

Dean Blanchard



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JUDGE DEAN BLANCHARD. In fashioning his meritorious career Judge Dean Blanchard has builded substantially and well, and among his other western undertakings has associated his name irrevocably with the upbuilding of the town of Rainier. As a boy Judge Blanchard breathed the inspiring air of far off Maine, in which state he was born at Madison, December 20, 1832. His first impressions of life and work were gained on the paternal farm, where early hours and plenty of muscular exertion contributed to health of mind and body. At the age of ten he removed with his parents to Woodstock, N. B., where he lived for three years, going then to Houlton, Me., where the father engaged in the hotel business.

When the family fortunes were shifted to the Pacific coast in 1853, the journey being accom-

plished by boat, via the Nicaragua route to San Francisco, Judge Blanchard spent six weeks in Portland, and then accepted a clerkship with Captain Knighton of St. Helens, in a general merchandise store. 1855 found him participating in the Indian outbreak on the Snake river, during which rebellion he drove a six mule team for the government, and had plenty of opportunity to study Indian methods of warfare. In the fall of 1855 he entered into partnership with his father in putting in a hundred acres of wheat in Santa Clara Valley, Cal., this venture, however, proving disastrous owing to a devastating drought. Thereafter the son was glad to accept another clerkship in St. Helens, after which he clerked in the Indian department at Vancouver for a few months. Returning to St. Helens he again clerked for Captain Knighton, and in 1859 went to Fort Colvill, and as a carpenter assisted in the construction of the fort at that place. In an effort to get to Walla Walla, Wash., with four ordinary, two saddle, and two pack horses, he had the misfortune to lose his four footed friends one night, and was at the mercy of what is known as shank's express. However, he happened to fall in with good samaritans who saw him safely to the end of his journey, and, having nothing else to do, he returned whence he came.

At the Cascades Judge Blanchard worked at the carpenter's trade for a short time, and in '60 worked at carpentering for the government in Vancouver. The following year he worked at his trade in Portland, and in connection therewith worked at surveying, he having learned both surveying and navigation while attending school in the east. The spring of '62 found Mr. Blanchard balancing up accounts and acting as general manager for G. W. Vaughn, of Portland, a position maintained until coming to Rainier in the fall of '63. The drawing card at this place was some sawmill property which he purchased in partnership with T. S. Trevett, after which was erected the saw mill which has since hummed its way to a large and increasing lumber business, and which at present still continues to use up forest products. About the time of the milling venture Mr. Blanchard enlarged his prospects by engaging in a general merchandise business, and having done so much towards starting the town a postoffice department was naturally added, and for thirty years the founder of Rainier was also its postmaster.

In 1858 Mr. Blanchard received substantial recognition from his Republican friends through his election to the office of county auditor, and this proved the beginning of a number of political responsibilities inspired by his peculiar fitness to serve the public interests. He was afterward elected county clerk, the first of Columbia county, and in 1874 was elected county judge, serving

eight years. During his term of office he raised the county to a solid financial basis, and refused the nomination for a third term. He was instrumental in securing the incorporation of Rainier, and was elected first treasurer of the embryo town, a position maintained at the present time. In 1892 he was again elected to the county judgeship for four years. As a promoter of education he has exerted a wholesome influence in elevating the standard of education in his locality, his work while a member of the school board having been fraught with particularly far reaching results. Judge Blanchard has been a member of the Masonic order for forty years, and is now connected with St. John's chapter, R. A. M., of Astoria, and secretary of Rainier Lodge No. 24. Judge Blanchard is one of the men of brawn and brain and sterling worth who have invaded this western country with but one result, that of leaving behind them permanent reminders of their ability to turn to account for themselves and others, the great opportunities by which they have been surrounded.

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