

The old Stage Stop at 2117 A Street

Forest Grove's Mobile History

By Walt Wentz

When we hear the phrase "mobile home," we usually think "trailer house." We generally don't think "beautiful," and we most certainly don't think "historic."

Yet many of Forest Grove's most impressive historic homes are—or were—mobile, because they have been moved from the sites where their builders first erected them. Some of the very oldest buildings in town have been moved, from pioneer times down to the present day.

An example is the old "Stage Stop" at 2117 A Street, shown above. Built in 1859 at what is now the northeast corner of 21st and A, about the turn of the century the old stage stop was moved two doors down the street, to make room for a handsome new three-story home in Transitional style—which was itself torn down only a few years ago, to make room for the little-used parking lot now occupying the site.

If not for some thrifty resident of ninety years ago who had the idea of recycling the old stage stop, present-day Forest Grove would have been the poorer for one important historic building.

According to Mary Jo Morelli of the Friends of Historic Forest Grove, the city has seen several major "spurts" of house-moving, on both sides of the year 1900.

Sometimes a historic house picked up some new history during its move. At 1724 Ash street stands a large, lovingly-maintained Queen Anne dwelling, with the intricately cut "gingerbread" of that era carefully painted in contrasting colors. But it was moved to its present location sometime around 1905. You can tell the date because its old front porch—the most fragile portion of the house—was lost in the move. The present porch, instead of the delicate columns and lacy fern-head brackets of the 1880s, has the massive brick pillars and thick, square beams of the Craftsman era.

The house is a "hybrid," but an impressive one.

Nowadays, pioneer houses are moved by well-trained crews with specialized equipment—long steel support beams, massive trailers, powerful trucks. Local traffic may be disrupted for an hour or two, sometimes power lines have to be temporarily moved, but when the dust clears the old house is sitting on a new foundation in another location.

It wasn't as easy in the old days.

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Preserving Forest Grove

Newsletter of the Historic Landmarks Board

National Historic Preservation Week

By Cheryl Hunter

It's that time of year again ...

We are celebrating National Historic Preservation Week.

For us at the Historic Landmarks Board, every day is about preservation—but each year for 28 years, the National Trust for Historic Preservation sets aside one week to call public attention to the history of our towns, homes and other structures.

This year's Preservation Week theme, "Protecting the Irreplaceable," highlights the unique role that historic places play in defining us as a nation. These places remind us of where we came from, and help us understand and appreciate the richness of our heritage.

Historic places are essential, but they are also fragile—and once lost, they are gone forever.

Since Forest Grove's beginning as a farming community settled by missionaries—beginning with Alvin and Abigail Smith in 1843—many changes have transformed the United States, and this community.

In the last century and a half, Forest Grove has seen the founding of Pacific University, the Great Depression, the growth of the logging industry, the beginning and end of World War I, World War II and the Cold War, and most recently the booming 1980s and '90s.

Along with these historic changes has come the growing strength and maturity of the preservation movement—not just in Forest Grove, but throughout the nation.

Preservation is about ensuring that our historic heritage—the buildings, neighborhoods and landscapes that make up our rich legacy from the past—is kept alive.

Preservation Week encourages us to reaffirm our commitment to saving the irreplaceable landmarks that lend permanence, beauty and character to our communities, and to explore ways to spread the preservation message to new audiences.

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James Casto

The Historic Landmarks Board mourns with the family of board member James Casto, who passed away Saturday, March 13.

Armed with a degree in history and expertise in genealogy, Jim was truly an advocate not only for historic houses, but for the people who lived in them. He was a professional among his colleagues and gave generously of his time and knowledge. We are grateful to have enjoyed his company.

National Historic Preservation Week

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The Week in Forest Grove

The celebration of Historic Preservation Week in Forest Grove will begin with the awarding of the Eric Stewart Award.

The Board will erect a banner celebrating Preservation Week across the main street downtown.

The Friends of Historic Forest Grove and Historic Landmarks Board will host an open house of our new History Room. The city library will house displays depicting area history, and the Annual House Tour will provide a close look at the interiors of some of Forest Grove's more impressive historic homes. See the boxed announcement for dates, and watch the News-Times for more details.

Taking the house tour is a wonderful way to see how historic preservation helps keep our community a beautiful place to live and work.

The Week Nationwide

As part of this week-long celebration, citizens nationwide will be staging different events. Some of these include: Washington, D.C.: a clean-up day at a building on the National Register of Historic Places that is currently under renovation; Peachtree City, Georgia: a cemetery tour and clean-up; Springfield, Illinois: a series of lectures, followed by a trolley tour; Kansas City, Missouri: a free guided tour of historic churches; Somerville, New Jersey: a judging of recent renovations; and Bainbridge Island, Washington: a guided beach walk to view Indian petroglyphs.

We hope to see you at our own local event, the House Tour, on May 15.

Forest Grove's Mobile History

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Movers had to snake thick wooden beams beneath the floor joists of a house to be moved, then put "screw-jacks" underneath and, hauling and straining on steel bars, turn the jacks to lift the house a bit at a time.

In fine weather, teams of draft horses might move the house slowly over temporary planking; in foul weather, they might haul it over greased skids, just as huge logs were moved by ox-teams in the woods.

It was a slow and laborious business, either way.

Yet the "drayage" companies at the turn of the century were kept busy. Morelli can point out dozens of houses that were moved from their original sites. Lumber was cheap, vacant lots plentiful, but building took time and money—so, as new houses were added to the town plat, old ones were moved around like pieces on a checkerboard—sometimes given to newlywed offspring as the old folks built newer digs, sometimes sold to a newcomer who lacked either time or money to build new.

Anything that held out the rain had a value, and the applicable building regulations were lenient.

As a result, you might say, some of Forest Grove's historic neighborhoods have a distinctly checkered past, and many of its old houses are far from home.

Tour of Historic Houses

Saturday, May 15, 1999

Noon to 4 p.m.

Cost: \$7.50

Purchase tickets at Collections in the Attic, beginning in early May

Co-sponsored by the Friends of Historic Forest Grove and the Historic Landmarks Board

Forest Grove History Display

Thalia Stewart, widow of historian Eric Stewart, has completed a major project, "Snapshot Forest Grove," a series of 12 wall-mounted boards. Each board describes a decade of the town's history, from 1840 to 1940, in one significant photograph and 300 words—descriptions, narrative or quotes from journals—intended to "capture the essence of that decade," Thalia says.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Forest Grove Library, the Historic Landmarks Board and the Friends of Historic Forest Grove, the boards are intended to be a gift to the architects who are designing the expansion of the Forest Grove City Library.

Although Thalia provided the original conception of the project, its completion involved a great many local people.

Megan Havens did the research for photographs and text. Lynda Larson did the graphics work. Pepper Brown of Oregon Quick Print did the reproduction. Lucille Robbie of Etcetera Too—The Frame Place did the mounting. Patricia Grass of Green Heron Press made the gift box, and Pat Edmonds made the marbled paper to cover the box.

A duplicate set of history boards will be placed in the Eric Stewart Collection, where it will be available to civic groups for display and educational purposes.

The boards will be on display in the new Forest Grove History Room during its open house, May 15.

Open House of Forest Grove History Room

Saturday, May 15, Noon to 4 p.m.

Room 311, Old First National Bank Building
(Northwest corner of Main and Pacific)

Eric Stewart Award, 1999

By Martha Khoury

Congratulations to Friends of Historic Forest Grove (FHFG), recipient of this year's Eric Stewart Award.

Established in spring of 1996, the Eric Stewart Award is presented during National Preservation Week to honor an individual or organization that has shown outstanding achievement in historic preservation in Forest Grove.

The recognition was awarded posthumously to Eric Stewart in 1996. In 1997, it was presented to Gladys Haynes, and in 1998 to Mary Jo Morelli.

The plaque representing the award is on display in the Forest Grove City Library.

In addition to years of devoted service to historic preservation and education in Forest Grove, Friends of Historic Forest Grove has worked particularly hard this past year to help create the Forest Grove History Room. To facilitate that goal, FHFG recently acquired 501(c)(3) status as a charitable, nonprofit organization. This means all donations to FHFG and to the History Room are tax deductible.

Friends of Historic Forest Grove was organized in 1989 by a group of people who recognized the distinct and important place Forest Grove has in the history of western Oregon and the Tualatin Plain. This fundraising group was organized to acquire brass plaques for local National Register properties, since, at that time, fundraising was out of the purview of the Historic Landmarks Board.

Since then, FHFG has also used enhancement grant funds to provide wood plaques for properties on the local *Register of Historic and Cultural Resources*, primarily those which have been open for tour.

The mission of the Friends of Historic Forest Grove is to:

- Recognize national and state historic landmarks and local cultural resources;
- Enhance and promote the historic environment of Forest Grove; and
- Educate members and other groups in areas of historic interest.

To further this mission, FHFG works to document the

rich history of the area by collecting photographs and oral and written history. These resources are used to prepare programs, and are made accessible to the public for research purposes.

With a current membership of 150, FHFG presents educational programs, including slide shows, lectures, and photo exhibits, to schools and clubs. FHFG has sponsored a needlework show, tours of historic houses, fashion shows and annual events, including the spring garden tour and holiday parlor tour.

If you are interested in membership in Friends of Historic Forest Grove, please call 992-1280.

Grant Funds Still Available For Home Restoration Projects

The Historic Landmarks Board has a \$7,000 budget for Renovation Grants for historic buildings in Forest Grove in the coming fiscal year.

Persons owning a historic building on which external repairs are needed—such as paint, windows, roof or structural restoration—may apply for a grant of up to \$1,000 to be applied to those repairs.

To qualify, the repairs must not visually impair the historic appearance of the building. All grants must be approved by the Historic Landmarks Board.

For information on obtaining Renovation Grants, contact James Reitz at 359-3233, or attend the monthly meeting of the Historic Landmarks Board in the City Library, beginning at 7 p.m.

The next two meetings will be May 26 and June 29.

At the meeting of April 27, grants were awarded for repairs on several historic Forest Grove buildings, including the Hines House at 1604 Birch Street, the Congregational Parsonage at 2125 18th Avenue, the Fortner House at 2328 18th Avenue, and the Masonic Lodge at 2029 Main Street.

The Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board

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Calendar of Coming Events

Historic Preservation League of Oregon "What Makes a Historic Neighborhood?"

Lecture by Virginia McAlester

Tuesday, May 11, 7:30 p.m.

Warner-Pacific College, CMM Building, 2219 SE 68th

Admission: \$10 HPLO members, \$15 non-members

Tour of Historic Homes

Sponsored by Friends of Historic Forest Grove

Saturday, May 15, Noon to 4 p.m.

Tickets: \$7.50 at Collections in the Attic

Open House of Forest Grove History Room

Sponsored by Historic Landmarks Board

and Friends of Historic Forest Grove

Saturday, May 15, Noon to 4 p.m.

Room 311, Old First National Bank Building

(Northwest corner of Main and Pacific)

Admission free

"Thru the Garden Gate"

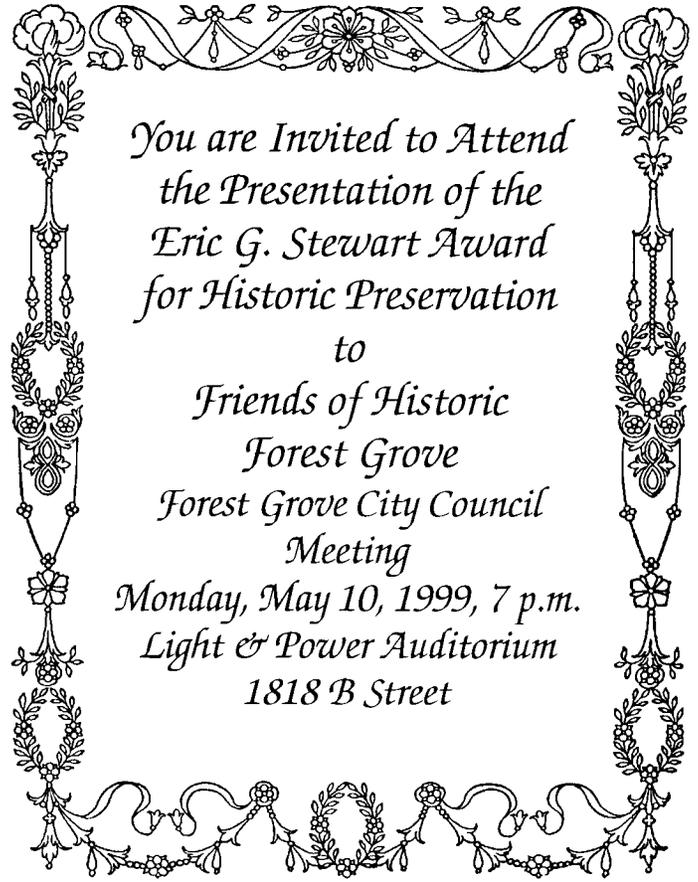
A Tour of Ten Cottage Gardens in Old Town

Sponsored by Friends of Historic Forest Grove

Saturday, June 5, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Tickets: \$5 at the corner of 17th and Birch Streets

Parking at the United Methodist Church



*You are Invited to Attend
the Presentation of the
Eric G. Stewart Award
for Historic Preservation
to
Friends of Historic
Forest Grove
Forest Grove City Council
Meeting
Monday, May 10, 1999, 7 p.m.
Light & Power Auditorium
1818 B Street*

Historic Landmarks Board
City of Forest Grove
PO Box 326
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