

# Oregon Historic Site Form

Barrett House  
183 6th  
Hillsboro, Washington County

## LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 183 SE 6th  apprx. addr

historic name: Barrett House

Hillsboro  vcnt Washington County

current/ other names: \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Information

assoc addresses: \_\_\_\_\_  
(former addresses, intersections, etc.)

location descr: \_\_\_\_\_  
(remote sites)

block nbr: \_\_\_\_\_ lot nbr: \_\_\_\_\_ tax lot nbr: \_\_\_\_\_

township: \_\_\_\_\_ range: \_\_\_\_\_ section: \_\_\_\_\_ 1/4: \_\_\_\_\_

zip: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

resource type: building height (# stories): 2

total # eligible resources: 1 total # ineligible resources:

elig. evaluation: eligible/contributing

NR status: \_\_\_\_\_

primary constr date: 1912 (c.)  secondary date: \_\_\_\_\_ (c.)   
(optional--use for major addns)

NR date listed: \_\_\_\_\_ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)

primary orig use: Single Dwelling

orig use comments: \_\_\_\_\_

secondary orig use: \_\_\_\_\_

primary style: Foursquare (Gen.)

prim style comments: \_\_\_\_\_

secondary style: \_\_\_\_\_

sec style comments: \_\_\_\_\_

primary siding: Horizontal Board

siding comments: \_\_\_\_\_

secondary siding: \_\_\_\_\_

plan type: Foursquare (Box)

architect: \_\_\_\_\_

builder: \_\_\_\_\_

comments/notes: \_\_\_\_\_

## GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

survey project name or other grouping name: Hillsboro Local Inventory Update 2008 2008 Survey & Inventory Project

farmstead/cluster name: \_\_\_\_\_ external site #: 30  
(ID# used in city/agency database)

## SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: \_\_\_\_\_

ILS survey date: \_\_\_\_\_

RLS survey date: 3/1/2008

Gen File date: \_\_\_\_\_

**106 Project(s)**



East façade

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## ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

(Include expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings, and alterations)

Architectural Description: The Barrett House is an American Foursquare style of residence, typified by its square massing and hipped roof. The residence features several attachments: expansive wrap-around porch; a gabled addition off the northwest corner; a hipped dormer on the east elevation; a filled-in back porch; and a hip-roofed projection on the facade. (The last may be a late addition because the windows are different than on the main volume.) An obtrusive chimney has subsequently been added to this projection. The porch which wraps around the south and east elevations has a cement floor and a wrought iron railing. The windows are one-over-one double-hung sash in single placements. The entry doors feature leaded glass lights. The house is clad in shiplap, and is finished with cornerboards, a boxed cornice and plain frieze. It is wood-framed, with a cement foundation. The house has been through several episodes of alteration which have compromised its architectural integrity.

## HISTORY

(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period [preferably to the present])

Historical Significance: This residence was built in 1912 according the 1981 Cultural Resources Survey of Hillsboro. It was built for W.W. Barrett, who bought the lot in 1887 for \$840. The current structure replaced another residence located on this lot. W.W. Barrett was an attorney and the son of a carpenter. He was born in Washington County in 1855. W.W. went to the Tualatin Academy, and graduated from Pacific University in 1879. He started his career as a teacher, but by 1882 he was working in the law office of Thomas Tongue. IN 1884 he was admitted to the bar. W.W. held several prominent positions in Washington County, and became known as one of the foremost lawmakers in the state in the early part of the century. In 1908 he was elected to serve as a State Senator. Prior to this he was Deputy District Attorney, District Attorney for the 5th District, and a State Representative. He married Lucretia Parrish in 1882. They had three sons: Ira, William, and John. William became one of the most infamous men ever to have been born and bred in Hillsboro. He was known as "Diamond Bill" Barrett, after forging a check to buy a diamond ring for a young lady in San Francisco. As a result, he found himself in jail and his father had to bail him out. Bill was charming and good looking, and had a habit of taking advantage of unsuspecting women. He eloped in 1914 with the daughter of a wealthy capitalist. Her father apparently refused to grant any money to Bill, even though they had a child, and they were divorced in just over a year. Bill subsequently dropped out of site until 1919, when it was reported that he had eloped, again, with another young wealthy girl, Alice Drexel. He had told Alice that he was a war hero, and the son of a senator. When his story was exposed as a false, he and his new wife left for Europe with money that her father had given them for a honeymoon present. Alice was soon disillusioned with her new husband. He spent the money lavishly, and was seen everywhere, while she became a recluse. In 1920 when the money was gone and she was nine months pregnant, he fled and left his wife alone without any money to support her during the birth of their baby. She returned to her family and divorced him, having promised never to mention his name again. Diamond Bill was by this time notorious figure, disdained in the press and soon to become a fugitive from justice. He went to London where he met a young lady at the race track, Mrs. Sydia Spreckles. She was the new bride of the sugar magnate and millionaire, John Spreckles. The Spreckles were on their honeymoon, but John had gone ahead to Norway because the trip was not as blissful as he had anticipated. Bill may have known Mrs. Spreckles when she was single and a dance hall girl in San Francisco and Portland. They were frequently seen together in London during the weeks following their fateful meeting at the racetrack. Barrett convinced Sydia to buy a \$100,000 diamond and pearl necklace, and took it into his possession on the pretext of wanting to insure it for her. He then disappeared with the necklace, and Mr. Spreckles, returning from Norway, was outraged about the matter. Scotland Yard traced Barrett to Hollywood, and arrested him on a Hollywood production lot. Bill tricked the police into believing that Mr. Spreckles had sold the necklace himself and was so charming and sincere the police let him go. Spreckles pressed Scotland Yard to ask for Barrett's extradition, but Barrett had disappeared again. It is not known exactly what happened to Bill during the next few years. He may have been successful eluding the vengeful John Spreckles. He may have gone to Mexico. His cousin was convinced he saw Bill on the streets of Los Angeles begging for change. In 1932 Bill was caught by Brazilian police, charged with counterfeiting, and put in a prison cell in Pernambuco, Brazil. That was last that was heard of "Diamond Bill" Barrett. This house merits inclusion to the inventory due to its historical association to W.W. Barrett, who was a notable lawmaker and lawyer in Hillsboro in the early part of the century, and for its association with his notorious and infamous son, Diamond Bill.

## RESEARCH INFORMATION

(Check all of the basic sources consulted and cite specific important sources)

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

Local Library: \_\_\_\_\_ University Library: \_\_\_\_\_  
Historical Society: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Bibliography: Sources Consulted:

Joseph Gaston, The Centennial History of Oregon, 1811-1912. Chicago, The S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1912. Vol. II, pp. 861.

History of the Bench and Bar in Oregon. Portland, Ore. Historical Publishing Co., 1910.

Polks Oregon and Washington Gazetteer 1910.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, City of Hillsboro. 1902, 1912.

Ticor Title Company

Washington County Manuscript Collection, Diamond Bill Barrett. ?

Recorded By: McLaughlin, Emde  
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