Carlson, Cheryl Hunter and Jo Morelli proofed the transcribed records (which were remarkably accurate) and Ginny Carlson made the corrections that were necessary. The records are now ready for a final proof reading.

The 1993 survey was in a Word document and had to be converted using a "cut & paste" approach. Kim Montoya completed this process last month. Cheryl has begun the proofing process on this database.

The 1998 survey is already in the Access format and when the content of the other two are approved by the committee, all data will be frozen to 'read only' files and the database will be ready for general use.

This has been a huge project and it took a lot of time. Between June and December of 2000 volunteers put in an average of 37 hours per month.

There are other records in the history room and we are excited to proceed with getting more items moved into the room. We have seen an increase in requests for use of the room in recent months and expect the requests to increase again as we begin to publicize the room more in the near future.

What do we have in the history room?

Photographs, OHS Quarterlies (not a complete set) dating back to the early 1900, census records, business directories, marriage records, biographical information, school district records and a variety of resource books and historic surveys as mentioned above.

What is included on the surveys? Owners' names at the time of the survey, historical or common name of the house, date constructed, architectural description and historical and architectural significance. We also have photocopies of the houses & buildings themselves.

Volunteer Training will be set up as needed. Interested volunteers are urged to call the History Room at (503) 992-1280, to sign up for training, and to find out what other volunteer opportunities are available. Come and help support the preservation of YOUR town's History and learn more about were you live.

Developing a Chain of Title Learning the technicalities

by Kim Fitzgerald

If you are interested in discovering the previous owners of your property, it would be necessary to develop a Chain of Title. This is simply a list of transactions, showing who bought your property and when, going back through time. The consultants for the Landmark's Board developed these for the properties within the Clarke Historic District, as required to complete the National Register Nomination. If you don't feel like doing the legwork yourself, you can check the yellow pages for Title Companies and very often they will do the Chain of Title for you, for a fee. Our consultants for example, were able to use a Title Company's database to obtain information regarding all of the properties in the proposed district. However, if you are interested in the process itself, it can be a very fascinating way to go back through time!

If your property is located within Forest Grove, or anywhere in Washington County, you would need to go to downtown Hillsboro at 155 North First Ave., Suite 130. This is the Recording Department of the Washington County Assessor's Office. If you go into town to drop off your property taxes, it will be on the other side of the office where you pay your

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Harvey Clark – a Forest Grove Founder

by Mark Everett

The Historic Landmark Board has recently completed phase one of a proposal for a historic district within the city of Forest Grove and has started phase two. Most of the land in the proposed district originally belonged to Harvey Clark. If approved, the district will be named after Clark who is one of the founding fathers of Forest Grove.

Clark came to Oregon in 1840 to work as an independent missionary. He was a Vermont native and a graduate of Oberlin College. He entered an area of the Tualatin Valley near Orenco called the West Tualatin Plains. In 1845, Clark moved to the present site of Forest Grove. He founded First Congregational Churches in Forest Grove and Oregon City; he also preached in both. Sometime prior to 1848, Clark purchased two land claims in the West Tualatin Plains. One claim was paid for with 500 bushels of wheat; it was bought from Orus Brown. The other land purchase originally was the Soloman Emerick claim; it consisted of 640 acres of property.

In 1848, Clark turned his thoughts to education. In the spring that year Clark founded a small school primarily for orphaned children. This school was located in Harvey Clark's log cabin near the corner of 15th and Elm Street. As time went on not only orphaned children but all children were accepted into his school. At the first board meeting for Tualatin Academy in the fall of 1848, Clark gave one quarter of his land for establishment of the academy. This plot of land was part of the foundation of Forest Grove. Clark also gave roughly 200 acres of land to be designated as residential lots that could then be sold to generate funds for Tualatin Academy. That is the part of his claim that became the neighborhood just south of Pacific University. The academy flourished for many years and eventually became Pacific University.

Harvey Clark was instrumental in the founding of Forest Grove and Pacific University and designating the historical district as the "Clark Historical District" is a fitting tribute.

How to Pick the Right Color

by Scott Rogers

One of the most difficult decisions to make as a homeowner is what color to paint the exterior of your home. This dilemma is compounded when you have an older home and know that there are historical considerations involved. This is where historical color palettes come into play.

One of the first questions to ask is what qualifies as a historic color palette? This is a range of colors that were originally painted on older homes. Historical colors were dictated by turn of the century tastes and fashions, as well as paint pigments and technologies used at the time. Today, those original color palettes have been combined with modern color theory and technology, thus producing a "historic palette" that offers modern old-home owners a starting place.

Most paint companies now have palettes specifically designed for historic homes. These are great resources to start with because a lot of the footwork has already been completed. The historic palettes also help narrow down what your preferences are. If you would like additional information concerning what constitutes a historic color, try either the library or home restoration stores such as Rejuvenation Hardware in Southeast Portland. There are several great books that discuss this topic at length. In addition, feel free to contact the Forest Grove Historic Board for information and references and, if you are really serious, you can hire a historic colorist to assist you.

After reviewing the various historic color palettes available today, the next question to ask is what palette is right for my home? Several factors are involved in this decision. First, the architectural style of the house. A Victorian era home might warrant a bold, bright color scheme, were as an Arts and Crafts style home might be enhanced by more subdued, earthy tones. You can also do a little research on the home itself. Scrape away some of the existing layers of paint on a small section of the siding, and see if it reveals any previous color schemes. Another way to start your search is to look around your neighborhood at similarly styled homes. Your local neighborhood is like having a paint showroom at

your fingertips that shows you what works and what doesn't. Note your preferences regarding body color and trim color, and don't forget accent colors. Should the porch match the rest of the trim? Or should it be a complimentary color that ties the body and trim together? In the end, go with your personal preference.

Finally, after the above two steps, the third and final question presents itself: how will I know what color will be best for my historic home? After completing your research and selecting a few palettes that you like, it's time to try them out. Narrow it down to two or three colors- the ones you would use on the main body of the house. Buy a pint of each color, in the brand and finish you wish to use for the actual paint job. Paint 3' x 3' foot blocks of each color on different areas of your home. Look at the colors at different times of the day and consider how different seasons will effect the color. Will you still like it when the trees are bare and the flowers are no longer in bloom? Finally, don't forget to consider the "color" of your roof. That lovely shade of blue might not look so great next to a green roof.

When you find a body color you like, it's time to look for trim and accent colors. These colors will not only compliment the body color, they will highlight your home's unique features – or hide the ones you don't care to show off. Start with the colors suggested on your historic palette, then depart from there as necessary.

When you think you've honed in on a palette, it's time to start getting others' opinions. Ask your friends, family and neighbors what they prefer. They may have some insight on something that you didn't even consider. And they may help you eliminate colors that you are undecided on. Go with the color you like, the color that you can live with, the one that is nice to come home to everyday.

It's important that your historic home is painted appropriately. Take the time to research palettes and test them. Choosing an exterior color scheme is a difficult decision because it is an important one. But when you have done your homework, the end result is evident to all that will enjoy the beauty of your home.

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bill. You would need to bring with you the map and tax lot information of your property. To begin your search, you would start off by searching their computer records. Their computer records go back to 1989, then they have records going back as far as the 1850's on microfiche.

You will need to obtain the following information from each transaction described: Current Property Owner (seller) / Property Buyer / Date of Transaction. As you go through your search, the records are organized by the property owner's name, and then you can verify that the property is the same throughout time, by looking at the property description (map and tax lot information). It is especially important to verify the property description if a property owner owns more than one property in Washington County. It can get a bit tricky if your property once belonged to a larger lot and was subdivided, but if that happens, just simply try to trace that larger lot and its owners back through time. The staff at the Recording Department are very helpful, and the use of their equipment and records is all free (except for copies which are fifty cents a piece). If you have any questions just give them a call at (503)846-8751. They are open from 8:30am until 5:00pm Monday through Friday.

Good luck if you try the process on your own, it can be a very gratifying experience to trace the previous owners of your property back over 150 years. You never know who you might uncover!

Colleen Clark Cornish is looking for information on Dilley and Montinore Vinyards. She is putting together a package for the Washington County Historical Society and Dilley School. If you have any old photography of the area she would like to copy them, or if you have stories you would like to tell, call her. Colleen Cornish can be contacted at 503.359.5012.

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