

GRIFFITH E. WILLIAMS, deceased. The subject of the following memoir, late of The Dalles, Oregon, was a prosperous and progressive merchant of that city. He was born in Wales about 1835, the son of Evan and Phoebe (Roberts) Williams. Both of the parents died when our subject was nine years of age, and he came to the United States with his brothers and sisters, arriving at the port of New Orleans. The father of our subject was a farmer near Bedd-Gelert, of an ancient and distinguished family in Wales. The father was a life-long student, and possessed considerable literary ability. On the death of the parents of our subject the estate was sold and the proceeds divided among the children, of whom there were nine. The share of Griffith E. Williams supported and educated him until he was thirteen years of age. At that period he left his brother and learned the trade of a cabinet-maker, which he successfully followed in Dodgeville, Wisconsin, until 1852, when he crossed the plains with a brother, Robert B., who died en route.

Our subject continued on to Portland, Oregon, where he found employment in a sawmill, remaining two years, at which period the mill was destroyed by fire. He had drawn but little of his two years' earnings, and he lost it all. He then purchased a cayuse and outfit and went to Yreka, California, where he was employed two years building cabins for the miners in that locality. Returning to Oregon he was employed in different mills in that state, and in 1862 went to The Dalles, accompanied by his wife, and for many years subsequently was in the employment of the Oregon Railroad & Navigation Company, engaged in car building. At the same period he was associated with Mr. Edward Wingate in the hardware business, the latter conducting the enterprise while our subject remained in the employment of the company. The business, however, soon increased to an extent warranting the attention of both gentlemen, and he assumed an active management of the affairs of the hardware firm. On the death of Mr. Wingate he continued the business for himself and widow of his former partner. Gradually the hardware store was merged into a general merchandise business. Mr. Williams died March 6, 1886. He was a member of the city council and throughout life was a staunch Republican.

At Beaver Creek, near Oregon City, May 26, 1860, Mr. Williams was married to Anna M. Marshall, born in London, England, March 26, 1846. She was the daughter of George and Mary Spencer Marshall, the father a native of Staffordshire, and the mother of Hull, England. The father died at Southampton, England, when Mrs. Williams was six years of age. Her maternal grandfather was a gentleman farmer, and his daughter, the mother of Mrs. Williams, passed many years in Paris. There she married and lived four years longer, then returned to England with her husband. He died in Southampton, England, when subject was about six years old. They came to the United States, the widow and children, settled in Chicago, remaining until 1852 when the mother married William Harmon. They then crossed the plains, the party consisting of subject, three brothers, mother and step-father. The journey to The Dalles occupied six months and ten days. Indians stole their horses and their cattle died for want of water. The party wearily walked the last six hundred miles, having only one yoke of cattle left. The mother, being crippled, rode with a two year old step-child in the one remaining wagon. They were scantily provided with provisions, had endured many hardships, yet withal they arrived at The Dalles in comparatively good health. Pushing on to Portland they remained two weeks, and then located at Oregon City. Here the step-father, who was a skilled mechanic, procured employment in a foundry and blacksmith shop. He was a distinguished temperance worker, and was known as "Father Harmon" throughout the northwest. He died in 1890. Mrs. Williams has two brothers living, John Marshall, former chief engineer of the Oregon Railroad & Navigation Company, now retired, engaged in the real estate business in Portland; and Edward T., of Sturgis City, North Dakota. Our subject left nine surviving children, Jeanette, wife of Arthur G. Dunn, of the firm of Ainsworth & Dunn, Seattle; Edward M., mentioned elsewhere; Griffith C., of Spokane; Mary E., married to Russell E. Sewell; an attorney at Portland; Annie G., wife of H.W. French, of Wapinitia; Pearl E., wife of Dr. George Marshall; Carl P., of The Dalles; Robert A., a student at the college of Physicians and Surgeons, New York City; Florence J., living at home; Grace (deceased). Mrs. Williams has one sister, Mary E., widow of Webster A. Clark, of Chicago.