

WILLIAM H. DAVIS is a man of kindness, affability and geniality, always ruled by a sense of honor and justice and guided by unswerving integrity. His birth occurred in Linn county, Missouri, on August 28, 1843. The parents, James and Nancy (Johnson) Davis, were natives of Ireland and Kentucky, respectively, and died when our subject was a small boy. The father preceded his wife, some time over the river of death, and when this lad was about seven, he awoke to the sad fate of being an orphan. He was bound out and lived the life of an ordinary boy, but had little opportunity in those early days to attend school. But young Davis was not made of the stuff that wilts at one adverse blast, for he picked his way along with the training to be had and became fitted for life's duties. About twenty-one, or a little before, he departed from his guardian and in 1862 enlisted in Company F, Forty-second Missouri Infantry, and served throughout the entire struggle with distinction, being called on to do much heavy fighting and the arduous duty of the soldier. He acted as a scout and a spy and would often be called to headquarters to doff his uniform for citizen's clothes to undertake some hazardous mission where his life would pay the forfeit should his identity become known. Frequently he made his way into the rebel lines, fraternized with them and always left without exciting suspicion, his successful plan being to act the part of a green, gawky boy. His services were highly appreciated and he was intrusted with many very important enterprises. When the war ended and the time came to lay down his musket and take again the plow, he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had done what he could for his country. While he participated in none of the large battles he had a life of the most trying danger during the entire service. Being mustered out in 1865, he returned to Linn county and there engaged in farming until 1877, when he came to Oregon and settled on Wapinitia flat. He landed here in July and since that time he has continued in the business of stock raising and farming. He owns eleven hundred and sixty acres of land, the beginning of the estate being secured through the homestead act. Half of this is cultivable, and he reaped this year three hundred acres of good grain. Last winter, Mr. Davis fed nearly two hundred head of cattle. He started with Shorthorn breeds but is now handling Hereford, almost exclusively. He has some fine registered animals and ships as far as Missouri. His stock is of the best and the thrift, care, and wisdom manifested in all his enterprises, show a man of ability and one who could but be crowned with success.

In Linn county, Missouri, on December 12, 1865, Mr. Davis married Miss Eliza H. Woodruff, a native of Linneus, Missouri. Her parents, David and Frances (Alexander) Woodruff, were born in Kentucky and are now deceased. On March 19, 1904, after many years of faithful life, Mrs. Davis was called hence by death. She had, many friends, being, like her husband, popular and highly esteemed. No children have been born to this marriage. Owing to the fact that Mr. Davis had little opportunity to gain an education, and his knowledge of books being circumscribed, he relied more especially on his faithful wife to assist him in his business relations. She was a woman of refined and gentle nature, possessed of excellent business qualifications, and, her loss was most keenly felt by her husband as well as by all who knew her. Mr. Davis is one of the active Republicans of the county and, is almost always at the conventions, where he is an influential participant. He never seeks office for himself, but is greatly interested in putting good men into the places of importance.

Mr. Davis is justly entitled to credit for improving the cattle stock of Wapinitia flat, and also of this section of Oregon, as he was the first settler to bring Shorthorns to the flat. Some time since he returned to Missouri and brought back eleven cows and five bulls, all fine registered stock. He has devoted his entire time to cattle raising and his enthusiasm along that line has resulted in his nick name, "Cow Davis," by which he is known all over central Oregon.