

# City of Gresham

## Historic and Cultural Landmark Inventory Form

### LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

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Historic Name: **Heiney House**

Current/ Other names: **Forest Springs  
Bed and Breakfast**

Address: **3680 SW Towle Ave.**

**Gresham, Oregon**

**Multnomah County**

Township: **1s** Range: **3E** Section: **21**

¼: **NW ¼ of the NW ¼** Zip Code: **97080**

Tax Lot: **300** Addition: Block:

Assessor: **R340834**



Heiney house looking east up the walkway from SW Towle.

### PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

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Resource Type: **Residence** Height (stories): **1 1/2**

Total # eligible resources: **1**

Eligibility: **Eligible/ Significant**

NR status: **Not Listed**

Primary construction date: **c.1908**

City Landmark Status: **Listed**

Secondary construction date:

Primary use: **Residence**

Use comments: **Substantial alterations to  
N and E façades**

Secondary use: **Bed & Breakfast**

Primary style: **Craftsman**

Style comments: **Orig. form notes**

Secondary style: **Stick**

**English Cottage (incorrect)**

Primary siding: **Clapboard**

Siding comments: **Similar Clapboard used  
on additions**

Secondary siding: **Coursed Shake**

Plan type: **Rectangular**

Architect:

Builder: **Frank Heiney**

Notes: **Exterior: Double gambrel front porch with decorative stickwork. Sits on threeknee braced columns and concrete footings.**

**Alterations: Shed roof dormer added to south façade. Second story addition has extensively altered the north and east rooflines.**

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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A woman with extensive land holdings, Hannah (Rilla) Heiney owned this home, which her family built in 1910. Hannah's husband Franklin owned and operated a Sawmill on Butler Creek with his brothers. The Heiney family was regularly in the local news, often entangled in controversy.

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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The Heiney House is a 1908 Craftsman home set up on a steep hillside and is set back approximately 100 ft. from the northeast corner of Towle Avenue and Butler Road. Butler Road and Butler Creek are directly south and downhill of the home. A long gravel road grade affords access to the property and is located 190 ft. north of a carriage pullout, mailbox, and water-well.

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Access to the parcel by car requires passing through a locked gate and driving past a remodeled guard/ carriage house to a graveled pad area for 4-5 cars at the northeast corner of the home. The home's historic entry is the west (main) façade, and is accessed by a narrow footpath from Towle Avenue, where there appears to be a pullout and smaller parking area. The footpath takes you up past numerous large and potentially historic rhododendrons, boxwoods, spruces and cedars, to reach the front entrance. A tool shed sits directly east of the home and is clad in the original shakes from the historic barn, which was located further east uphill. There are several historic rock wall alignments and old foundations on the parcel as well. A steep roofed front gabled playhouse sits uphill to the northeast of the house. The home is the only structure considered a city Historic Landmark.

The Heiney house is a square plan Craftsman home with a simple hipped roof covered in composition shingles. It is clad clapboard siding and has coursed shake siding on the west (main) façade's original gabled roof dormer. The home's decorative diamond leaded glass windows are all intact, as well two large plate glass bay windows on the west and south façades. Many of the original double-hung 1/1 wooden sash windows remain on the main floor, but the second story displays significant alterations to original fenestration.

The most prominent feature is the unique double gambrel-roofed porch, which covers the main entry and is offset on the southwest corner of the home. The porch features decorative stickwork and centered louvered vents on the pediments. Decorative knee braces and square posts support the porch, which rests on pyramidal poured concrete footings. The main entrance faces south, and stairs on the west and east sides of the porch create the feeling of an open breezeway. The main entry has original hardware and features a large, single-paneled beveled-glass door, with two diamond leaded-glass sidelights.

Additionally, the south façade contains a three-section bay window with original 1/1 double-hung wooden sash windows framing a center cottage window with a decorative diamond leaded-glass upper sash. The second story alteration of a three-window, shed-roof dormer is clad in clapboards. The eastern half of the south façade is currently undergoing removal of vinyl siding to return to clapboards.

The east and north facades display significant alterations in the form of a second story addition, with hipped and shed wall dormers. These alterations significantly alter the historic roofline. However, the south and west facades have little to no visibility from the street.

### **HISTORIC DESCRIPTION**

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According to county deed records, this house was first owned by (Rilla) Hannah Heiney, née Davis, wife of Frank (Franklin) Heiney. The two married in Vancouver, Washington on June 2, 1901. Hannah, at 20 years old, was much younger than her husband, who was 41 years old. Deed records also indicate that Hannah purchased several large parcels of land in the south Gresham area in 1904 – 1906. Hannah bought the parcel from A. C. and R. N. Gibbs on April 11, 1906. Frank, who worked as a carpenter and mill owner with his brothers, may have constructed the home in 1908.

For a woman in her early twenties, Hannah's extensive land holdings were very rare for the time. It is unclear why she, and not her husband, is on the deed transfers. One probable explanation is that Frank wanted to distance himself and his wife from his family.

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Joseph and Rachael Heiney (Frank's parents) emigrated from Kansas to Oregon in 1874 and homesteaded on a 177-acre tract in East County. They had 11 children, 8 of which survived to adulthood—Frank being the oldest and born in Indiana in about 1860. In addition to farming, Frank and his brother Richard owned and operated a sawmill near his eventual home along Butler Creek. From time to time, they employed their younger brothers Ross, Arthur, and Albert at the mill. Little is known about the mill beyond its approximate location.

Frank's younger brothers Arthur and Albert lived with their parents on the family homestead. In 1903, they sued their father Joseph for \$3,750 in damages after he set fire to a large, dead tree on the property, which subsequently grew into a several-acre brush fire. Rachael helped move the neighbors' livestock to safety, but Albert and Arthur claimed that the fire damaged the farmland that they leased from their father. Joseph published an open letter in *The Oregonian* clarifying his side of the story. While he agreed that he had leased the farmland to his sons, he had also allowed the boys to live in his home rent-free. Joseph further claimed that the controversy started because the brothers had disrespected their mother's cooking and homemaking by bringing in a Mrs. Hanavan to cook and clean. Mrs. Hanavan then sued Joseph for quarreling and defamation of character. The suits continued as Joseph fought his sons up to the State Supreme Court, which ruled in Joseph's favor to evict his sons. During the case, the boys assaulted their father and the sheriff subsequently arrested them on separate assault charges. This somewhat high-profile drama was all occurring just as Frank and Hannah were trying to purchase more timberland for the mill and to build their home.

The family appeared in the news once again in 1909 when Lena Heiney, wife of Frank's brother Ross, committed a gruesome murder of their adopted infant child with a sledgehammer. After the horrendous act, she left a suicide note and walked a mile and a half down from their home on Pleasant Valley Road towards Linneman Station. Walking along the road she waited until a car approached and at the last moment jumped in front of the moving vehicle and was killed instantly. Ross, who was working at Frank's mill, returned home to find his murdered child and wife's note. According to *The Oregonian*, Lena, daughter of pioneer A.C. Gibbs, had long suffered from "an unbalanced condition" and the horrible tragedy was the result of "an attack of dementia."

Given the Heiney family reputation at the time, it makes sense why there is little information on Franklin and Hannah. They likely tried their best to stay out of the news and remained focused on the mill. A picture of Joseph and Rachael Heiney visiting the home demonstrates that they were on speaking terms with the elders, as the distinctive diamond leaded-glass sidelight and mantel are still present in the home today. However, little information indicates how Frank and Hannah got along with the siblings. The Gresham Historical Society owns a piece of the Heiney Bros. Sawmill stationery and a business card, but neither includes the address of the mill or the home. Frank died in 1940, Hannah began selling houseplants and succulents at local farmers' cooperative stands. At that time, Richard and Hannah are listed on the Metsker's map as owning the property west of the home across Butler Creek, while Hannah remained as the sole owner of the house. She lived to be 105 years old and died in 1986.

While a comprehensive chain of title has not been completed for Hannah's landholdings, this method is likely the only way to ascertain the full history of the home and the location of the sawmill. Nonetheless, with documentation of initial deed transfer of the home property, the house certainly relates to the Heiney Brothers' sawmill, and more importantly stands as a rare example of a young woman owning large acreage in early twentieth century Gresham.

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## Historic and Cultural Landmark Inventory Form

### RESEARCH INFORMATION

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|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title Records    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Census Records       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Property Tax Records | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Histories      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sanborn Maps     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biographical Sources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SHPO Files           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interviews           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Obituaries       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newspapers           | <input type="checkbox"/> State Archives                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic Photographs |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Directories | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building Permits     | <input type="checkbox"/> State Library                   |                                                          |

Library: **Multnomah County Public Library, Gresham Branch**

#### Bibliography:

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- Morning Oregonian*, "Fence May Go Higher," Feb. 13, 1903, p. 1.
- Morning Oregonian*, "Gresham Farmer Sued," April 3, 1903, p. 8.
- Morning Oregonian*, "Joseph Heiney's Story," May 7, 1903, p. 8.
- Morning Oregonian*, "His Sons Must Vacate," Oct. 28, 1903, p.11.
- Morning Oregonian*, "Woman Native of Oregon," Oct. 21, 1909, p. 12.
- Morning Oregonian*, "Mad Woman Slays Child and Self," Oct. 22, 1909, p. 12.
- Morning Oregonian*, "Joseph Heiney Obituary" April 24, 1920, p.7.
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- U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.



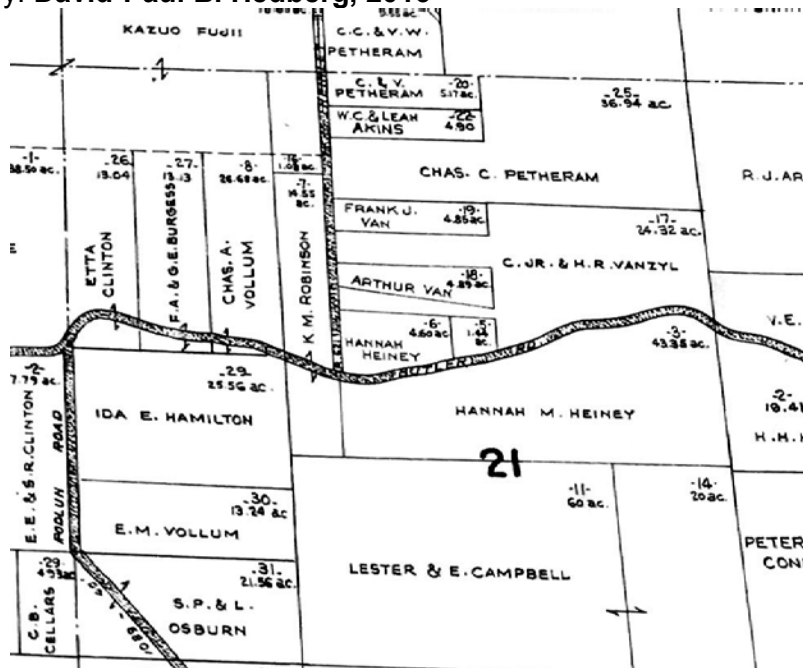
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*United States Census, Year 1930; Census Place: Gresham, Multnomah, Oregon; Roll: 1955; Page: 1A; Enumeration District: 0247; Image: 465.0; FHL microfilm: 2341689.*

*United States Census, Year: 1940; Census Place: South Gresham, Multnomah, Oregon; Roll: T627\_3377; Page: 1B; Enumeration District: 26-35.*

Form prepared by: **David-Paul B. Hedberg, 2016**



1927 Metsker Map showing only Hannah Heiney as the landowner.



Gresham Historic Landmark #6  
Hannah and Frank Heiney House

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Heiney House west (main) façade looking east from Towel Road.



Heiney House west (main) façade approaching east up the stair entry.





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## Historic and Cultural Landmark Inventory Form

Heiney House close up of double gambrel porch and stickwork.



Heiney House south façade with shed roof dormer.





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## Historic and Cultural Landmark Inventory Form

Looking south across W. Powell Blvd at the north (main) elevation.



Rebuilt Shed behind the Heiney House.



Joseph and Rachael Heiney pictured in the front room of the Heiney House. Note the leaded glass sidelight, which is still in use by the current owners

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(used with permission of Gary Robinson).

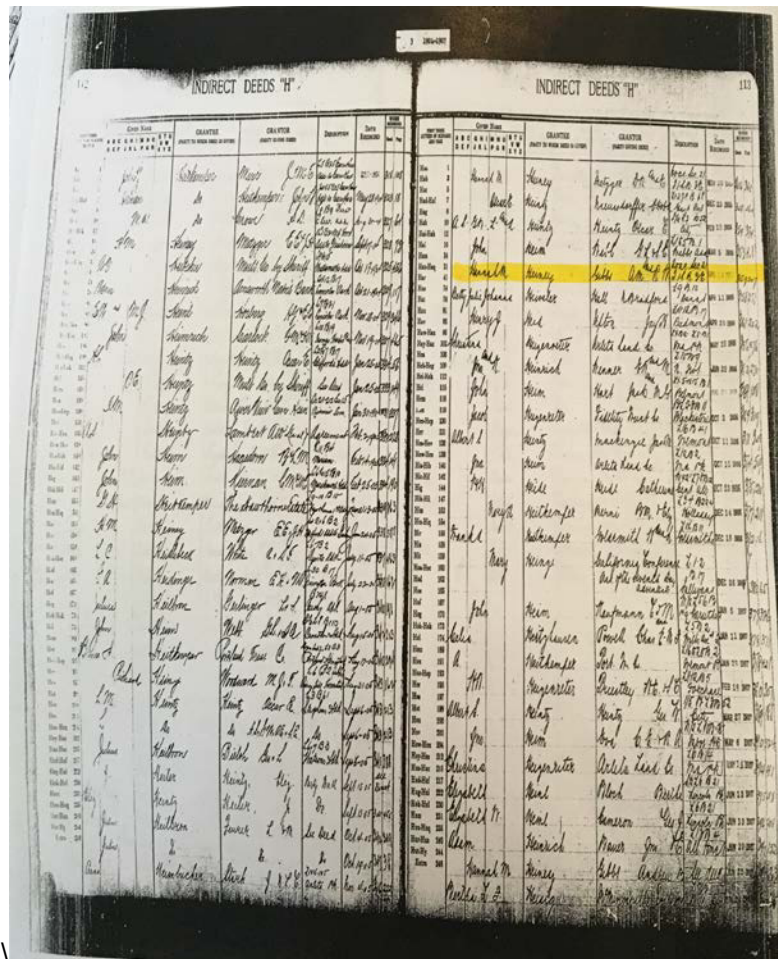


Heiney Sawmill, c. 1912 near Butler and Towle Roads. Image courtesy of Gresham Historical Society.



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1904 – 1907 Multnomah County Deed Index lists several properties held by Hannah Heiney.

Index	First Name	Last Name	Spouse	Date	Page
1	Hannah	Heiney	Metzger	Nov 20 1906	816 360
3	Hannah	Heiney	Kreunertoff	Dec 23 1906	816 460
5	Hannah	Heiney	Heintz	Feb 13 1906	854 374
7	Hannah	Heiney	Heintz	Mar 5 1906	853 601
8	Hannah	Heiney	Heintz	Apr 11 1906	858 251
10	Hannah	Heiney	Heintz	Apr 11 1906	858 251
12	Hannah	Heiney	Heintz	Apr 11 1906	858 251
16	Hannah	Heiney	Heintz	Apr 11 1906	858 251
24	Hannah	Heiney	Heintz	Apr 11 1906	858 251
31	Hannah	Heiney	Heintz	Apr 11 1906	858 251
41	Hannah	Heiney	Heintz	Apr 11 1906	858 251
74	Hannah	Heiney	Heintz	Apr 11 1906	858 251
78	Hannah	Heiney	Heintz	Apr 11 1906	858 251
81	Hannah	Heiney	Heintz	Apr 11 1906	858 251