

WILLIAM HEISLER, better known as "Grandpa Heisler" is one of the pioneers of the Pacific coast and a detailed account of his career is very interesting in a work of this character, therefore, for the benefit of all, we append the same.

William Heisler was born in Schuylkill county, Pennsylvania, on April 13, 1828, the son of John and Catherine (Yost) Heisler, also natives of the Keystone State. They were both descended from prominent and old Dutch families. The father's father was a patriot in the Revolution. Our subject was reared and educated in his native county and when 1846 came he went to Pittsburg and wrought at his trade of tobacconist and cigar maker. Then he traveled to Adeiphia, Ohio, thence to Louisville, Kentucky, later to Bethlehem, Indiana, and thence to St. Louis, where he enlisted in Colonel Powell's Battalion, being enrolled in Company A, under Captain Sublett. His service was for eighteen months or until peace was declared with Mexico. When they got as far as Fort Leavenworth, word came of the Whitman massacre, and his command was ordered to that section. The following winter was spent near the present site of Omaha and in the spring they made their way to Grand Island in the Platte. As peace was declared, they were discharged, but at that time the government built Fort Kearney and they remained until the regulars relieved them in the fall of 1848, and they were formally discharged at Fort Leavenworth. In the spring of the following year, Mr. Heisler with four friends came with ox teams to California and soon was working in the mines, first at Weavertown, sixty miles northeast from Sacramento and then in other places with moderate success and then returned to Missouri via Panama. From June 22, 1851, to March 12, 1852, he remained in Missouri, then came overland with his wife, having married. His brother-in-law and others accompanied them and they arrived at Foster's ranch in Clackamas county on August 16, 1852. Soon he took a donation claim nine miles south from Salem and later sold it to Gaines, who was the second governor of Oregon. Then he took another claim in Lane county and there made his home until 1868. Next he bought a forty acre tract near Brownsville, and in 1870 sold it and came to Prineville. There were but thirteen settlers in that part of the country upon his arrival and he contracted to have lumber brought over from Linn county at three cents per pound for freighting, with which he built the first store in Prineville. He remained in business there until 1880, when he sold one half interest to Arthur Breyman, and later the balance to John Summerville, and removed to The Dalles. In September, 1882, Mr. Heisler opened a store in Dufur, there being but five houses and a black-smith shop there then. For four years Mr. Heisler continued there and then he sold to A.J. Brig-ham, who is mentioned elsewhere in this work. Next we see our subject in the cattle business with his sons, they handling the stock in Crook county, which continued until 1897. Then he sold his cattle and land in Crook county and purchased a flour mill in the edge of Dufur which he operated until the spring of 1903. At the present time Mr. Heisler is dwelling in Dufur and has a comfortable cottage in the centre of town, which is situated in a block well set to trees and ornamental shrubs. He is widely known and is as highly esteemed as he is known and is one of the true historic characters of this part of the state. Mr. Heisler has one sister, Mrs. Catherine Lyser, a widow at Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Heisler has one sister, Susan Cheshire, a widow in Sodaville, this state.

The marriage of Mr. Heisler and Martha, the daughter of John and Folly (Hill) McConnell, natives of Kentucky and South Carolina, respectively, occurred in Cedar county, Missouri, at the home of the bride, on December 4, 1851. Mrs. Heisler was born in Missouri, on August 8, 1834. The children born to this worthy couple, are; Munroe, a carpenter in Dufur; Alexander, a farmer near Dufur; Jefferson D., with his father; William H., a miller in Portland; Louisa, wife of George Cary, a groceryman in North Yakima; Susannah, wife of W.T. Vanderpool, a farmer of Dufur; Mary, wife of W.L. Vanderpool a farmer of Dufur; Catherine, wife of Andrew Howie, a farmer four miles out from Dufur; and Annie, the wife of John McAtee, a clerk in Dufur. Mr. and Mrs. Heisler are members of the United Brethren church and have always been devout and worthy people. For twenty-two years they have favored the prohibitionist movements and are stanch supporters of all that tends to build up the community. The descendants of these venerable people are nine children, twenty-one grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren, only two of the entire number being deceased.