

ROSEBURG

Settlement of Aaron Rose—This Trading Post—First Called Deer Creek—Secures the County Seat—First Business Men—County Jail and Court House—The School House—Winchester Absorbed by Roseburg—Roseburg and Coos Bay Road—Arrival of the Railroad—Roseburg Incorporated—Burning of the Jail—Fire Department—Brick Buildings—Business Enterprises—Climate—Extension of the O. & C. R. R.—Roseburg and Coos Bay R. R.—Wool and Grain Shipments—Generosity of Mr. Rose—Needs of the City—Newspapers—Noted Men Who Hail From Roseburg.

WHEN the northwest coast of the United States was little less than a howling wilderness and the strong handed pioneer was forcing the fight of civilization onward to the western sea, Aaron Rose, a man of medium stature, iron will and nerves of steel, came journeying from the forests of Michigan, seeking a quiet home in Oregon. He left nothing behind him to attract his gaze from the setting sun. His family and effects were conveyed along with him in the usual prairie vehicle, moved by the usual steady, stubborn oxen. After many days of toilsome travel in crossing the Great American Desert, and climbing and descending the Rocky and Sierra Nevada ranges, when the Sierran peaks were successfully passed and the famous Cow creek canyon was in the rear, on the twenty-third day of September, 1851, he found himself looking with admiration upon the small valley at the junction of the South Umpqua and Deer creek.

Mr. Rose saw here the realization of his dreams and claimed, as a donation from the government, the land upon which Roseburg now stands. He built him a clapboard shanty of sufficiently ample dimensions, near the place where the center of the city now is, and engaged in selling to travelers, teamsters and packers, who were very numerous in those days, such things as they needed. He also engaged in the business of farming and stock raising. Uncle Aaron as he is familiarly called, seems to have thrived and prospered well in his mercantile and other pursuits, notwithstanding the fact that he sometimes "saved" money by taking his customers' notes for less than half the amount they owed him—and he can show you some of the notes today, still unpaid. The Indians of the Umpqua and Calapooia tribes were all around him, but a friendly relationship always existed between him and them. He had one of them in his service, known far and wide as "Rose's Jim," who remained with him for years. The neighbors, within a radius of several miles, were few. W. T. Perry located on what is now known as the Bushy place, across Deer creek and just north of the city. Phillip Peters, still an active man, resided some six miles away, engaged in cattle raising and farming. Jesse Roberts, also cattle raiser and farmer, lived only a few miles away, and John Kelly worried the patient backs of his mules with the complaining pack saddle, and awoke the ready echoes with his lusty shout, in the immediate vicinity. There were others, also, but they were few.

In 1852 there was considerable immigration to Douglas county, and Roseburg, or Deer creek as it was then called, began to assume

took the only man upon whom he ever passed judgment in Roseburg, and hanged him on the rafters of the Deer creek bridge. One day, however, this primitive jail was discovered to be on fire and about all that was saved were two white men and two Chinamen, all the occupants at the time.

In 1855 began the Indian war, and Roseburg was the central point for the northern battalion, which formed and procured its supplies here. About this time the town first began to be known as Roseburg. The population was steadily increasing, and houses thickly dotted the little valley and hill sides. Business was increasing, and its future was secured. Uncle Aaron did not cease his efforts, but was always first in donating to proposed improvements. He was always ready to donate lots to churches, and gave the land upon which our public school building is now situated, and also \$1,400 towards building the house. About 1857 the U. S. Land Office was built at Winchester—a two-story building which was afterwards moved to Roseburg, bodily—and this excited the people of Roseburg to outdo the rival town by erecting a school house of grander proportions than the land office. They accordingly erected the three-story edifice which vibrates to the tread of their district school children to this day. It was more magnificent than necessary, but it fully satisfied their ambition and drew heavily on their purses. The two rival houses, one built at Winchester and one in Roseburg, some four or five miles apart, now gaze upon each other at a stone's throw, one used as an Odd Fellows' Temple and the other never changed. These were the finest buildings in Southern Oregon at the time of their construction. In about 1859 Roseburg's attractions became so great that Winchester was not able to resist them, and was rolled over the intervening space, and the two became one. The land office above mentioned, the store of Flood & Co., just as it appears today with a little change; A. R. Flint's old store, now on Washington street, between Main and Jackson, and Mrs. Moffitt's residence, near the banks of the South Umpqua river, in other words, were moved bodily from Winchester and placed in Roseburg, where they now stand. In a short time the once busy little town on the bank of the North Umpqua river had entirely disappeared, and it lives only in the memory of its former inhabitants

and the pages of the county records. The music of the ringing anvil is hushed, the jingle of bar glasses and gold has ceased, the shrill cry of the hoodlum unheard, and the busy merchant no more presents his little bill on Monday morning, on the streets of Winchester. In the years following, when the eastern and southern portions of our country were bathed in blood and convulsed in civil war, the faithful influence was strongly felt even in these outskirts of the world. During all this time Roseburg was the radiating center and headquarters of all parties. Men seemed to take a deeper interest in the issues presented, if possible, and talked loudly and more threateningly, than did their brothers at the seat of war. But nothing retarded the steady growth of the future city, and all things conspired to build her up. In 1859 steps were taken from Roseburg to the head of tide water on Coos bay, and a joint stock company was formed for that purpose. Like all enterprises, this one found favor in the eyes of some persons, and was denounced as impracticable by others. The opposition claimed, in this instance, that the road would never pay for itself on account of the large amount of money which would be required to build it. They also alleged that nature had made a natural highway from Roseburg to the sea; that the Umpqua river only needed a few thousand dollars expended upon it to become a navigable stream for boats. The route to the seaboard, by way of the river, was, as has been related, on page 385, demonstrated to be a failure, and the Coos bay wagon road enterprise moved in to success. Iron, plant powder, munitions and money, dug, blasted out, graded and paid for the present road to Coos City, which, though for a long time somewhat precarious and unreliable, is at last a success, and it is possible to ride very comfortably in a wagon over a fair mountain road from Roseburg to the sea. Most of the former stockholders in the road are prominent business men in Roseburg, and deserve the success which they achieved and the coin benefit which they received when, in the beginning of 1883, they sold their road, franchise, etc., to C. Crocker. In 1872 the most important event for Roseburg occurred when the O. & C. railroad track was laid across her boundaries. It was not a question whether the railroad should come through Rose-

burg or not. It was bound to come on account of the lay of the land. While the finishing of the railroad to this point was a matter of vast importance to the town, the cessation of the work at her gates was no less so. Up to that time Roseburg had been only a way station on the O. & C. stage road and the commerce of the county amounted to very little, or nothing, all told. Very little grain was raised except for flour, feed and seed and the wool clip was greatly smaller than it has since become. The only means of transportation were the heavy wagons usually drawn by horses or mules, over a mountain road to the Willamette valley. The beautiful and fertile valleys in which Douglas county abounds, lying secluded among her magnificent hills, were used principally for stock range, when their possibilities were much greater. She was, as it might be said, a perfect electrical machine, complete in all its parts, with the poles of her battery not joined. But when the iron rails were laid and the shrill whistle of the locomotive waked the echoes in her mountain fastnesses, the connection was made and all the machinery felt the influence and moved in perfect harmony. Roseburg became a center of commerce for the country. Warehouses were built at the depot and the granaries and wool rooms became more and more crowded each year, until the first warehouses became too small and had to be increased or replaced by new and larger ones, with all the modern improvements for preparing produce for the market. Jackson and Josephine counties received their goods, wares and merchandise at Roseburg, thus increasing the business of the city and helping to swell the tide of her prosperity.

Roseburg was incorporated by the act of October 3, 1872. At the first election, which was held the eleventh of the same month the following officers were elected: Trustees, G. Gaddis, afterward chairman; George Haynes, S. Hamilton, William I. Friedlander, and T. P. Sheridan; recorder, Andrew Jones; marshal, L. C. Rodenberg; treasurer, E. Livingston. The taxes of the city have never been burdensome—not over three mills—and the ordinances passed by the boards are salutary, comprehensive and not oppressive. As is true of all young towns, so it happened that the houses of Roseburg were nearly all built of wood, and the majority of them remain have been remarkably infrequent. Not half a dozen fires have been known where any considerable damage has been done. We have already mentioned the first jail, which succumbed to the fire fiend. The one which was erected to replace it was also destroyed by fire. This was built of brick, with iron cells for prisoners, and stood southeast of the present court house. Several times prisoners effected escapes from it. In the spring of 1882 a man had been incarcerated therein, having committed some

petty offense, and was awaiting his trial. One morning, just about daylight, the jail was discovered to be on fire, and a crowd soon collected to render what assistance was possible to the poor fellow within the iron walls. It appeared, however, that the fire had been raging within for some time, for the building was so hot that no human being could approach near enough to even see what had happened on the inside. All that could be done was to stand at a respectful distance and wait for the fire to complete its work. Later in the day, when the roof, floor and other woodwork had been consumed and the blackened walls surrounded the curled and twisted sheets of iron of which the cage had been composed an entrance was effected. Nothing resembling a human form could be discovered, but just at the bottom of the iron door, and immediately under an opening therein, was a small heap, which, upon examination, proved to be all that was left of the recent prisoner. He had escaped, and all that remained to indicate that he had been there was a crisp and blackened lump which would hardly have been taken for what it was in any other place or under any other circumstances. What was left was decently buried by the county, and the place which knew him last, knows neither him nor the old jail any more forever. The jail which the county has at present is an elegant little two-story brick building, with the most appropriate, impregnable cells, and an airy corridor running around. It is both comfortable and safe. On the upper floor are offices, neat and well ventilated. The county court house, a substantially built and commodious and conveniently arranged structure, stands on the same block.

Though there never has been a devastating fire in Roseburg, yet, until last year, there had been no fire company of any possible efficiency in the city—a few ladders and buckets constituting the only available apparatus for extinguishing fires. The fire fiend had every opportunity for glorious work, but did not seem disposed to take it. In the spring of 1883, however, steps were taken to organize a fire company, and on the tenth day of May, the board of directors passed an ordinance creating the fire department for the city of Roseburg. There are two companies comprised in the department—the Rescue Hook and Ladder Company, No. 1, and the Umpqua Hose Company, No. 2. The city has built a large reservoir on the hill east of town, some 150 feet higher than the houses, and laid iron pipes therefrom down Washington street to the city hall, with occasional hydrants at convenient points. It has also procured several hundred feet of hose, and provided, at large expense, a handsome and thoroughly furnished hook and ladder truck. In a city which is mostly composed of wooden buildings, it is not amiss to briefly mention those

more substantially constructed. The first brick house in Roseburg was built by Mr. T. P. Sheridan, in 1859, to be used for a store, and is still owned by members of the same family. It is about 20x40 feet, two stories high, and is situated on the east side of Jackson street, between Douglas and Washington. It was considered a wonderful building at that time. The second was built by Dr. S. Hamilton, in the year 1866, at the southeast corner of Washington and Jackson streets. In 1874 was completed the brick house where the postoffice still stands, and built by H. C. Stanton, who still occupies it. Next in order came the handsome iron-front brick of S. Marks & Company, in 1878, situated on the northwest corner of Washington and Jackson streets. It is 36x100 feet, two stories high, and cost about \$20,000. Next came Dr. Hamilton's new drug store, adjoining his former one, built in 1878. Then came the elegant cut-stone-front brick store of Abraham, Wheeler & Co., built in 1875, on the southwest corner of Oak and Jackson streets. The dimensions of this block are 45x90 feet, and two tall stories high—the largest in the city. Mr. E. M. Moore put up a single story brick store for Caro Bros., next to the postoffice in 1880. Last, but not least in importance, was the Douglas County bank, on the east side of Jackson street, in 1883.

There are, taken all together, seven general mercantile houses, two hardware stores, each having a tin shop attached, two flooring mills, three hotels, one bank, three blacksmith shops, two butcher shops, two livery stables, two cabinet shops, three grocery stores, two restaurants, twelve saloons, two barber shops, two bakeries, six physicians, two dentists, one marble cutter, and several wash houses. The above is not a bad record of business for a city containing but one thousand inhabitants, all told. The United States land office is at Roseburg. It was moved, as before remarked, from Winchester in 1859. The old land office building still stands under an immense willow tree, on the north side of Douglas street, between Rose and Jackson. In 1879 the land office was removed to its elegant quarters in the brick block of S. Marks & Co., and the old building is valuable for little else now, than a relic of bygone days. The officers who have presided in the land office are as follows: L. F. Mosher, register, and Colonel Martin, receiver; John Kelly and Mr. Briggs; W. R. Willis and B. Herman; W. R. Willis and J. C. Fullerton, all of whom, except one, are no longer connected with the office. The present officers are Hon. W. F. Benjamin and Hon. J. C. Fullerton, both of whom are affable and competent gentlemen. The United States Signal office was established in 1876, and placed in charge of Sergeant John Dascomb. Sergeant J. J. Nanery is now in charge. The barometer is just 537 feet above the level of the sea, and an inspection of the records there shows

the following entries for 1883: Mean of highest observation of barometer, 30.052; mean of lowest, 28.829; annual mean, 29.539; mean of highest thermometer readings during the year, 93; mean of lowest, 34; mean for the year, 51.5. Total rainfall for "rainy" Oregon during 1883 was 22.45 inches. We challenge the world to show a more salubrious climate, a more desirable range of barometer or thermometer, or more favorable conditions, generally for health and happiness. Aaron Rose could not have selected a more favorable place for a city. The postoffice is in the brick store of H. C. Stanton, the postmaster. In the spring of 1882, the Oregon & California Railroad Company began the extension of their road south, and it was not many months before the terminus at Roseburg was a thing of the past. In 1883, however, the company built a three-stall round house just south of the depot, and made this the end of a division. The Oregon and California stage, with its six milk white steeds, and heavy loads of freight, mail and passengers, and the lumbering freight wagons, with their long teams of horses and jingling bells, are now but a memory in Roseburg. While it is true that Roseburg has lost the extreme Southern Oregon trade, it is generally believed that what she has lost by the extension is a small affair compared with what she will gain by the building of the Roseburg and Coos bay railroad, which it is predicted, will, at least, be commenced the present year. We join them in the hope that the prediction may be verified. The depot building and depot warehouses—and we hope the company will soon have a better depot—and four large private warehouses are on the depot grounds. They are owned by the estate of J. C. Flood, the Grange Business Association, Abraham & Company, and S. Marks & Company. Immense quantities of grain and wool are shipped from these warehouses yearly. When the rich bottom lands of Douglas county shall be farmed on scientific principles, even larger warehouses will be needed at Roseburg, and the shipments will be multiplied. This, of course, does not represent the entire exports from Roseburg, but will suffice to indicate how the commerce has grown from the better of Uncle Aaron Rose, in his clapboard shanty. The old gentleman has never ceased to give to objects which might be a benefit to Roseburg. He gave the depot grounds to the railroad company and the right of way over his land, and sold them, for a song almost, gravel to balast their road. Long ago he moved from his first location, and now occupies a neat and comfortable little cottage on the top of an eminence south of town, from which the whole valley can easily be seen. He has ample means to live easily and no longer worries himself with the cares of business. May his declining years continue to flow gently on.

(Continued on page 19, Col. 5)



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