

City of Gresham

Historic and Cultural Landmark Inventory Form

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

Historic Name: **Pioneer Grave**

Current/ Other names: **Pioneer Child's Grave**

Address: **I-84 & NE 169th**

Gresham, Oregon

Multnomah County

Township: **1s** Range: **3E** Section: **30**

¼: **SE ¼ of the NW ¼** Zip Code: **97230**

Tax Lot: **ROW I-84 across from Wilkes School**



Pioneer Grave next to the I84 Bike path and NE 169th.

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

Resource Type: **Burial marker** Height (stories): **N/A**

Eligibility: **Eligible/ Significant**

Primary construction date: **1854**

Secondary construction date: **1953/1989**

Primary use: **Geographic marker**

Secondary use: **N/A**

Primary style: **Basalt Boulder**

Secondary style:

Primary siding:

Secondary siding:

Plan type:

Architect:

Total # eligible resources: **1**

NR status: **Not Listed**

City Landmark Status: **Listed**

Use comments:

Style comments:

Siding comments:

Builder:

Notes: **Relocated from 1987 location**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This basalt stone boulder formerly marked the grave of a nameless eleven-year-old girl who died in 1849, one day before her family completed their journey overland on the Oregon Trail. The boulder dates to 1953, and Children of the American Revolution helped relocate and install a plaque on the marker in 1989 during the widening of I-84.

HISTORIC DESCRIPTION

According to an affidavit by Margaret Sales stated in 1955, Ms. Sales' parents helped the family of the sick child. When the girl died the next morning, Sales' parents helped build a coffin and dug the grave.

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Children at the Wilkes School would decorate the grave with flowers and installed a white picket fence. In 1953, the Union Pacific Railroad placed a large basalt boulder on the grave to mark it and protect from the construction of I-84. In 1954, the Children of the American Revolution, with help from the railroad, installed a bronze plaque on the rock.

In 1986, the city of Gresham included the marker in the local historic landmarks list. However, the widening of I-84 in 1989 required relocating the marker because of limited access issues. It is unclear if the burial was disturbed, as the narrow right-of-way between the railroad and freeway are in accessible.

The marker represents several generations of concerned children that cared for and decorated this grave. Although the marker has been relocated, its continued proximity to the Wilkes School maintains the spirit of the children's' efforts.

RESEARCH INFORMATION

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

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

Bibliography:

- Burgh, Virginia Gloyd, "Grave of Unknown Pioneer Child," *Roots Web: Multnomah County*, May, 22, 1990, accessed, Nov 18, 2016 from: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ormultno/Cemeteries/child.htm>
- Chilton, W.R., eds., *Gresham, Stories of our Past: Book I, From Campground to City* [Gresham, Ore.: Davis and Fox Printing, 1993].
- Chilton, W.R., eds., *Gresham, Stories of our Past: Book II, Before and After the World Wars* [Gresham, Ore.: Davis and Fox Printing, 1996].
- City of Gresham, *Inventory of Historic and Cultural Landmarks and Historic Context Statement*, adopted 1988; amended 1990.
- City of Gresham, *Inventory of Historic Properties: Pioneer Grave*, [1986].
- City of Gresham, *Updates to Gresham Historic Properties: Child's Grave* [1993].
- Miller, George R., *Gresham* [Charleston S.C.: Arcadia, 2011].
- Oregon State Society, Children of the American Revolution, accessed Nov 18, 2016 from: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~orcar/>

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

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Looking east down NE Wilkes Road with relocated Pioneer Grave in middle left.



Looking north at relocated Pioneer Grave marker from the NE 169th and I-84 bike path.

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Close up of Pioneer Grave Plaque.



View of Pioneer Grave Marker in its original location, 1986.