

Sophia Henley

Death called another Klamath County pioneer Sunday, December 18, 1938, when Sophia Steele Henley who for more than 50 years an outstanding figure in the early days of southern Oregon, died at the home of daughter, Mrs. Sarah E. Harshbarger, in the Henley district.

For two score years, Mrs Henley's interest centered in the development of Klamath county, especially the Henley district, and within the past few years she devoted much time and energy in the Henley schools of which she was exceptionally proud.

Sophia Steele Henley, daughter of William Steele, was born in Walpacka, Wisconsin in 1854. She was 84 years, 8 months, and 29 days at the time of her death.

She was married, when a young girl, to Asa Foster in Virginia City Nevada. Foster died several years later, and she married James Thomas Henley for whom the Henley district, south of Klamath Falls, is named. The couple married in Reno, Nevada 58 years before her death. To this union was born a son, James H. Henley Jr. who died two years before his mother. Sophia bore two daughters in her marriage to Asa Foster.

For several years, Mr. and Mrs. Henley lived in Cortiz, Nevada, and they came to Linkville more than 50 years ago with their three small children. James Henley purchased a piece of property, "100 acres square", which he is said to have bought from the Carison family.

For some good many years, the Henleys were one of the largest land owners in Klamath county. The old Henley place was one of the first houses in the valley and the first big house in that section. Both Mr. and Mrs. Henley were great lovers of the land, and they planted hundreds of tree which can be seen from many points in the valley.

After James T. Henley's death some 35 years ago in 1903, Mrs. Henley continued to live on in the old home place, leaving it 11 years ago to make her home with her daughter, Mrs. Harshbarger. A year ago (1937) a modern home was built on a piece of the property, and it was there that Sophia Henley died.

Mrs. Henley's father, William Steele, came here in the early days, more than 60 years ago, (in the late 1870s), and he is given credit for construction of a canal which transformed that part of the valley from sage brush into rich farm land, green and productive. He died, according to one of the relatives, some 45 years ago (about 1893).

The old Henley home still stands and is now occupied by William Whitlatch.

Old friends and neighbors spoke with affection and reverence for "Grandmother" Henley who took an active part until her recent illness in the progress of that section of Klamath county. She was especially pleased with the construction of Henley Junior High which added another step to education in that part of the valley.

Mrs. Henley is survived by her two daughters, Mrs. Sarah Harshbarger of the Henley district, Mrs. Lucy T. Cross of Oakland, California, a sister, Mrs. Minnie E. Ward of Klamath Falls, two grandsons, Asa Harshbarger and Foster Calef of Los Angeles; four granddaughters, Alice Sutton and Helen Henley of Sacramento; Esther Jones of Martinez, California and Virginia LaForge of Henley, and also three great-granddaughters.

Funeral services will be held at Ward's Funeral Home, 925 High street, Tuesday afternoon, December 20th at 2 o'clock. The Reverend V. E. Newman of St. Paul's Episcopal church will officiate. Mrs. Henley's body will be forwarded via Southern Pacific to Oakland, California, where cremation will take place at the Oakland Crematorium.