

SMITH FRENCH, a retired merchant in The Dalles, has been one of the heaviest operators in commercial lines in this portion of Oregon. During a long career in active business life here, he manifested ability and energy, coupled with industry and uprightness that won both success liberally and for him a standing that is certainly enviable. A well outlined account of his life will be interesting and we append the same.

Smith French was born in Holland, Vermont on March 26, 1837. His father, Joshua French, a native of New Hampshire, was born in 1803, went to Vermont when a young man, became a successful farmer, and died in April, 1857. The mother, Polly (Mead) French, was born in New Hampshire, the year being 1801, and died August, 1850. In 1875, Mr. Smith French came to The Dalles to visit his brothers and see the country. After a month spent here, he returned to the east and one year later went to California, whence he journeyed to The Dalles arriving there February, 1877, and bought the interest of Mr. Samuel Brooks, in a mercantile establishment owned by Brooks and McFarland. Mr. Brooks is mentioned elsewhere in this volume. The title of the firm was changed to McFarland and French. They did a large and successful business for fifteen years, then sold out and Mr. French retired from the very active duties of business life. At the present time he is president of the Gilman French Land and Live Stock Company, one of the largest cattle raising companies in the state of Oregon. He is a member of the firm of Bolton and Company, general merchants, at Antelope. He is a large stockholder in the Wasco Warehouse Milling Company. He is a stockholder and director in the Arlington National Bank at Arlington, Oregon. In addition to which, he has minor interests in different parts of the state.

Politically, Mr. French has always belonged to the ranks of the Republican party until recently, being now a Prohibitionist.

On September 18, 1861, at Stanstead, province of Quebec, Canada, Mr. French married Miss Esther B., daughter of James F. and Sallie (Brown) Magee. The father was born in Lebanon, New York and was a carpenter. He went to California in 1854, via the Isthmus, and followed his trade and mill work there for twelve years. After that, he returned to Canada and in 1877, came to Oregon with the subject of this article. He remained here until his death, on June 23, 1894, being aged eighty-three years. The mother of Mrs. French was born at Andover, New Hampshire, on February 19, 1812. Her parents moved to Canada in 1821. Mrs. French was born in Stanstead, Quebec, Canada, on December 5, 1838 and has one brother, William B. Mr. and Mrs. French are the parents of three children: C. Gertrude, a doctor of medicine, and practicing in Portland, Oregon; Grace Maude, who married J. W. Condon, in November, 1889 and died on November 20, 1898, leaving her husband and one son, Clifton French Condon; Frank Arthur, who is the manager of the New York Cash Store, a mercantile house in The Dalles.

Daniel M. French, eldest of the three French brothers of The Dalles, came to The Dalles in 1862, and for many years was a leading business man here. A sketch of his life with that of his widow are found elsewhere in this work. Joshua W. French, brother of our subject, came to The Dalles in 1864 and for many years was engaged in the mercantile business with his brother Daniel. In 1877, they established the first banking house in The Dalles, and the same is now owned by Mr. Joshua French and the estate of Daniel M. French. Our subject is one of the executors of the estate of his brother, Daniel M. deceased.

Joseph M. French, the eldest one of the brothers went to California from Massachusetts, in 1849, and died in the Golden State in 1889, a retired merchant. Marsh French, the youngest brother, came to the coast about 1863 and now lives at Port Townsend, Washington.

Mr. and Mrs. French are members of the Methodist church and for twenty years, he has been a trustee. Mrs. French was superintendent of the M.E. Sunday school for more than twenty years, is now president of the W.C.T.U., and is closely identified with the social functions of the city. She was appointed chairman of a committee by the Columbia River Conference of the M.E. church to formulate plans for the removal from Stanstead, province of Quebec, Canada, the remains of the late Rev. Jason Lee, the first Protestant missionary sent across the Rockies, to be interred by the side of his wife and child in the Lee Mission cemetery, From early life Mrs. French has been an aggressive worker in the church of temperance.