

JOSEPH PURSER resides about two miles out from Hood River, on Belmont street and is one of the leading and thrifty horticulturists of the valley. He was born in England on November 20, 1848, the son of Thomas and Martha (Wast) Purser, natives of England. The father was a brick maker and came to the United States with his family in 1851, settling in Danville, Illinois. He followed his trade until 1872, when he sold his property and came to Oregon. For two years he lived in Portland, then removed to Hood River where he died in 1861. The mother died here in 1897. Their marriage occurred in England, in May, 1841. The father was a very skillful brick maker and manufactured all the brick used in the capitol building at Springfield, Illinois. Our subject was raised and educated in Danville and labored with his father until they came to Oregon. He was employed for a couple of years in Portland, then came to Hood River and homesteaded eighty acres, where he has since lived. He is one of the early settlers here and has labored continuously for the building up of the country. His land is unexcelled in quality and owing to his nearness to town, he has advantageously sold all of it except eighteen and one half acres. He has six acres of strawberries and the balance to other fruit and general crops.

At Danville, Illinois, in 1871, the day of the Chicago fire, Mr. Purser married. He was a member of the Danville fire department and just after the ceremony as he was accompanying his bride down the street the fire alarm sounded and he hurried to headquarters just in time to be rushed away on the train to Chicago and did not see his wife again for four days.

In Portland, in 1874, Mrs. Purser died. A second marriage was contracted by Mr. Purser, the same being in 1880, when Ellen Swan, a native of England and the daughter of George and Mary Swan, became his wife. She came to the United States in 1869. Her parents lived at White Salmon. Mr. Purser has two brothers, David and John and two sisters, Mrs. Phoebe Foss and Mrs. Mary Noble. Mr. Purser is the father of six children: Nora, wife of R.A. Phelps in the valley; Hattie, wife of John Tyler, also in the valley; David J., Rena P., Winnie D. and Ira D., all at home.

Politically, our subject is independent. He has served as road supervisor here in the valley and made a record for himself in building the first gravel road in this section. It was an excellent piece of work and has stimulated good road building, one of the most important factors of a civilized country. In Illinois, Mr. Purser was road supervisor for seven years and he is skilled in the way of building good roads cheap. He has made a study of the matter and is one of the best posted men on roads in the county. He is very enthusiastic in the improvement of the country in every line and a progressive and good man.

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