



Noah Hubler

Milwaukie's First Law Enforcement Officer

In an era of horse-pulled commuter trolley cars, when chickens and cows freely roamed the dirt roads along the banks of the Willamette River, and before the campaign to organize an incorporated municipality, the law and order of Milwaukie was voluntarily maintained by Noah Hubler: a son of Ohio, a pioneer, volunteer soldier, husband and father, self-appointed law enforcer.

Like most nineteenth century Oregonians, Noah Hubler started life east of the Mississippi River, having been born on December 10, 1832, in Harrison County, Ohio¹, twenty-five hundred miles away from the land he would help conquer and protect. After spending part of his childhood in Lucas County, Ohio, Noah headed west, traveling with the Hardy family by ox team to the Willamette Valley, arriving by 1852². The group settled in the recently platted community of Milwaukie, where Noah would reside for most of the next six decades.

By 1856 the Oregon Territories' "Indian disturbances" had escalated into the "Indian War" in the Rogue River Valley³, and Noah joined many of his new neighbors in serving in the Oregon Mounted Volunteer cavalry under the command of Captain W. S. Buckley of the 9th Regiment⁴. Although Noah's military service was short-lived, the experience was referenced prominently in his obituary articles written nearly 60 years later.

Also similar to his pioneer-age contemporaries, Noah had several different careers and occupations. According to the Census Report of 1870, Noah reportedly was a laborer, but he had at various times run a "small fruit boat" for the Seth Wellon Company of Portland⁵, toiled in Seth Lewelling's orchard as a foreman⁶, and operated a tavern on what is today's McLoughlin Boulevard⁷. While pursuing these professional endeavors he was married twice, earlier in his life to a Catherine Miller, and as of October 4, 1871, to a Rebecca Jones⁸. Noah had two daughters, Rosella, born on August 22, 1859, at Albany, Oregon, who would go on to become Mrs. Rosella Lakin; and Mabel, whose last name at the time of Noah's passing in 1915 was Burke⁹.

Noah's fame as the community constable seems to have started after he had resettled in Milwaukie and married Rebecca, having become a regular amongst the people he felt comfortable enough to proclaim himself the "first police officer" based largely on his ownership of a badge and gun¹⁰. It is reported by those who knew him that he took great pride in serving as a "special marshal" on election days¹¹ and its possible that this type of appointment may have added to his role, official or not, as the enforcer of the unincorporated area's laws. Noah may also have some claim to fame as the founder of the Milwaukie Police Department's K-9 unit as he was frequently seen on patrol with his little dog.

The pioneer, veteran of the Indian War, the community's first law enforcement officer, passed away at his daughter's home in Milwaukie on September 10, 1915, he was buried along with many other notable figures in the City's early history at Pioneer Cemetery¹². His official capacity notwithstanding, certainly his community can thank Noah Hubler for his courage and willingness to freely serve his community.

¹ *Oregon City Enterprise*, "Milwaukie Pioneer of 1852 is Dead", 9/17/1915

² *Ibid.*

³ Wikipedia, *Rogue River Wars*, retrieved 5/15/2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rogue_River_Wars.

⁴ *Ibid.*, notation 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, notation 1.

⁶ Olson, Charles Oluf, *History of Milwaukie* (Milwaukie Historical Society, 1965) page 77.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Oregon State Archives, *Oregon Historical Records Index*, retrieved 5/15/2014, <http://genealogy.state.or.us/>

⁹ *Ibid.*, notation 1.

¹⁰ Milwaukie Historical Society, *Hubler* biography (Milwaukie Historical Society, circa 2000).

¹¹ Lahman, Mr., *Home of Direct Legislation* (Milwaukie Historical Society, 2/27/1936).

¹² *Ibid.*, notation 1.