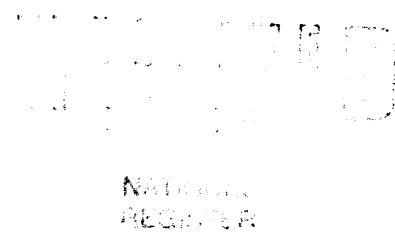


1701

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See Instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the Instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wesley Everest Gravesite  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location Sticklin-Greenwood Memorial Park

street & number 1905 Johnson Road  not for publication  
city, town Centralia  vicinity  
state Washington code WA county Lewis code 041 zip code 98531

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>   </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>   </u>	<u>   </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>   </u>	<u>   </u>
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>   </u>
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Centralia Armistice Day, 1919

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

*Paul E. [Signature]* 10/28/91  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register. *Antonieta office* 12/17/91  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/Culture:Commemorative Marker

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/Culture:Commemorative Marker

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation granitewalls graniteroof N/Aother concrete (flower box)

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N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Wesley Everest Grave Site is marked by a simple granite headstone with concrete flower box. It is located in a paupers' cemetery that borders Johnson Road in Centralia adjacent to the Sticklin-Greenwood Memorial Park. Technically, the grave site is located on public rather than private property, although it is currently maintained by the Sticklin-Greenwood cemetery.

In sharp contrast to the elaborate cenotaph that stands prominently in Centralia's city square to honor the four slain legionnaires, the Wesley Everest Grave site is a study in obscurity and simplicity. The location of the grave site is not widely known, even to residents of Centralia or students of the Armistice Day events of 1919. It is surrounded by pauper graves, many of them unmarked. The grave is designated by a 12-inch by 24-inch piece of granite containing the epitaph:

*In memory of  
Wesley Everest  
Killed Nov. 11, 1919  
Age 32*

In the upper left-hand corner of the headstone is carved an IWW emblem (the three initials with a globe below), a highly unusual funerary ornament for the graves of even the most dedicated Wobblies. Like a number of other graves in the Sticklin-Greenwood cemetery, a small rectangular concrete flower box, painted white, is placed at the head of the marker. The flower box rests on a concrete slab and is ornamented with fluted indentations that create a classical dentil-like backdrop for the marker. From time to time, the box is filled with flowers, some real, some plastic. The flower box is part of the nominated site.

In appearance, the headstone and flower box remain unaltered since placement in the 1930s. A small chip is discernable in the granite stone near the IWW emblem. The sexton of the Sticklin-Greenwood cemetery believes this niche results from an accident rather than an act of vandalism, probably caused by a lawn mower in the course of routine maintenance.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Period of Significance

1919-1939

Significant Dates

c.1932-1939

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Everest, Wesley

Architect/Builder

Carl J. Setterberg, Centralia Monumental Works

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Wesley Everest Grave Site is significant as the only extant site linked to the IWW "version" of the events of Armistice Day, 1919, in Centralia, Washington. It is also a significant political symbol, reflecting the radical union movement of the era, with its own unique role in the history of the events of the day. The grave site is associated with Wesley Everest, the Wobbly logger who became a figure of historical importance and a martyr to the American labor movement as a result of his death during the violence of November 11, 1919. For the purposes of the multiple property nomination, the associated historic context is "the Legacy of Centralia Armistice Day, 1919." The associated property type is "Commemorative Sites and Objects." Although grave sites are not normally considered eligible for listing in the National Register, the ideological, political, and symbolic content of the site reflects important associations with the events of the Centralia Armistice violence and the martyrdom of Wesley Everest, two themes in history for which no other associated properties remain. Consequently, it meets the registration requirements established in the MPD and meets the criteria for eligible grave sites.

The Wesley Everest Grave Site is significant as the only historical property directly associated with the IWW side of the Armistice Day events which has survived the passage of 70 years. Other sites directly related with the Wobbly role are no longer extant. The Roderick Hotel (site of the IWW hall) was replaced in the 1930s. The city jail (where the IWW suspects were imprisoned) was torn down for a new city hall in 1921. The original Mellen Street bridge (the notorious Hangman's Bridge from which Wesley Everest was lynched) was replaced in 1960<sup>1</sup>. No other properties associated with the life of Everest are known to exist.

Historical Background: Wesley Everest was the "Joe Hill" of the Centralia Armistice Day Riot. Like the Swedish-born Wobbly who became a labor hero after his execution by a Utah firing squad in 1915, Wesley Everest emerged as the symbol of labor's problems in the Pacific Northwest--and as a symbol he assumed more importance in death than he ever had as a living man. Within a year of Everest's death, in 1920, Ralph Chaplin published an account of the violence and trial from the Wobbly perspective entitled "The Centralia Conspiracy". The front cover was illustrated with a sketch of Everest dangling from a noose, and the pamphlet concluded with a poem comparing Everest's hanging with the crucifixion and martyrdom of Christ. Twelve years later, in 1932, John Dos Passos imbued the story of Wesley Everest with mythical import, romanticizing Everest as the heroic logger Paul Bunyan. Dos Passos, who

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<sup>1</sup>When the local press reported the bridge was to be replaced — because it could not handle the increasing traffic — no mention was made of its association with the riot. See, for example, the *Centralia Daily Chronicle*, 14 October 1958.

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created the Wobbly hero Mac in the 42nd Parallel (1937), used the Centralia violence and Everest's hanging to close his epic of postwar America, 1919. He painted Everest as a decorated war veteran and dedicated IWW organizer.

While modern students of the event continue to speculate about how many other Wobblies may have been tracked down and quietly killed in the manhunts that followed the Centralia episode, Everest remains the only known IWW casualty. His martyrdom in the eyes of labor is rooted in both the fact of his death and the grisly circumstances surrounding the killing-- a lynching at the hands of an enraged mob, possibly preceded by his castration<sup>2</sup>.

The mythologizing has obscured what little is actually known about the life of Wesley Everest, who seems to have been a taciturn, gutsy, perhaps even reckless man with a passion for the IWW. Everest was born in 1890 in the Willamette Valley, near Newberg, Oregon, the son of a farmer turned schoolteacher and postmaster. Like many rural youth, he spent his adolescence as a farm boy, working for his family and neighboring relatives, until leaving for a series of jobs as a logger and laborer at local sawmills and for the Northern Pacific Railroad.

As a laborer, Everest came in contact with the IWW in his late teens or early twenties. It is not known when he actually joined the union, but by 1913 he was an active IWW strike leader. A strike in Marshfield, Oregon, in that year became a formative influence in his life. As one of two energetic Wobbly organizers in Marshfield, Everest was arrested and placed in jail for vagrancy, then abducted by a mob, and run out of town after being forced to kneel in the street and kiss an American flag.

In 1917, as the United States prepared for war, Everest was drafted. Details of his military service are sketchy and still hotly debated by students of the Armistice Day events. On the one hand, evidence introduced at the Wobbly trial in 1920 asserted that Everest was assigned to the Army's Spruce Production Division, a wartime logging unit created to keep timber harvesting going in the Northwest

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<sup>2</sup>Whether or not Wesley Everest was castrated in the car that transported him from the city jail to the Mellen Street bridge continues to be a matter of debate. As public opinion has come to view the Wobblies as the victims rather than the perpetrators of the tragedy, the story of Everest's castration has gained currency, perhaps because it telegraphs the horror of the riot from the I.W.W. perspective so vividly, much as use of the term "Centralia Massacre" functioned for the Wobblies' adversaries for so long. For a recent, skeptical view that argues Wesley Everest's castration is legend rather than fact, see Tom Copeland, "Wesley Everest, IWW Martyr," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 77:4 (October 1986), pp. 122-129; also see John McClelland, Jr., *Wobbly War: The Centralia Story* (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1987), pp. 84-85.

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despite a IWW strike. On the other hand, oral tradition on the left--which seems to burnish the image of its martyr--insists that Everest served in combat overseas where he became an experienced sharpshooter. The partisan debate notwithstanding, Everest was discharged from the Army in March, 1919.

As a former serviceman, Everest qualified for membership in the American Legion, a newly-formed veterans organization founded shortly after the war. But his politics and background led him instead back to the IWW. Soon after his discharge, Everest took up residence in Centralia and became a Wobbly organizer.

During the attack on the IWW hall on November 11, 1919, Everest was one of the Wobblies who engaged in the brief, intense moments of shooting. When it became clear that the attackers were not going to be driven off by the gunfire, the men inside the Roderick Hotel beat a retreat. Everest chose to flee down an alley at the back of the hall and was chased a half mile to the banks of the Skookumchuck River where he was captured but not before he fired at his pursuers and fatally wounded one. After his capture, Everest was dragged through the streets and thrown into jail, although an abortive attempt was made to lynch him from a nearby telephone pole.

Heeding a warning not to incriminate themselves by executing someone in broad daylight, the mob returned to the jail that night, as the lights in Centralia went out for a mysterious 15 minutes. Men entered the darkened jail without resistance, removed Everest, and transported him by automobile to a nearby bridge from which he was hanged, his body riddled with bullets. The body was cut down the next day and deposited on the floor of the jail among the Wobbly prisoners until buried.

Unlike the dedication of The Sentinel in Washington Park five years after the Armistice Day events, no ceremonies or rites surrounded the burial of Wesley Everest or the subsequent placement of the grave site marker. Instead, the day after his death four Wobbly prisoners were conscripted to nail together a wooden coffin, and Everest's body was then taken by moving van to the paupers' burial ground at Greenwood Park Cemetery, two miles west of the city. The IWW prisoners dug the grave accompanied by the coroner, several newspapermen, and a squad of National Guardsmen who had been summoned to Centralia following the violence. Initially, no marker was placed on the grave, apparently to avoid vandalism at the site. Its location was never lost from memory, however, particularly among IWW partisans. On Memorial Day in 1921, for example, while a military parade was underway downtown, Centralia Wobblies gathered at the grave site, adorned it with American flags, and paid honor to Everest in a quiet ceremony.

The present headstone was placed on the grave site in the late 1930s, according to the proprietor of a local cemetery monument company. Analysis of the chisel work suggests that it was carved by Carl J.

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Setterberg, a stone cutter employed by the Centralia Monumental Works between 1937 and 1939. There are no records at the present Centralia Monument Company to indicate when the headstone was ordered or by whom, although placement of the stone at the grave site in the 1930s would have coincided with the release of the Centralia IWW prisoners (most between 1930 and 1933, and the last in 1939). Over recent years, enterprising residents have “staked out” the cemetery to see who placed flowers on the grave (and to learn more about the history of the headstone), but this imaginative research strategy has yielded few clues. The mystery that continues to surround the origins of the headstone is completely consistent with the shroud of secrecy that came to cloak discussions in Centralia of the legacy of Armistice Day.

Like the sentiments carved in the pedestal of The Sentinel in Washington Park, the inscription on Wesley Everest’s headstone makes a political statement. Anyone happening upon the grave, even with no prior knowledge of Wesley Everest, is struck with the marker’s unconventional wording. It gives a date of death, but no birth date, suggesting ignorance of a relevant biographical detail but also a keen awareness of the man’s politicized death<sup>3</sup>. No reference is made to family members who may have placed the stone, as is often the custom. Instead, the IWW emblem decorates the headstone, declaring that those who placed the marker knew that Everest, like many Wobblies, had found family in the idea of “One Big Union.” Most striking of all--for any headstone, much less one as tersely composed as this--we are told how Wesley Everest met his death (“Killed Nov. 11, 1919”), a simple but enormously meaningful epitaph for those who regarded Everest as the martyr of Armistice Day, 1919. The marker is neither imposing nor elaborate, but in its own modest way it is every bit as ideological in content and powerful in symbolism as the cenotaph to the legionnaires in the city square.

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<sup>3</sup>If Wesley Everest was born in Newberg, Oregon in 1890, as is commonly reported, then he would have been 28 or 29 years old at the time of his death, rather than 32, as stated on the headstone.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

- Copeland, Tom, "Wesley Everest, IWW Martyr," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 77:4 (October 1986), pp. 122-129.
- Dubofsky, Melvyn, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969).
- Interview with John Baker, Sexton, Sticklin-Greenwood Memorial Park, 12 December 1990.
- Interview with William G. Craig, Centralia Monument Company, 4 April 1991.
- McClelland, John, Jr., *Wobbly War: The Centralia Story* (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1987).
- Martin, John, "Everest's 'hidden' grave found in Centralia," [Centralia] *Daily Chronicle*, 27 February 1981.
- Polks Lewis County Directories: 1937, 1939.*

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- See continuation sheet Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

A 10 501470 5175640  
Zone Easting Northing

C  
Zone Easting Northing

B  
Zone Easting Northing

D  
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is a rectangular parcel located in the Garden of Freedom in the Sticklin-Greenwood Memorial Park in Centralia, Washington, and is described thusly: To reach the point of beginning, start at the northwest corner of Johnson Road and Reynolds Avenue and proceed north along the west edge of Johnson Road, approximately 250 feet; turn westerly 90° and proceed westerly approximately 5 feet to the point of beginning. From this P.O.V. continue westerly about 10 feet; turn northerly 90° and proceed northerly approximately 10 feet; turn easterly 90° and proceed easterly 10 feet; then proceed south to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel includes the gravesite, with marker and flower box, associated with Wesley Everest. It does not include any other lands or monuments in the cemetery.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Dr. Robert R. Weyeneth  
organization PAST PERFECT Consulting  
street & number P.O. Box 5288  
city or town Bellingham

date 5 July 1991  
telephone (604) 736-4236  
state Washington zip code 98227-5288

REYNOLDS AVE  
RAILROAD  
PROPERTY

VAN WORMER

GARDEN OF APOLLO

MCKINLEY WAY

VICTORY GARDEN

SUNSET GARDEN

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

PARKING

CEMETERY OFFICE SALE

LILAC LN

GARDEN OF HONOR



FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

SHADY LANE

EVERGREEN GARDEN

MAINTENANCE BUILDINGS

HERITAGE GARDEN

CELESTIAL GARDEN

GARDEN OF TRANQUILITY

Location of  
Wesley Everest Gravesite  
Sticklin-Greenwood Memorial Park  
Centralia, WA

CEMETERY OFFICE SALE  
1905

GARDEN OF FREEDOM

GARDEN OF CHANGE

TRANSFORMATION

JOHNSON RD

FRONTIER DR.

DORST LANE

PIONEER SQUARE

MARONI DR

LIBERTY WAY

SUNRISE DR

SOLIDARITY DR

CENTURION WAY

POPULAR WAY

WARRIORS WAY

3

6

10

15

12

13

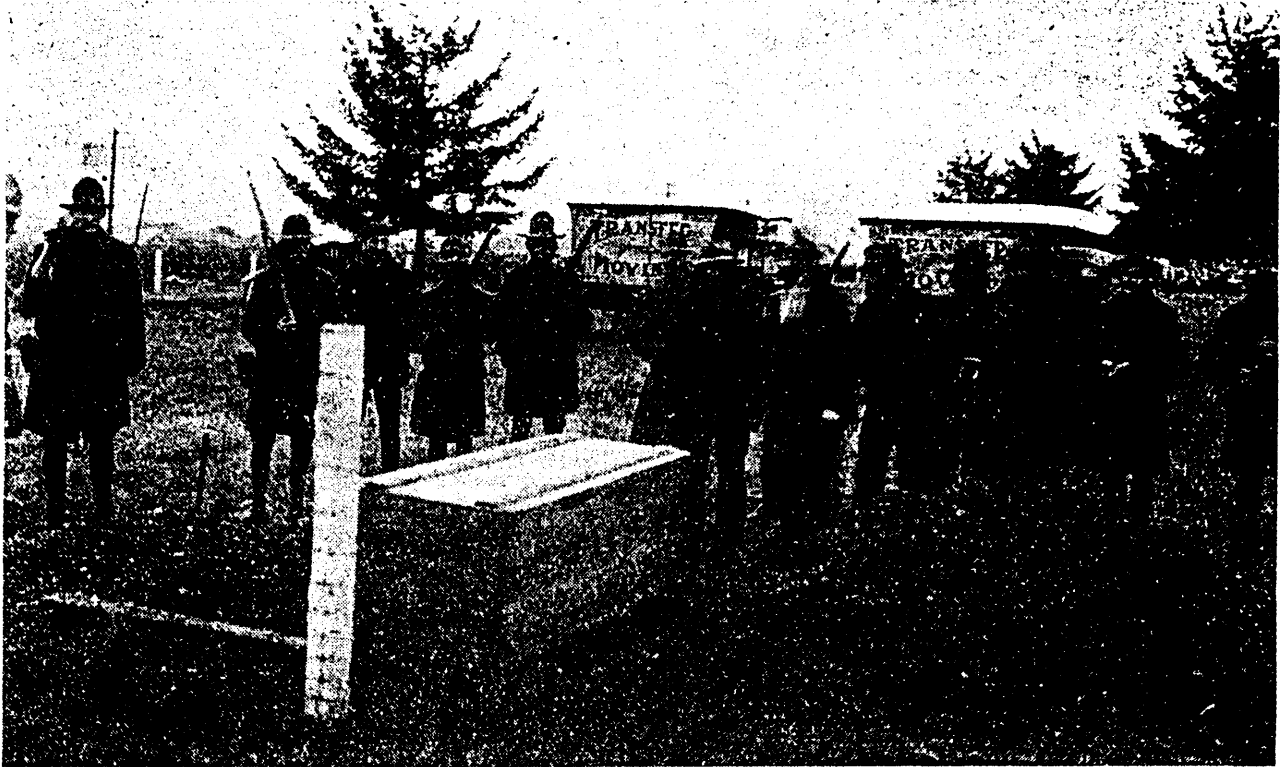
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The burial of Wesley Everest, 12 November 1919.  
Four I.W.W. prisoners dug a grave for the wooden  
coffin, accompanied by a squad of national guardsmen,  
the coroner, and several newspapermen.

Source: John McClelland, Jr., Wobbly War: The Centralia  
Story (1987), p. 82.