

The

ARCHIVE

QUARTERLY OF THE GRESHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING 2025



410 N Main Ave ♦ PO Box 65 ♦ Gresham, OR 97030 ♦ (503) 661-0347 ♦ info@greshamhistorical.org



Rockwood Industrial District partially completed in the early 1960s.
GHS 1926



See pg. 6-7

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AT THE MUSEUM

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar. 29, 5pm

History Talk: Inside the Outlook

Join veteran Gresham Outlook reporter Anne Endicott to learn about the history of Gresham's hometown newspaper. See pg. 4 for details.

Apr. 26, 5pm

History Talk: Quilts and the Underground Railroad

A lecture by Dr. LaVerne Lewis, who will share hand quilting techniques passed down from her great grandmother, Bessie Jean Walker. See pg. 4.

April 27, 1pm

Historic Downtown Gresham Walking Tour

Learn about historic buildings and landmarks in Downtown Gresham on an easy, 1-hour walking tour.

May, TBD

Gresham Heritage Bicycle Tour (Family Friendly!)

Explore Gresham's history by bike! Stay tuned for more information. Contact Austin Ross with questions: austin.ross@greshamoregon.gov

May 9-10

Plant Sale and Flower Crown Workshops (see pg. 4)

May 31, all day

Archaeology Roadshow at Gateway Discovery Park

Check out our booth at the Archaeology Roadshow, featuring a mini exhibit on music history in Gresham.

May 31, 5pm

History Talk: Walter Q. Gresham and U.S. China Policy

A lecture by Jim Mockford on Secretary of State Walter Gresham, our city's namesake. See pg. 4.



NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Indigenous Arts Festival Receives Grant

The Multnomah County Cultural Coalition has awarded GHS a \$2,700 grant to support the 2nd annual Indigenous Arts Festival, which is planned for October 4th and 5th, 2025. A collaboration with Gresham Outdoor Public Art and the Portland Indigenous Marketplace, this weekend event will feature artist booths, lectures, live music, dancing, and children's activities.



Dancers at the 2024 Indigenous Arts Festival. Photo by Charlotte Becker.

Podcast Team to Present at Statewide Conference

The *Voices of Gresham* podcast is getting statewide recognition! Public historian Stephanie Vallance, intern Melissa Bevency, and director Silvie Andrews have been

selected to give a talk at the 2025 Oregon Museums Association Conference in Independence, OR this April. The presentation will cover how our team funded, planned, and produced the podcast, with the goal that other museums will be able to host their own productions. We're excited to represent Gresham at the conference and share the success of the oral history-based podcast, which now sits at over 1,800 downloads! Season 1 is now streaming at greshamhistorical.org/voices-of-gresham-podcast-1.

Speakeasy Dinner Auction Postponed

Our annual "fun-raiser" will return in 2026 with more reasons to dust off those glad rags and support a great cause – historical preservation. Though date and location are still to be determined, there's no doubt the event will be just as exciting and action packed as in years before.

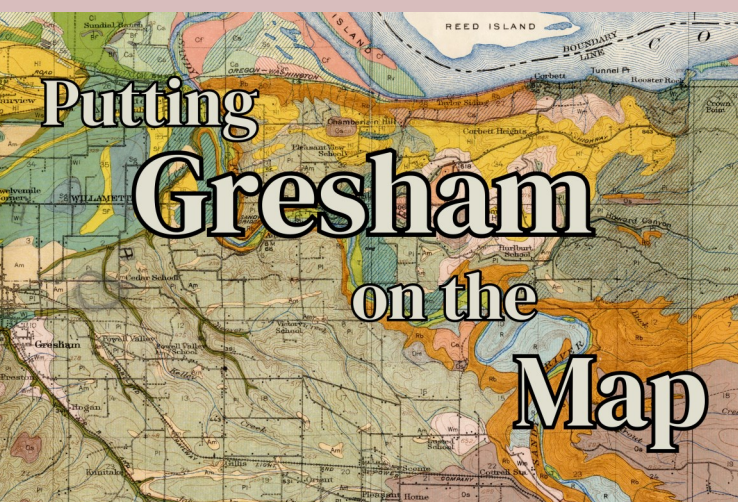
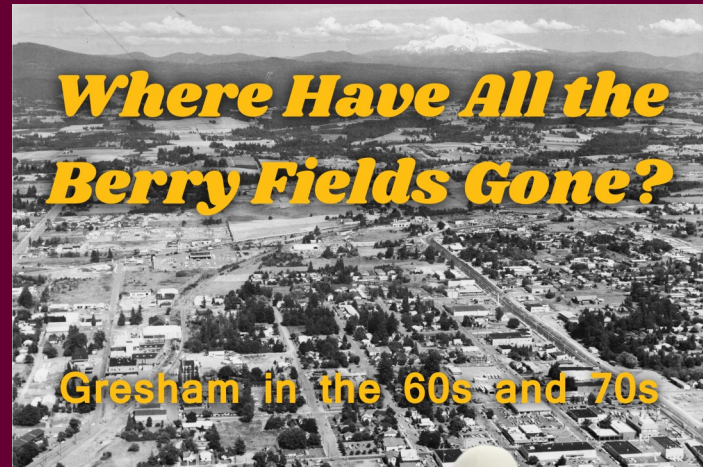
In the meantime, keep an eye out for other fundraising events, including the Flower Fest in May and the Tie Dye Fundraiser in July (dates TBA).

The podcast now sits at over 1,800 downloads.

AT THE MUSEUM

Our featured exhibit explores business, politics, and culture in Gresham at a time of historic change. From the Street of Dreams to Mt. Hood Community College, many forces converged on Gresham during the 60s and 70s, defining what the city would become. Incorporating objects, photos, documents, and oral history accounts, this exhibit sheds light on a little-studied but important era in our history.

Dates: Jan. 22–Nov. 15, 2025



This exhibit features maps from our archives. These historic documents could show you how to get around, where to shop, what to plant in your garden, and why you should move to Gresham—plus much more. Learn more about what different types of maps can tell you about the world around us and why cartography remains important in the age of satellites and GPS.

Dates: Jan. 22–Nov. 15, 2025

AT THE MUSEUM

FLOWER FEST IS COMING BACK!



Get your spring annuals, flower baskets, house plants, herbs, and more at our 3rd annual plant sale!

May 9th-10th (Friday & Saturday), 8am-4pm in the Gresham Historical Society parking lot

Flower crown workshops: May 9th, 7pm and May 10th, 10am

Visit greshamhistorical.org/events for details and updates.



Free cemetery tours are returning this spring! This year, you can choose between the standard one-hour tour and a longer walk that will also explore significant trees within the cemeteries. All tours will continue to meet in the east lot of West Gresham Elementary, 330 W Powell Blvd. The terrain is rolling lawn.

2025 Tour Dates

5/17, 12-1 - Cemetery Tour

6/14, 12-1:30 - Cemetery Tree Tour

7/13, 12-1 - Cemetery Tour

8/16, 12-1:30 - Cemetery Tree Tour

9/13, 12-1 - Cemetery Tour

10/11, 12-1:30 - Cemetery Tree Tour

UPCOMING HISTORY TALKS

3/29—Inside the Outlook

Join veteran Gresham Outlook reporter Anne Endicott to learn about the history of Gresham's hometown newspaper. Based on Anne's recollections and the research and stories of her friend and mentor Sharon Nesbit, this talk will be a colorful account of a newspaper that changed with its community.

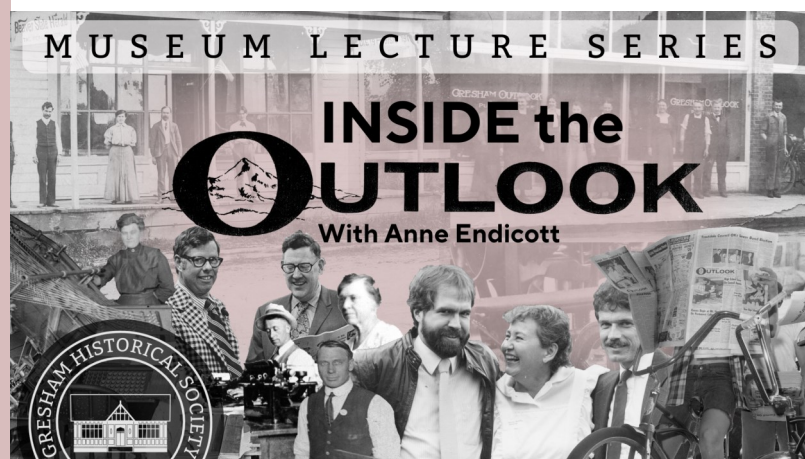
4/26—Coded Quilts and the Underground Railroad

Dr. LaVerne Lewis

5/31—Walter Q. Gresham and U.S. China Policy

Jim Mockford

Lectures take place on the last Saturday of the month at 5pm. Admission is free for members and \$5 for all others.



OUTLOOKing

Volunteer Mike Andrews spends hours each week sifting through bound volumes of the Gresham Outlook, which we recently received from the Outlook's closed print shop. While looking for damaged or missing pages, he also finds forgotten and unusual stories from Gresham's past. He'll be sharing a few of them in this new section.

In the 1950s, East Multnomah County began to transition from farms and fields to a more suburban setting to accommodate the postwar Baby Boom. In addition to housing, the growing population needed more schools.

In the spring of 1959, an as-yet-unnamed new high school was being constructed along Southeast 182nd Avenue north of Powell Boulevard to relieve crowding at Gresham High School. The school board narrowed the field of possible names down to three, and in an article in the April 9, 1959 *Outlook*, it was announced that the new school would be named Centennial High School, in honor of the 100th anniversary of Oregon statehood. "It was felt by the board that the new name would always bring to mind the year in which the school was built."

The other two options for names? Mt. Hood High School and Sam Barlow High School.



Centennial High School during and after construction, from the 1961 Centhiscan.



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

This February, we celebrated the 120th birthday of Gresham becoming a city. Gresham in 1905 looked very different from Gresham in 2025, as you'd expect. For starters, the population now (111,634) is about 220 times what it was back then. Most of this growth has taken place over the past 50 years due to urbanization and annexations (you can learn more about it in our featured exhibit exploring Gresham in the 60s and 70s). Early city ordinances mandated licenses for bars, "soothsayers," "hawkers," and "jugglers," among other professional entertainers. They also forbade the running of livestock within city limits.

Gresham's birth as a city was surprisingly contentious. While local business leaders were generally in favor of incorporating, many farmers were opposed. Becoming a city meant paying city taxes, which would fall more heavily on landowners. Tax-funded

improvements, such as better roads and a volunteer fire department, would largely benefit Gresham's commercial core. So when the time came for the townspeople to meet and nominate their first town council, a dissident group arrived early, called the meeting to order, and adjourned it without nominating a council in the hopes of foiling the planned incorporation. Unsurprisingly, their ploy failed to delay the inevitable. Gresham was incorporated as a town on February 11, 1905.

The City of Gresham still holds the handwritten records of the first town council meetings. Eventually these unique and incredible records will be available online.

Silvie Andrews

HISTORY FEATURE

DREAMS OF A HOME IN GRESHAM

By Jay Lehr

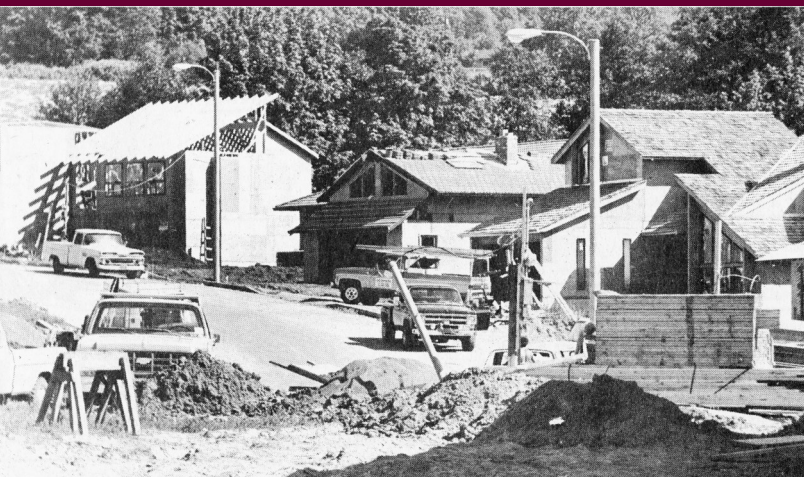
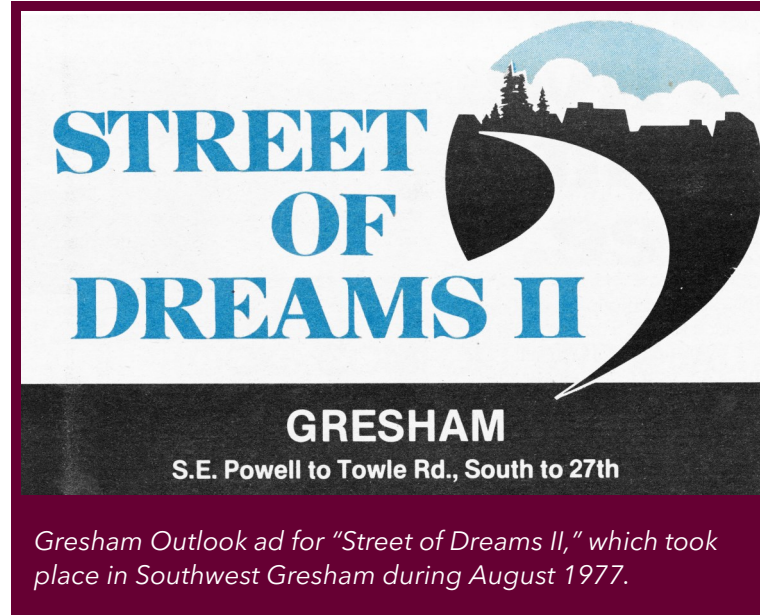
In the summer of 1976, the Homebuilders Association of Metropolitan Portland held a "Street of Dreams" event at Rock Creek in Washington County. This event invited the public to explore a neighborhood of brand-new homes, showcasing the best ideas and craftwork of Portland area home builders and the latest in home design and technology. The success of this first Street of Dreams prompted a Street of Dreams II for 1977, and this time organizers chose Gresham.

The housing boom in Gresham began in the early 1970s, and by 1977 it was in full swing. Berry fields and pasturelands were one by one being bulldozed and turned into housing subdivisions. During this time, Raymond and Myrtle Crites purchased a 79-acre berry farm off of Towle Road in southwest Gresham and had it platted as the Willowbrook subdivision; this is where it was decided "Street of Dreams II" would be built. The topography and established natural greenways on the site could accommodate a variety of showcase homes.

Street of Dreams II consisted of 14 homes along the northernmost section of Southwest 29th just south of Southwest 27th, plus Southwest Riverview Court. The goal of the program was to build affordable homes while incorporating modern design and features. The target price range for the Street of Dreams homes was \$55,000 to \$75,000, which was already above the state's average new home price of under \$50,000, but once completed,

these 14 homes had ballooned to asking prices of \$70,000 - \$100,000 (roughly \$400,000-\$500,000 today).

These were not your average tract homes; they were packed with cutting-edge design and state-of-the-art amenities. Many homes touted vaulted ceilings, skylights, sunken living rooms, and large windows to "give the feeling of spaciousness and elegance." Natural tones and natural stone and wood materials appeared in abundance throughout. Floor-to-ceiling mirrors covered many walls. Bathrooms got walk-in showers, while kitchens got walk-in pantries. Decks and patios extended living spaces into the outdoors. One home included a "sports court" in the backyard.



"Street of Dreams II" homes under construction (left) and after completion during the event in August 1977. From the Gresham Outlook, August 1977.

HISTORY FEATURE

These model homes incorporated technology relatively new to home construction, such as heat pumps, air conditioning, trash compactors, microwave ovens, intercom systems, built-in lawn sprinkling systems, and automatic ice maker refrigerators. More than one model home highlighted its "Jenn-Aire" downdraft vent oven, which eliminated the need for a hood vent. In a nod to the energy crisis of the time, insulation and energy efficiency were top selling points.

Street of Dreams II ran from August 13th through August 28th, 1977. Despite rainy weather, the event drew visitors from across the region to view these incredible new model homes and see what Gresham had to offer as an up-and-coming bedroom community to Portland. Some of the model homes sold during the Street of Dreams event, but others took a few extra months to find owners. These homes, and all the new homes built since, brought new residents to the city that contributed to Gresham's evolution from being primarily a "farm town" to what is now a bustling city - the fourth largest in Oregon.

Street of Dreams is now a program of Northwest Natural Gas. It continues to feature new neighborhoods annually, showcasing the latest in residential architecture and technology.

The August 1977 issue of *Northwest Living* magazine featured houses from the Gresham Street of Dreams along with profiles of the builders and architects. These illustrations show a few of the homes that visitors could explore. You can still find most of these homes if you take a walk in Southwest Gresham—just don't try to go inside.



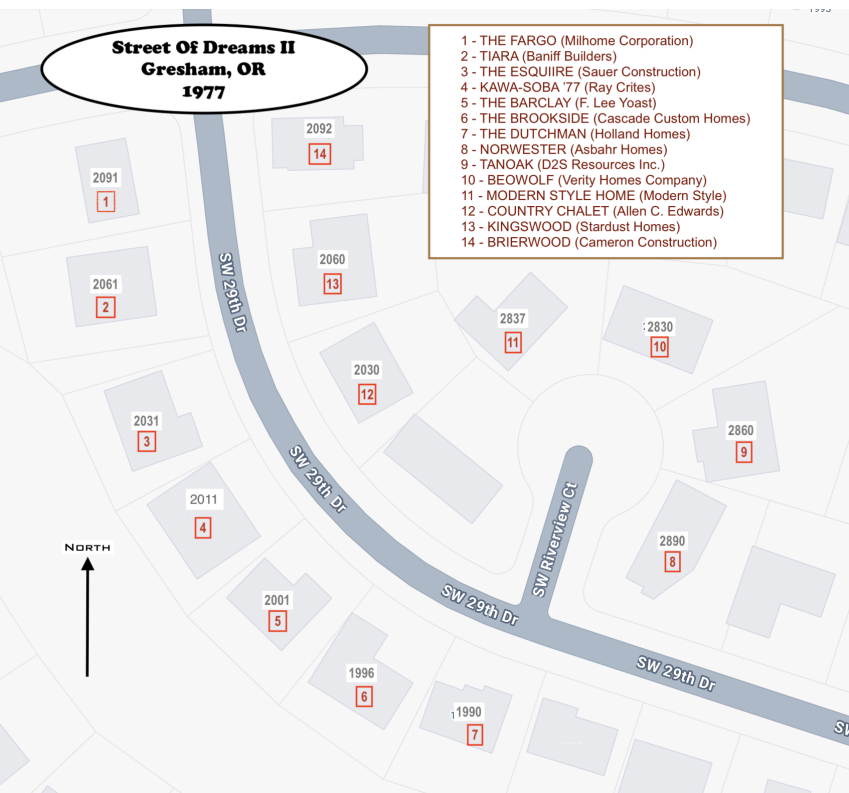
The **Kawa-Soba '77** was a 2,422 square foot house built by Ray Crites featuring a bridge-like entry and modern accommodations, including a Jenn-Air range in the kitchen, a buried sprinkler system, and a heatform fireplace.



The **Barclay**, built by F. Lee Yoast, measured 2,363 square feet. It featured dynamic exterior design and an airy, modern interior with a sunken living room and family room and a second-floor balcony.



The **Tanoak** was a smaller home at 1,975 square feet. Builders D2S Resources, Inc. included cedar interior siding and exposed-beam ceilings, plus a large deck off the dining room.



LET'S GET ACQUAINTED

We love our volunteers! Our staff of about 50 volunteers helps out with everything from photographs to textiles and oral histories. They greet visitors to the museum, lead historical tours and lectures, and provide the heavy lift with property maintenance and repair.

An 11-member board of directors oversees the financial side of GHS and the museum, conducting fundraisers to support upkeep on GHS buildings and day-to-day expenses. The board also works closely with Executive Director Silvie Andrews to aid with grant funding, collections acquisitions, and marketing.

The generous donation of our volunteers' time ensures Gresham's history will continue to unfold and be available to future generations.

So let's get acquainted!

MARDY STEVENS, CATALOGER

A Gresham native and past GHS president, Mardy left her hometown for education and career until the late 1980s. After her return, she frequently tagged along to the museum with her mother, who was a versatile museum volunteer.

In early 2022, Mardy offered a significant personal photo donation to the museum, which we accepted with one request: she electronically catalog the nearly 500 photos herself.

"It took me one and a half years on the museum computer, two hours at a time, one day a week..." she said. "But this project was incredibly gratifying to me because it meant that many Sister City visits to Ebetsu, Japan; Sokcho, Korea; and Owerri, Nigeria are finally saved for the future in the museum electronic archives."

These days, Mardy is one of several volunteer catalogers who don white gloves and wield powerful magnifying glasses to record information about donated objects.

"The traditional saying that when you volunteer you receive more than you give, has certainly been true for me," Mardy said. "New learning, making friends, being part of a team effort, making a difference – all ring true and are part of the fabric of our Gresham community."



DEBBY BROWN, GHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Another Gresham native, Debby joined the board of directors in April 2024 after an invitation from former Gresham High School classmate and board vice president Lon Shiiki. The opportunity to serve on the board was an honor, Debby said, adding that she welcomes the chance to contribute to the preservation and protection of the community's history.

"I want to expand my knowledge of local history, connect with others who are passionate about our community's history, and volunteer my time and skills to support [GHS's] mission," Debby said. "GHS is essential to our community to maintain Gresham's identity, foster a sense of pride and belonging, and ensure our history is preserved for future generations," she said.

MEMBERSHIP

GRESHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

JOIN US ON A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME!

MARCH 1ST - APRIL 30TH

YOUR MEMBERSHIP — GRESHAM'S LEGACY

JOIN AND REFER NEW MEMBERS
TO ENTER THE RAFFLE FOR A
**GIFT BASKET WORTH
OVER \$250!**



WHY JOIN?

As a member, you'll enjoy special perks such as discounts on merchandise, free admission to our speaker series, discounted rates to events held at the Gresham Museum, invitations to special events, and a subscription to our quarterly newsletter.

WHAT YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS

With your support, we can continue to curate engaging exhibitions, preserve priceless heritage materials, and foster a deeper understanding of our collective history through educational programming and events.

DID WE MENTION THE PRIZES?

Now through April 30, new and renewing members will get two entries in a raffle for a gift basket full of merchandise and gift certificates valued at \$250! PLUS you'll qualify for a **free annual family membership at the Oregon Historical Society!** See below for details.



THE OREGON
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
FOUNDED 1898

RECIPROCAL MEMBERSHIP OFFER

Join or renew your membership to the Gresham Historical Society and get a FREE one-year family membership to the Oregon Historical Society!

OHS membership includes a subscription to the Oregon Historical Quarterly, free admission to the museum and library, a 10% discount in the museum store, invitations to exclusive member events, priority access to the Mark O. Hatfield Lecture Series, and more! Offer ends April 30, 2025.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership at the Gresham Historical Society supports the continued preservation and sharing of our local history. Now, more than ever, we rely on member support to continue our mission.

Not a member already? You can join on our website, at greshamhistorical.org.

Or, fill out the form below and bring it to the museum, or mail it to us at PO Box 65, Gresham, OR 97030. Please make checks payable to *Gresham Historical Society*.

MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT/RENEWAL FORM

Member or Family Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

CHOOSE YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Each membership level includes 10% off museum store purchases, a subscription to the quarterly newsletter, and invitations to members-only events throughout the year.

- ☐ **Individual** \$25 membership for one adult
- ☐ **Dual** \$35 membership for two adults
- ☐ **Family** \$50 benefits for two adults and all family members under 18
- ☐ **Business** \$150 two membership cards for any employee
- ☐ **Business Plus** \$500 two membership cards for any employee and your business logo in the Quarterly of the Gresham Historical Society
- ☐ **Patron** \$1,000

I wish to make an additional donation in the amount of \$ _____

How do you prefer to receive your newsletter? ☐ Email ☐ Print

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Payment method (circle one): Cash Check (payable to Gresham Historical Society)

Please charge my credit/debit card \$ _____

Card number _____ Expiration date _____ CVV _____

Signature _____

THANKS TO OUR BUSINESS PLUS MEMBERS FOR
THEIR INVALUABLE SUPPORT!



MEMBERSHIP

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE JOINED, RENEWED, OR DONATED SINCE NOVEMBER:

Laurie Monnes Anderson
Mike & Claudia Andrews
Silvie Andrews
April Avery
David & Kendra Baumann
Charlotte Becker & Howard Huntley

Joy Beldin
Joe Breniser
Rob Burke
Tami & Kirk Campbell
Bev Carlon
Nancy Carpenter
Sandy Cartisser
Ric Catron
Shannon Chisom

Louise Dix
Dunlop Family
Kathy Edwards
Michael Fitz
Frenzi Frozen Yogurt
Scott & Pamela Gibbons
Valerie Greenaway

Cheryl Grigg
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Melissa Hayden
Sarale Hickson
Georgene Honke
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Don & Sharleen Jessup
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Geoffrey Kenway
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Emma Olson
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Laura Shown
Shauna Signorini
Evan Smiley
Desiree Smith & Jamie LaCour
Glenn Sogge
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Mardy Stevens

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Eellitta Stone
Nancy Takamune
Marilee Thompson
Marguerite Truttman
Susan Voss
Linda Wagner
Doug & Diane Walker
Helen Wand

Judy Werner
Janet Westberg
Richard Witmer & Georgene Hansen-Witmer
Tracy Woodsworth
Ann Zink & Steve Christiansen

Christmas at the Museum Sponsors

Riverview Community Bank
USI Insurance Services
Gresham Ford
Oregon Insurance Agency, Inc.
Moen Machinery Co.
Bucket List Travel Tours, Inc.
City of Gresham
Warren Allen, LLP

In-Kind Services

Foraged Blooms—wreath materials
Minuteman Press Gresham—printing

Polar King Sign Restoration Fund

Mike & Claudia Andrews
Ann Zink & Steve Christensen





Powell Boulevard looking west towards Gresham, about 1920. GHS 2014.008.0022, donated by Norma Davidson

The Gresham Historical Society is a private, nonprofit organization that manages the Gresham Historical Museum and special collections library and archive, located in the 1913 former Gresham Library building in Historic Downtown Gresham.

Founded in 1976 and funded through donations from the community, the Gresham Historical Society was run exclusively by volunteers for the majority of its history.

In 2010, Multnomah County voters passed a property tax levy to support local history. These levy funds pay the salary of a full-time museum director, which helps keep us free and open to the public.

Our mission is to preserve and share our community's past to enrich its present and future.

HOURS

Wednesday-Saturday	10am-4pm
Sunday	12pm-4pm
Monday-Tuesday	Closed

CONTACT

Web: greshamhistorical.org/contact

Email: info@greshamhistorical.org

Phone: (503) 661-0347

Board and Staff

President Sue Piazza ✦ **Vice President** Lon Shiiki ✦ **Treasurer** Leslie Radke ✦ **Secretary** Cassie Rafalski

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Museum Director Silvie Andrews ✦ **Public Historians** Stephanie Vallance and Melissa Bevency

Textile Collections Manager Rose Caughie