

JOHN S. BOOTH, a leading merchant in Hood River, was born in The Dalles, Oregon, on August 26, 1870, thus being a native son of Wasco county, as well as one of its most popular citizens. His father, John P. Booth, born in Oakland county, Michigan, was a harnessmaker and a saddler and died at The Dalles, in 1876. He married Miss Mary L. Riggs, a native of Michigan, and descended from an old and prominent southern family. She had grown up in Michigan with her husband and her marriage occurred there. Her husband's father was a Baptist preacher and her father was one of the most eminent jurists that the state of Michigan ever produced. He was one of the framers of the constitution, was appointed by the first governor of the territory, Louis Cass, agent to take charge of all the Indians within the boundary of the territory. He had been commissary officer on the staff of Colonel James B. Ballis all through the War of 1812. Later he was supreme judge in the state of Michigan and his decisions are quoted and followed to this day. He was a man of deep erudition and possessed of a keenness and acumen that especially fitted him for that responsible position. His father, Jeremiah C. Riggs, was an aide-de-camp to General Washington in the Revolution, and served throughout that struggle. The grandfather of Jeremiah Riggs served with distinction in the Pequot Indian war about 1636, and on one occasion was the means of saving his entire command from annihilation by the savages, by an act of personal bravery and daring.

Our subject's parents came to Oregon via the isthmus in 1851 and located at The Dalles. The father brought the first set of harness and saddle tools to the country east of the Cascades. They came on the boat that followed him the next day. The craft sank and Mr. Booth hired an Indian to dive for the tools. He opened a harness and saddle store and shop at once and continued the same for twenty years. He was active in governmental affairs and was the first justice of the peace in Wasco county, and performed the first marriage ceremony. After retiring from the shop, he attended to the oversight of his farm, on Five Mile creek, and was the first man to foster market gardening. After his death, the family remained in The Dalles until 1898 then went to Portland and in 1901 they came to Hood River. Our subject received a good education in the schools of The Dalles and then turned his attention to the fish and produce business, as a commission merchant in The Dalles. Ten years later he sold this business and engaged as agent with the first line of steamers plying from Portland to The Dalles after the opening of the locks. One year later he assumed charge of the Portland office for the Regulator line of steamers and in that capacity served for two years. Then he resigned and opened his present mercantile business in Hood River.

At the time of the Spanish war, Mr. Booth was captain of Company G, Oregon National Guards, and with his company of sixty men went to camp McKinley, at Portland. Captain Booth's company was absorbed by the Second Oregon Volunteers, and he was appointed second lieutenant of Company L. The changes resulting from the absorption of the state militia by the regulars practically disorganized the Oregon militia and at the suggestion of General Beebe, our subject took up the arduous task of reorganizing and establishing anew the Oregon Militia. Upon the abandonment of camp McKinley and the sailing of the regulars for the seat of war, Mayor Booth commenced his labors, which finally, after two years of persistent, patient, and skillfully disposed effort, resulted in placing on a better basis than ever before the Oregon State Militia, reorganized, newly equipped, and standing in commendable relation to the other guards of the nation. To the efforts of Brigade Quartermaster Booth and his associate officers this happy ultimatum is due, and the fact that from raw material he has helped to bring out the excellently trained and finely uniformed Guards in Oregon reflects great credit upon him.

Previous to his service, Mr. Booth had an extensive military record. On December 15, 1886, he enlisted in Company C, at The Dalles, it being the first company organized in eastern Oregon, and captained by Charles E. Morgan, now of Portland. Upon the organization of the Third regiment of the Oregon National Guards, our subject was appointed signal officer on the staff of Colonel Houghton and served four years. Then he was elected major of the same regiment and was assigned to command the first battalion, serving thus four years. Then he resigned, but upon the earnest solicitation of his commanding officer, accepted the position of commissary officer on his staff and remained in that capacity until chosen captain of Company G. All told this makes fourteen years of service for Major Booth, and in it all there have been that trust-worthiness and faithful execution of duty that have warmly commended him to both men and higher officers.

Fraternally, Major Booth belongs to the Artisans. His father was a thirty-third degree Scot-tish rite Mason and was instrumental in getting the charter for Wasco Lodge, No. 15, A.F. & A.M., of The Dalles. He and his wife were charter members of the first Congregational church at The Dalles, and their son, our subject, is a consistent member of the same denomination, being also clerk of his church. Major Booth had one brother, Latimer, a popular voting business man of The Dalles, bookkeeper for J.T. Peters, who died on April 5, 1897, leaving a wife and two children. He was thirty-six years of age when his demise occurred.

On June 9, 1904, at Hood River, occurred the marriage of Major Booth and Miss Loretta F. Edmunds, a native of Petrolea, Ontario. Major Booth has made a splendid success of business life, starting in the mercantile field at The Dalles with a small capital and now having a fine establishment. His store is one of the neat, attractive places of Hood River, and is a credit to the town. He handles a full line of such goods as are usually found in a variety store, and his geniality and deferential treatment of all have won for him an excellent patronage and given him a wide circle of friends wherever he is known.