

George Nurse

2017 is the 150th anniversary of George Nurse's journey to the shores of the Link River. We will look back at the man who was key to the establishment of our community, Klamath Falls.

Nurse, during his day more affectionately known as "Uncle George", was the founding father of Linkville, later to be known as Klamath Falls. He was born June 7, 1820 in Courtland County New York. In 1855 he crossed the country to California where boom towns and gold fever had grasped the imagination of the world. Eight years later he moved on to Oregon and accepted a contract to provide hay for the military post at Fort Klamath. A year later, in 1864 he set up a sutler's store at the fort and established trade with the soldiers and local Native Americans.

In 1867, the enterprising Nurse embarked southward to occupy a piece of land that he eventually would develop into the town of Linkville. He established a ferry service, built a bridge at the mouth of Link River and built the first building, including a modest hotel. He promoted the development of Linkville by giving much of the land he had plotted to any individual who would build on and occupy it. He dedicated block 12 for common school purposes, allotted land for the future site of a courthouse and provided a new cemetery site.

However, his unlimited generosity brought about his financial undoing. He often co-signed for the debts of others and in 1883 a party defaulted, leaving him responsible for a huge note. In order to pay the note, it was necessary for him to liquidate most of what he possessed, leaving him with almost nothing. He packed his few belongings and again headed south, this time to Yreka, California, where he later died in 1905.

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