



*The A.T. Smith House (see story p. 2)*

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## **The Historic Landmarks Board: Its Origin and Reason for Being**

**Why:** The State of Oregon passed enabling legislation more than a decade ago that required local communities to create some means to identify, designate, and protect local landmarks.

**How:** Following that direction, the City of Forest Grove enacted a zoning ordinance in 1986 covering historic landmarks. The City Council recognized that the heritage and character of Forest Grove warranted protection and preservation. The ordinance, therefore, initiated a comprehensive program to identify, designate, and protect the history, culture, archaeology, architecture, and landscape of the city.

**What:** To that end, the ordinance also created a Historic Landmarks Board, composed of seven members appointed by the City Council. The Board is authorized to maintain an inventory of historic and cultural landmarks and to recommend to the Council those landmarks that meet specific historic or cultural criteria. The Board is further required to regulate and protect those landmarks through a review and approval or disapproval of proposed exterior changes to historic landmarks.

**Finally:** The Board hopes to secure through this media and others the views of owners of landmarks and the public regarding the community's cultural, historic, and scenic values, and to better inventory and evaluate all historic landmarks.

# Preserving Forest Grove

Newsletter of the Historic Landmarks Board

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## **National Historic Preservation Week**

May 12-19 is the week set aside by the US Department of Interior and the National Parks Service as the time to reflect upon the assets that we have in historic structures and places in our country. This may sound like it has nothing to do with Forest Grove, but it does.

In our town, there are eight buildings that have been designated as National Historic Register Properties. These eight buildings have been deemed as important to all Americans, not just the people of Forest Grove. Next time you are on Main Street, look to the building most of us know as "Grove Furniture" and be aware that it is a national treasure. For more information on the other seven nationally recognized buildings in town, contact anyone on the Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board.

## **Historic Preservation Week in Forest Grove**

This year the Landmarks Board, in conjunction with the City of Forest Grove, is proud to announce the establishment of an award to honor individuals who have shown outstanding achievement in historic preservation in Forest Grove. The award is to be titled "The Eric G. Stewart Award."

The first recipient is to be the late Eric Stewart. No one better exemplifies the intent behind the award than he. Eric devoted years of effort in researching and collecting old photographs, land deeds, and cemetery records. Anyone who ever went to one of his slide shows always came away with a renewed interest in historic Forest Grove. Eric was a gift to our town.

The Eric G. Stewart award will be presented at the City Council meeting on May 13. We hope to have the award permanently located in the Forest Grove Library for public viewing.

Also during Preservation Week, look for our historic landmarks display at the library.

## The A.T. Smith House

The A.T. Smith house is located at the southern end of Elm Street. Built in 1856 by Alvin and Abigale Smith, it is Forest Grove's best example of a Greek Revival residence, and the home of the first white settlers near Forest Grove. The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Properties.

Born in Connecticut in 1802, Alvin was trained as a carpenter. In 1827 he moved to Illinois where he was a farmer and was married to Abigale. In 1840, they made the difficult journey westward inspired by their dream of being missionaries to the Indians. In 1841, the Smiths arrived in Forest Grove and took a land claim of 640 acres at the site of the present house.

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*April 9, 1852: Did chores about home.*

*10: Did the same and bargained with Mr. Patrick Cain for the lumber for my house – cedar at 25 dollars per thousand, fir and other lumber at 15 dollars per thousand and cedar shingles at 5 dollars per thousand.*

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*29: Worked at my new house.*

*30: Did the same and went to see the surveyor run the third township line south of the Baseline. Made a contract with F.W. Brown for my butter, 3 months at 50 cts a lb.*

—From the diary of Alvin Thompson Smith

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Over the years, three separate houses were built on their property. The first house was a makeshift shack, merely designed to shelter the new arrivals from the weather. Upon completion, they immediately began to build their second house. This was a log house intended to be lived in for about ten years, or however long it took the couple to build and profit from their farm. As soon as the couple was established, they built their third house, intended to be their permanent family home. Today only the third house exists.

When the Smiths arrived, they attempted to begin an Indian mission on their property. Although the mission did not succeed, the Smiths raised numerous orphans in their home and helped found the school that eventually became Pacific University. Alvin was also a prominent leader in local, county, and provisional governments.

Much is known about the Smiths and other early settlers in Forest Grove because Alvin kept a daily diary from 1840 until 1885. The original diary is kept at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland. A copy can be read at the Pacific University Library in the Archives.

## So, You Own a Historic Landmark

Owners of historic landmarks in Forest Grove have chosen their buildings and treasure them. Other residents of Forest Grove also esteem the historic ambience of our town. Visitors come to Forest Grove to enjoy seeing our buildings, and visiting them if they are open for tours. We may have more buildings of cultural significance than most other Oregon towns of our size.

What does it mean to own a "historic landmark?" In 1974, Oregonians voted to establish 19 land use goals. Goal 5 created the framework by which local communities established procedures to identify and protect historic buildings. Forest Grove first established a landmarks list in 1986. After a second survey and evaluation, more buildings were added in 1995. Some 67 buildings throughout Forest Grove are now historic landmarks. Eight of these buildings are also on the National Historic Register.

People must live in our historic treasures, so guidelines for protection of old buildings have been established by the Secretary of the Interior of the United States. Owners of local historic landmark buildings recently were sent a brochure by the City of Forest Grove covering those guidelines, in layman's language. Interiors are not regulated. If you plan exterior changes other than the four exemptions listed, your plans will be reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Board. Our goal is to help you "through the hoops" to meet the guidelines which will protect the financial value of your distinguished building.

With the best of intentions, when owners needed to make exterior changes, some people did not think ahead or have appropriate advice on how to modify a building compatible with its original architecture. Making so-called "modern" changes because they are easily available can destroy the aesthetic and economic value of a historic building.

Information and advice is always available through the Historic Landmarks Board of Forest Grove. There are many books, magazines, and other publications on historic preservation. Keep your guidelines brochure for easy reference. If you did not receive one or need another, call the Community Development Department at 359-3227.



In this newsletter, we intend to identify resources and address issues concerning homeowners with historic houses. If you have any such questions or ideas, please contact Martha Khoury, our newsletter editor.

## Meet the Board

Who are these people on the Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board? How did they get on the Board? And why? Can I get on the Board?

There are usually seven members on the Board. Currently the Board has one vacancy. There are three officers: Chair, vice-chair, and secretary.

**Edwin Dey** is the chairman. He has held this position for most of the six years he has been on the Board. He is a history instructor, having taught at Pacific University, Portland State and Portland Community College. He speaks quietly and with great conviction at City Council meetings. If you need clarification of our preservation ordinance, he's the one to ask.

**Janet Lamb** is the newly-elected vice-chair. She's been a member of the Board since 1992. She is finishing her master's degree in art history with a specialization in architectural history from the University of Oregon. Janet lives in Old Town. She is extremely knowledgeable about house structure, architecture, and history.

**Barbara Smith** is the newly-elected secretary of the Board. Her Old Town residence is listed on the local inventory of cultural and historical landmarks. She has been on the Board for over five years. As co-owner of Your Travel Place, and part-time dealer of antiques in two local antique malls, Barbara has a vested interest in preserving Forest Grove's history. She loves this town. Her area of expertise is antiques and artifacts.

**Gladys Haynes** was one of the original members of the Board, ca. 1981. She has served as secretary, vice-chairman, and chairman of the Board and is still an

active member. Gladys has combined her love of old homes with her interest in people. She has a master's degree in American Social and Cultural history. She was very instrumental in identifying original owners of historic homes, a process involving much research. Contact Gladys with questions about local history.

**Tobi Nason** has been a Board member since 1994. She lives in Old Town and is fascinated by Gladys' stories which sound much like historical novels. Tobi writes a newly-created column for the News-Times called "HouseTalk." Tobi's specialties are oral history and interior decoration.

**Martha Khoury**, the Board's newest member, was just appointed to fill one vacancy. Martha provides marketing services for a living and has an avid interest in afternoon tea. Martha is coordinating the newsletter, so if you have any comments, suggestions, or topics for future newsletters, let her know.

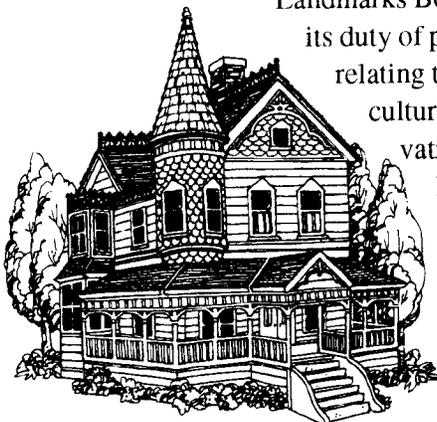
How does one get on the Board? Simply apply. When there is a vacancy, the News-Times will announce it. Applications can be obtained at City Hall on Council Street. Applicants are interviewed by the City Council. Requirements? A strong desire to be on the Board and a demonstrated positive interest, competence, or knowledge of historic preservation. Is it hard work? Can be. Is it fun? Definitely.

The Board is currently seeking applicants particularly with expertise in architecture and/or historic preservation. Application forms are available from City Hall, the library, or by calling 359-3235. The final day to submit an application is May 17.

The Historic Landmarks Board meets monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in the Rogers Room at the library. Visitors are welcome, but please confirm with a Board member.

*Preserving Forest Grove* is a quarterly newsletter for owners of historic and culturally significant properties in Forest Grove. The newsletter is published by the Historic

Landmarks Board to help fulfill its duty of public education relating to historic and cultural resource preservation. If you would like to be on the mailing list, call James Reitz, 359-3233.



### The Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board

Edwin Dey .....	357-1539
Gladys Haynes .....	357-9356
Martha Khoury .....	357-7309
Janet Lamb .....	359-4814
Tobi Nason .....	357-7091
Barbara Smith .....	357-8552

## Friends of Historic Forest Grove

Friends of Historic Forest Grove is a non-profit organization organized to:

- ❶ recognize National and State Historic Landmarks and local cultural resources;
- ❷ enhance and promote the historic environment of Forest Grove;
- ❸ educate the Friends members and the public in local history.

In order to meet these goals Friends has published a brochure of sites of historic interest within Forest Grove. The brochure is available in many downtown businesses, from the Chamber of Commerce, or by calling Jo Morelli at 357-0223 or Ginny Carlson at 357-3967.

The group presents monthly programs on a wide range of topics related to Forest Grove and the region. Their slide shows of historic Forest Grove are very popular and they usually schedule two each year. All programs and meetings are open to the public and free of charge. Programs for private and civic groups within the community can be scheduled upon request. The only

activity for which a donation is requested is home tours, if one is not a member.

A quarterly newsletter describes program and meeting schedules and other items of historic interest. Annual memberships of \$5 are collected in May, the beginning of the fiscal year.

To become a member, send \$5 to Friends of Historic Forest Grove, PO Box 123, Forest Grove, OR 97116, or bring your \$5 to the May 9 meeting.

### Spring/Summer Calender

**Annual Meeting;** Thursday, May 9, 7:30 p.m.

Annual Meeting and elections at the United Church of Christ. Following the business meeting, a panel of antique dealers to appraise any items you bring to the meeting.

**Spring Garden Tour;** Saturday, June 1, 10 a.m. & 1 p.m.

Tour will begin and end at the Main Street Bed and Breakfast, 1803 Main Street. Free of charge.

**Annual Picnic;** Wednesday, July 10, 6:00 p.m.

Held at Laurel Ridge Winery. Bring a salad or dessert. Friends will provide chicken and lemonade.

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Historic Landmarks Board  
City of Forest Grove  
PO Box 326  
Forest Grove, OR 97116