

JOSEPH H. SHERAR. There is not a community in eastern Oregon where Sherar's Bridge is not known. For nearly thirty-five years it has been a prominent point in the map of the state and the almost, ceaseless travel that wends its way across the bridge comes and goes to all points of the northwest. The roaring Des Chutes, a greater obstacle to the early travel than the Cascades, themselves, refused to allow passage of its precipitous banks or any traveler to pass in safety over its waters, unless the tribute of great labor was performed to make a place of descent and a bridge to span it. No ferry could live in its wild flood. Like the water of Lodore it comes down in a maddening rush, roaring, booming, foaming, and fighting, like a wild tyrant, furious at any restraint, never quiet until its bewitched waters are held in the firm grasp of old Columbia, in whose mighty arms they find their way to ocean's expanse. Beautiful and wild in a high degree, the waters of a heaven blue that beggars description, everything connected with the stream bespeaks a decisiveness in nature that finds expression with no tamed spirit or mellowed lines. The very rocks rise in sheer precipices that defy intrusion or hang in beetling cliffs where only the eagle's aery may be found. Through countless ages the busy waters have eroded these stalwarts until naked and bare they stretch hundreds of feet from the blue, galloping waters at their feet towards the clouds above. Only at remote intervals, even in this day of advanced civilization's skilled engineering, do the wise attempt to make a crossing of the untamed Des Chutes. Nature saw the wildness of the scheme and in a determination to assist the man who was to come, juttied out two huge abutments of flinty rock and bade the river pour its torrents between. There on their flat tops forty feet across the chasm and hundreds of feet below the surrounding country, she invited man to span the mad waters, and to aid his efforts in expediting commerce, she cast a canon, tortuous and rough, up on either side. Four of the tough gnarled pines which cling here and there to the rocks, were brought up, hewed and two huge capital A's were planted across the chasm, their prongs resting on either rocky wall and their obtuse angles meeting in mid air. These served for side supports and the bridge was swung. A more complete account of the opening of this important thoroughfare is given elsewhere in this work. Many thousands of money were expended before a safe road could be hewed up the canons, but since it was first opened it has been one of the great arteries of travel in eastern Oregon, and the toll bridge is famous in the history of this part of the state. Mr. Sherar has had charge of the property for many years and his name is indelibly connected with the enterprise.

Since he is thus one of the promoters of settlement and traffic in this part of the state, and since he is a pioneer and one of the leading men of this county, we are pleased to speak more particularly of Mr. Sherar's life. He was born in Vermont, on November 16, 1833, and his father John Sherar, was a native of Ireland. He married an Irish maiden and a few years before the birth of our subject came to the United States with his wife and three children. He settled to farming in the Green Mountain State and there our subject passed the first two years of his life. Then the family came on west to St. Lawrence county, New York, and there he gained his education and was reared. He remained with his parents until 1855, when he was led by an adventurous spirit and the glow of a strong constitution to push out into the west in search of that which lures the true pioneer to the wilder portions of Nature's domain. Fortune glimmered in the west and beckoned him, while a taste for the wild and adventurous also impelled him and soon he had decided to come by the isthmus to the sunny land of California. Mining and packing attracted him and these occupations kept him busy until 1862, with also a short time spent in farming on the Klamath river in the north part of the state. Then he sold all his property and came on to Oregon. He soon had an outfit and was packing out from The Dalles to the various mining camps of eastern Oregon and Idaho. There were no roads then, only trails in most places, and the business was attended with great danger. For two years, however, he followed the business with good success and then he sold to Robert Heppner for six thousand dollars. The second trip of that man was attended by the loss of the entire outfit from Indians. Mr. Sherar had experienced no difficulty with the savages. After that, Mr. Sherar devoted himself to stock raising on a farm he secured near the present site of Dufur. Two years later he removed to Tygh Valley and took a preemption and continued stock raising until 1871. On October 3, of that year, Mr. Sherar came to his present location and since then he has done a world of good to this country by opening and keeping in excellent repair this crossing of the Des Chutes. At immense cost he made a proper grade from the plateau above to the bridge and thence to the heights on the opposite side of the river. He has maintained the same continuously since then and is known as one of the best and most careful road makers of this part of the state. He constructed a hotel when he settled here and has operated the same since. In 1893, on the west bank of the river, he erected a fine hotel of thirty-three rooms and furnished it with all the modern conveniences. It is supplied with the purest spring water and nestles under the protection of the rolling heights on that side of the river and is an ideal retreat for one who wishes to enjoy the quiet and wild-ness of a summer outing with the comforts of a home. The scenery is beyond description and a little nook of land made fruitful with the spring water, produces all the fruits found anywhere in the country. Mr. Sherar has been guided with excellent wisdom in the planning and construction of his hotel, as the rooms are all commodious and pleasantly arranged both for comfort and view. Mrs. Sherar, a lady of refinement and intelligence, spares no pains in making the place so comfortable and inviting that it is a most popular resort for summer tourists and the traveling public. Under her skillful supervision, the Sherar Bridge Hotel has won a wide and enviable fame. In addition to the other beauties mentioned, the Des Chutes makes a leap of many feet here, presenting a scenic effect that is inspiring.

On April 26, 1863, Mr. Sherar married Miss Jane A. Herbert, the wedding occurring on the ranch on Fifteenmile creek. She was born in Joe Daviess county, Illinois, on October 11, 1848. Her father, George F. Herbert, was born in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and his ancestors were an old and prominent Virginia family. His grandfather was a patriot in the Revolution. George Herbert married Miss Elizabeth McCormick, a native of the same place as her husband and descended from Scotch ancestry. In 1850, he crossed the plains with ox teams, landing in The Dalles the day Mrs. Sherar was two years old. The trip occupied six months and was no more eventful than the ordinary one. Mr. Herbert took a donation claim near Eugene and in 1856 bought land on a portion of which Dufur now stands. Later he sold to Mr. Imbler and removed to Tygh Valley. After that he purchased another place near Dufur and there his death occurred on February 6, 1866. His widow died at The Dalles, on July 12, 1899. Mrs. Sherar has one brother, George, a hotel man in Cornucopia, Oregon. Mr. Sherar has no brothers or sisters. In political matters, Mr. Sherar is influential, but will never accept office, although importuned frequently so to do. He is a Republican and can give a good reason for his stand. In addition to the enterprises mentioned, Mr. Sherar handles much land which he owns in this and Sherman counties and also raises many sheep and cattle.