

WILLIAM R. MENEFEE, one of the oldest settlers in the country now comprising Wasco county, and a retired farmer, resides at Dufur. He was born December 5, 1823, in Rappahannock county, Virginia, at the time of his birth known as Culpeper county. He is the son of John M. and Lucy M. (Partlow) Menefee, natives of Virginia. In 1837 John L. Partlow, the brother of Lucy M. Menefee was sheriff of Rappahannock county.

In a subscription school in Virginia William R. Menefee, our subject, received his education, and in 1835 his parents removed to Henry county, Iowa To reach this place they were obliged to travel overland with horse teams. It was in 1852 that our subject came to Oregon, and located on a donation claim in Yamhill county, but it being not entirely satisfactory he secured another claim in the Walla Walla country, Washington, and in 1855 started for that locality with his wife and two children. At The Dalles he learned of the horrible atrocities connected with the massacre of Dr. Marcus Whitman, and decided to postpone his advent into that territory. On the repeal of the donation law he came to this vicinity accompanied by seven other families. They concluded to build a fort and take up land on Fifteen Mile Creek. There were in the colony the Combs, Crooks, Bolton, Zachery, Flett, Walker and two other families. They ran up part of a stockade, but as there was no immediate trouble with the Indians completion of the stockade was abandoned. It is true that some stock was stolen, but they were not fully convinced that this was not the work of white men, instead of Indians.

Until quite recently our subject has been a Republican. At present he is a Prohibitionist. For eight years he was justice of the peace, and has been school director, and was the first clerk of school district No. 2 upon its organization. He has never been an office seeker, but has always taken an active interest in party politics. For many years he followed the business of farming and stock raising, but in 1885 he disposed of his land, of which he at one time had six hundred and eighty acres, and removed into the town of Dufur. During one year he was in the hotel business, conducting the old Fifteen Mile House, and one year he was engaged in improving his town property. In company with two partners he erected a windmill and built waterworks, drawing water from the creek. These were the pioneer water works of Dufur. Later a company of eight was organized, including Mr. Menefee, and they enlarged the system, and of this plant he is now the superintendent. Since 1889 he has been a notary public. Our subject's wife owns residence lots in Dufur, and a house on Main street. Mr. Menefee had one brother, Elijah L., who died in 1875. Four sisters are deceased, Clarinda, Lucy, Sarah and Catherine.

February 8, 1849, Mr. Menefee, at Grand View, Louisa county, Iowa, was united in marriage to Nancy J. Benefiel. She has one brother living, William, in Spokane, Washington. She had three sisters, Susan, widow of Robert Ireland; Louisa and Hester, deceased. Mr. Menefee has seven children living, Henry, of Dufur; Frank; William R., a druggist in Gaston, Oregon; Mary, wife of F.M. Gilliam, of Fossil; Carrie, married to E.B. Dufur, of Goldhill, Oregon; Hannah, widow of Warren Emmerson and Evaline, widow of Hugh Moorehead. Both Mr. and Mrs. Menefee are members of the Christian. church.