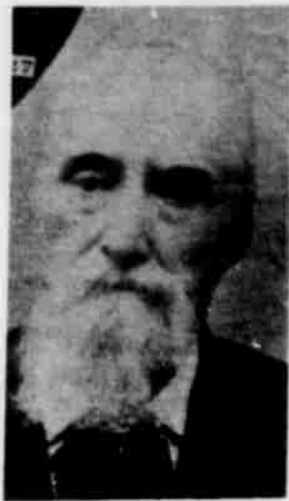


Morrow's Beginnings



COLONEL J.L. MORROW

By Justine Weatherford
Gazette-Times
Feature Editor

The co-founder of Heppner, Jackson L. Morrow, has probably had more words written about him than Mr. Heppner. He was the older man, being born in Kentucky on Oct. 18, 1827. He died on Sept. 22, 1899 and is buried in the Heppner cemetery. He married Nancy McQueen in 1852 in Iowa and she died in 1882 and is also buried here. They had six children only one of whom lived a full life, James W. Morrow. These six are also in the Heppner cemetery. James W. Morrow (Billy) died in 1929.

Several folks remember this family well. Mrs. John Brosnan (Zetta) knew "Uncle Jack" Morrow and was a playmate and school friend of J.W. "Billy" Morrow. Harold A. Cohn recalls that he was called in to talk with J.L. Morrow in the morning of the day that gentleman died. Mr. Cohn attended all the Morrow burials except Mrs. J.L. Morrow's.

HIS EARLY YEARS

The Morrow family left Kentucky and lived in Illinois and Iowa while Jackson L. was young. In 1852 he married and the next year he crossed the plains from Iowa to the Washington Territory. There he "embarked in the mercantile business, serving also in 1855-1856 as lieutenant-colonel on the governor's staff during the Indian War." He carried a badly injured leg from the effects of a rifle ball, which was operated on at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland in 1898 and which operation weakened him gradually until his death in 1899.

While in Olympia, Wa. the Morrrows had three children, James W., Charles W. and Amelia. Mr. Morrow was always interested in matters political and was elected auditor of Mason County, Wa. on the Democratic ticket. His outstanding service during the Indian War in Washington is given considerable space in the 1889 History of the Pacific Northwest. He also served at Fort Heppner during the 1878 uprising and "scare." In 1863 the family moved

to LaGrande where Mr. Morrow engaged in general merchandising and was very soon elected a member of the common council and was chosen its president which made him ex-officio mayor. He also served as county treasurer of Union County for four years. He probably knew Henry Heppner before 1871, and surely became well acquainted with him that year in LaGrande. Their lives were entwined from 1872 until 1899 when Mr. Heppner and his relatives grieved at Mr. Morrow's death.

A PLEASING POLITICIAN

Jackson Lee Morrow, who later was familiarly called "Uncle Jack", was surely a natural politician. In 1876 he was elected to the Oregon Legislature representing Umatilla County. Giles French has re-told of the formation of several new counties on Pg. 35 of his book. He points out that young and ambitious people are anxious to control their own destiny. That the formation of new counties aroused little opposition may seem odd, and the East Oregonian editor C.S. Jackson wondered about these new divisions when he wrote, "More counties, more officers, more taxes. How the dear people love to be taxed."

MORROW COUNTY IS BORN

Umatilla County had been separated from Wasco County in 1862 and in 1885 when its western area, especially the Heppner community, began to plea for another county it was Umatilla's representative L.B. Cox, a Pendleton lawyer, who introduced the bill, Morrow County HB 4. Mr. Cox was a first term legislator; Jackson Morrow was the more experienced county representative.

The bill passed without a struggle as did another creating Gilliam County. The members of the legislature were so fond of Jackson Morrow that they had given the HB4 his name, and now the new county happily continued as Morrow County, born on February 16, 1885. Because of the eagerness to form this county some felt that its boundaries were not too carefully drawn considering several geographical features. The determination of the lo-

cation of the county seat, which Heppner held temporarily, was to be finalized at the June election, and Lexington under Mr. Pendland's leadership really contended for this honor.

ACTIVITIES IN HIS LAST HOME

After rising to positions of leadership at Olympia, Wa. and LaGrande, Ore., Mr. J.L. Morrow again rose to the leadership in his final home. Before he was elected to the state legislature he had worked as partner in Heppner and Morrow and later in J.L. Morrow and Son. When Wells, Fargo and Co. established an office in Heppner, J.L. Morrow was the first agent. He

looked confidently to his city's great growth and in his pleasing political manner did much to promote the city and the county. He knew many successes but also knew unhappy times. He loved children, and saw five of his own children die young. He outlived his wife by 17 years. He was a leading member of the Masonic Lodge.

FINAL TRIBUTE

Mr. J.W. Redington who knew Mr. Morrow and admired him very much came from Portland to attend his funeral and to present a glowing written tribute. He wrote that "Uncle Jack" Morrow was loved and honored by men, women and children alike. He was courageous, strong and just and had the confidence of his followers. He was a simple, straight forward man, who practiced the golden rule, and whose common sense forbade wasting time straining eyes to sight the unattainable, or attain the unattainable.

Mr. Redington became quite poetic as he put down these words just after the impressive Masonic rites for his friend.

"These Morrow County hills seem sad today, for his brother Masons have just buried a good man — a man who gave the county its name on the maps of the world, and left a legacy of an honored reputation.

"It is warm on this treeless hillside today, and the sun beats down, but the people of the city and the county have climbed up here, 500 feet above the town he founded, to pay their last respects to Mr. Morrow. Old neighbors trudged through the dust as they would not do for many other men.

"Mr. Morrow's neighbor pioneers came today for miles around, bringing simple tributes of a few flowers, and they found him in his casket with a peaceful face. There was no sign of suffering — a few days' gradual sinking when the silent messenger came it was like the stopping of a clock whose machinery had served its time, and there was no sudden shock about its pausing.

"The simple service at the house was exactly such as would suit a man of such

simple tastes — a sweet refrain from girl-voices that had grown up around him, and the simple forms of the order, and the concourse of people passed through the home he had founded 25 years ago, and took the last look and overflowed into the well-shaded grounds, under the trees that Mr. Morrow had set out with his own hands. For he was a tree planter, as most men with a good streak in them always are. And the roses and the honeysuckles he had trained on his porches showed how near he was to nature.

"Mr. Morrow passed the three score and ten that so many men fail to reach, and

numerous of his mile stones were modestly marked with good deeds, and as the sun goes down in a flood of crimson, bathing the rolling hills in a sea of purple, leaving the glorious golden glow of the lovelight in the gloaming, so will his memory abide with those who knew him, and it is but a simple, truthful tribute to say that his sympathy was as swift as the flight of the wild duck his wrath as slow as the speed of a snail.

"His light went out as the crimson sunset faded from the summit of Old Mount Adams. The golden glow was gone, the purple haze has vanished, and the world is better for his having lived.

"No shades of shrubbery, or wealth of flowers is possible up on this sun-scathed hillside above water levels. There are no sighing pines, no somber evergreens up here, but the yellow sage blooming as a reminder of the first frosts soon to herald the coming of fall, and the beautiful lupine will come with the showers of the spring, and an occasional meadow, even now sweetly sings, one, ting until the shadows have grown a little longer.

"And now the Masons have tenderly dropped the last sprig of evergreen into their brother's grave; the clouds have fallen; the mound has been rounded up; the people have gone down the hill.

"But as the sun disappears over Judge Dutton's ridge and slants its shaft against the summit of Morgan Mountains, the hanging-lamps of heaven, arc lights of the earth twinkle out and gleam and glisten, and the big harvest moon looks down as if only can in this ambient air; they all know that a new-made grave contains one who appreciated their brightness before his eyes became sightless.

"The Morrow monument is far from the traveled highway and arteries of trade, but the noble character of Uncle Jack Morrow will long cast its shadow in homes and public places.

"Farewell, firm friend, may your sleep be peaceful, painless, and may the realms you have entered into be no less beautiful than the wonderful clouds that look on such fairy forms as you have watched, those splendid summer sunsets from the western portals of your Heppner home." J.W.R.

(Wow! Couldn't J.W.R. write beautifully? I cried when I first read this and have sat here with tears in my eyes as I've copied it. Such a tribute to a friend!)

A REVIEW OF MORROW'S HISTORY

THE BEGINNINGS

By Justine Weatherford

Many artifacts have been collected and many more will

be found that will help in the understanding of the early users of the area now Morrow County. The Indians and possibly earlier peoples traveled the area.

One indication of an early culture could be the geographically peculiar mounds, about 100 feet high, beside Willow Creek just north-west of Lexington. It has no connection with other hills and ridges. (It is just back of the Alvin Wagenblast home.) The American Guide Series, 1940, Oregon, Pg. 262, states, "The site of the remains of an ancient stone sepulcher, one of the several in this region. Found nearby are pictographs and artifacts. Anthropologists have surmised that these graves contain remains of Mayan people, ante-dating the American Indian, who left a trail from the Columbia River to Central America."

Professor E. R. Jackman of O.S.U.'s Extension Staff found evidence of fires atop several mounds. He questioned what heat had turned the earth there to glass-like chunks. Were sacrificial fires built? Where did sufficient fuel come from to build intense fires? Could that heat have been generated naturally?

The 1965-66 Oregon Bluebook, Pg. 135, states, "According to anthropological evidence, men have lived in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, especially on lake and river shores, for about 10,000 years. People migrated from Asia to America by an Alaskan land bridge, moved down the Northwest coast, along the Columbia River to east and north, and south through the interior basin. Pacific Northwest Indians were unique in the great number of languages used in a relatively small area."

It is well known that for many years Indian tribal groups traveled up and down Butter Creek, Rhea Creek and Willow Creek and their tributaries. Bands did not live in established villages but camped wherever it seemed convenient to them. At the season when the salmon were running most of them fished along the Columbia, in the summer and fall they went to the mountains ranging all across the Blue Mountains into Wallowa and Grand Ronde Valleys or on and around the John Day River where they hunted deer and elk and gathered camas, couse, kinnikinnik, wild berries, and various roots and leaves used for food and seasonings.

Early white explorers found the Indians cordial. The Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla used Morrow's acres. It is documented that the Nez Perce language prevailed at the time of the early white settlers having superseded an earlier Cayuse language.