

Founding Fathers of Baker City

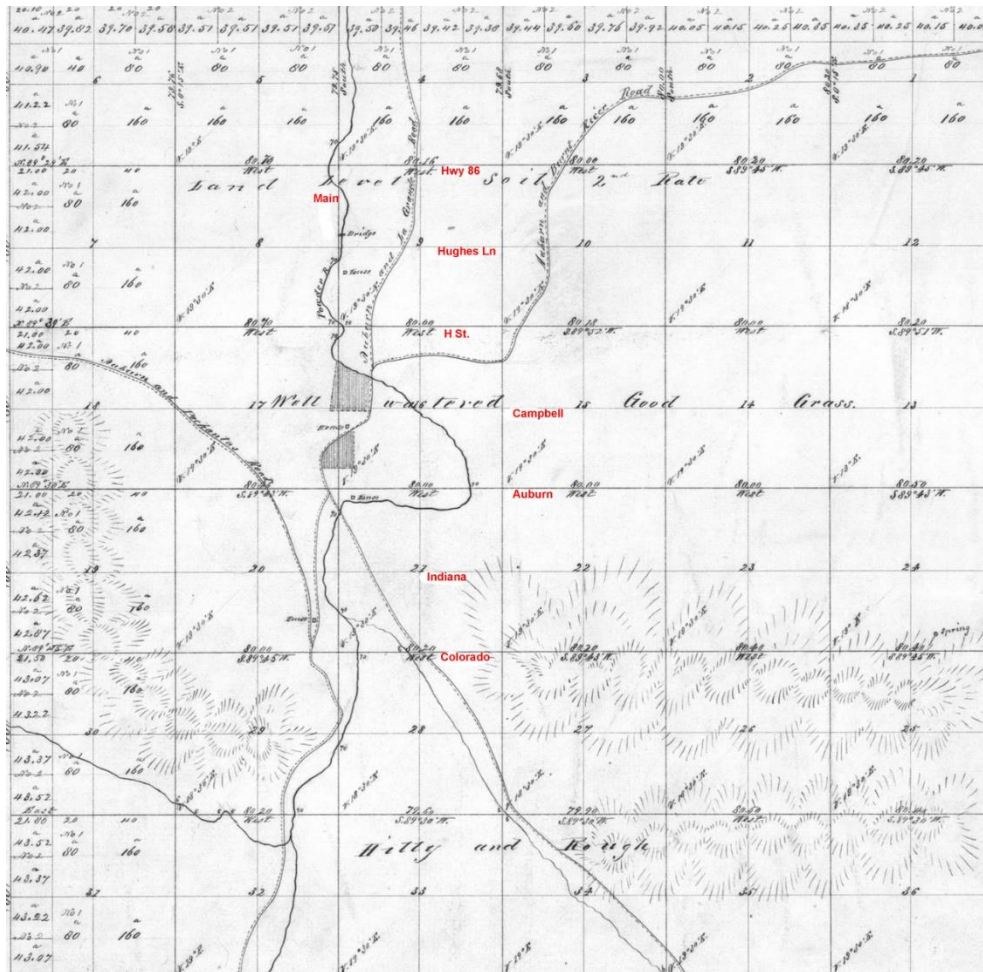
by Gary Dielman

Founding Father #1: Royal A. Pierce (1828-1907)

Isaac Hiatt in his "Thirty-one Years in Baker County: 1862 to 1893," described the actions Royal A. Pierce took to plat a town at the south end of Powder River Valley.

In the month of August 1864, R. A. Pierce laid claim to the SE 1/4 of Sec. 17, Township 9 S. R. 40, east of the Willamette meridian, and proceeded in 1865 to get a title to the same from the state. He built a house west of where the court house now stands and early in the spring of 1865 laid out the SE quarter of the quarter section for a town site, which he named Baker, but somehow people would call it Baker City and that became the adopted name.

The 1864 Baker City Township Map below shows clearly why lawyer Pierce filed a claim on 160 acres and platted the first town in the township. As the first to do so, Pierce is my choice for Founding Father #1 of Baker City.



The township map shows several wagon roads converging in the area of the shaded-in farm fields. Those fields were located in the heart of the present business district of Baker City. Pierce realized that Auburn, lying in narrow Blue Canyon in the foothills of the Elkhorn Mountains, was not a favorable site for a city. He had a better idea: establish a town at the south end of Powder River Valley, where five roads pointed like arrows toward the perfect location.

How did Pierce end up in Baker County? In 1852 he had gotten close, when he sailed around the Horn of South America to California, where he engaged in mining on the Feather River. The next year he returned to Wisconsin. In December 1853 he married Elizabeth Ann Turk (1832-1918). Elizabeth, who went by her middle name, Ann, was born in Sussex, England. At a young age she had immigrated to Wisconsin with her parents.

Royal Pierce was born Feb. 23, 1828, at Londonderry, Vermont. His parents were Abel Pierce and Harriet Dodge Pierce, whose forefathers had immigrated to America in the 1600s. When Royal was a child, his parents ventured further west to Black Earth, Dane County, Wisconsin, a village 20 miles west of Madison. Royal grew to adulthood in Wisconsin.

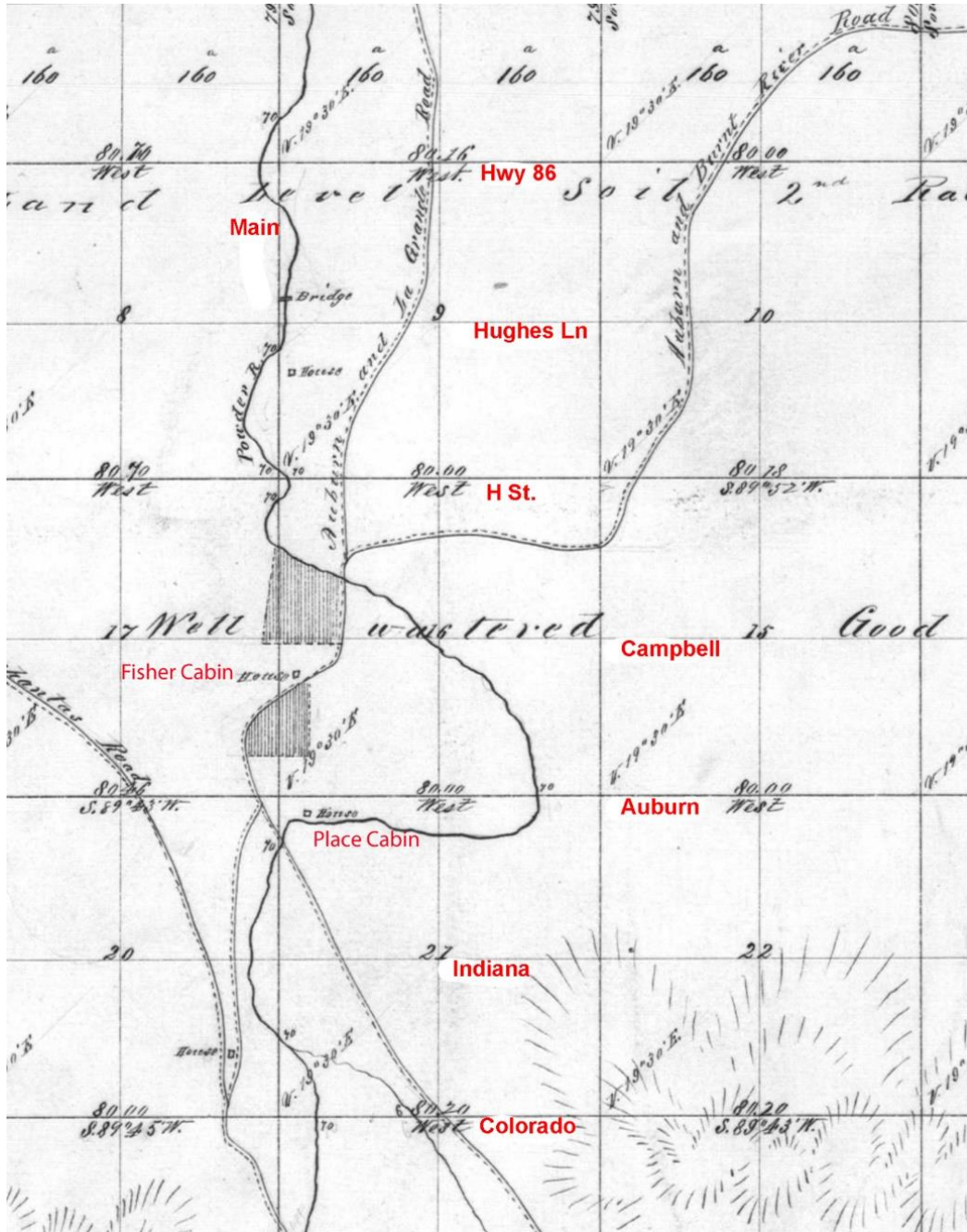
For a while he both taught school and studied law. It was common practice in those days to “read” for an established lawyer and then apply to the local court for permission to practice law. A Wisconsin newspaper article dated March 10, 1860, noted that Pierce was a member of the Dane County Bar Association, evidence that at some point Pierce had been admitted to the practice of law in Wisconsin.

By 1862, when Royal and Ann immigrated to Oregon, Ann had already given birth to five children, two of whom had died young and were buried in Wisconsin. The three surviving children accompanied their parents to Oregon traveling with the Tim Goodall wagon train via a supposedly shorter route to Powder River Valley. They crossed Snake River at Brownlee Ferry, near today’s Brownlee Dam, then up Powder River along a not very well-defined trail to Eagle Valley and on down to Powder River Valley. During the journey across the plains on the Oregon Trail, Royal was 34, Ann 30, James 5, Abel 4, and Nelly 2.

When they arrived at the future site of Baker City, according to Ann in a 1912 interview, they camped on the west side of Powder River opposite the present city park. Ann said there was one little log cabin on the west side of the river, in which a Mr. Evans conducted a saloon and provision store. The cabin referred to was apparently the “house” noted by the surveyors on the 1864 Baker City Township Map as belonging to Charles B. Fischer, who acquired land east of Pierce’s claim. (See map below.)

For many years the grove of cottonwoods on the east side of Powder River was known as Fisher’s Grove, present site of Geiser-Pollman Park. The 1870 U.S. Census listed Charles B. Fisher, age 29, profession mail carrier, born in New York, with personal worth \$2,000 and real estate worth \$2,000 (\$80,000 in today’s dollars). How he had acquired so much wealth before coming to Oregon is not known.

According to a 1907 obituary of Pierce that appeared in the Baker City Democrat newspaper, "His first camp was made near the Baldock placers north of the city." The site of that mine is not known. Pierce had tried mining in California. Perhaps he was lured to Baker County as a place to get rich quick.

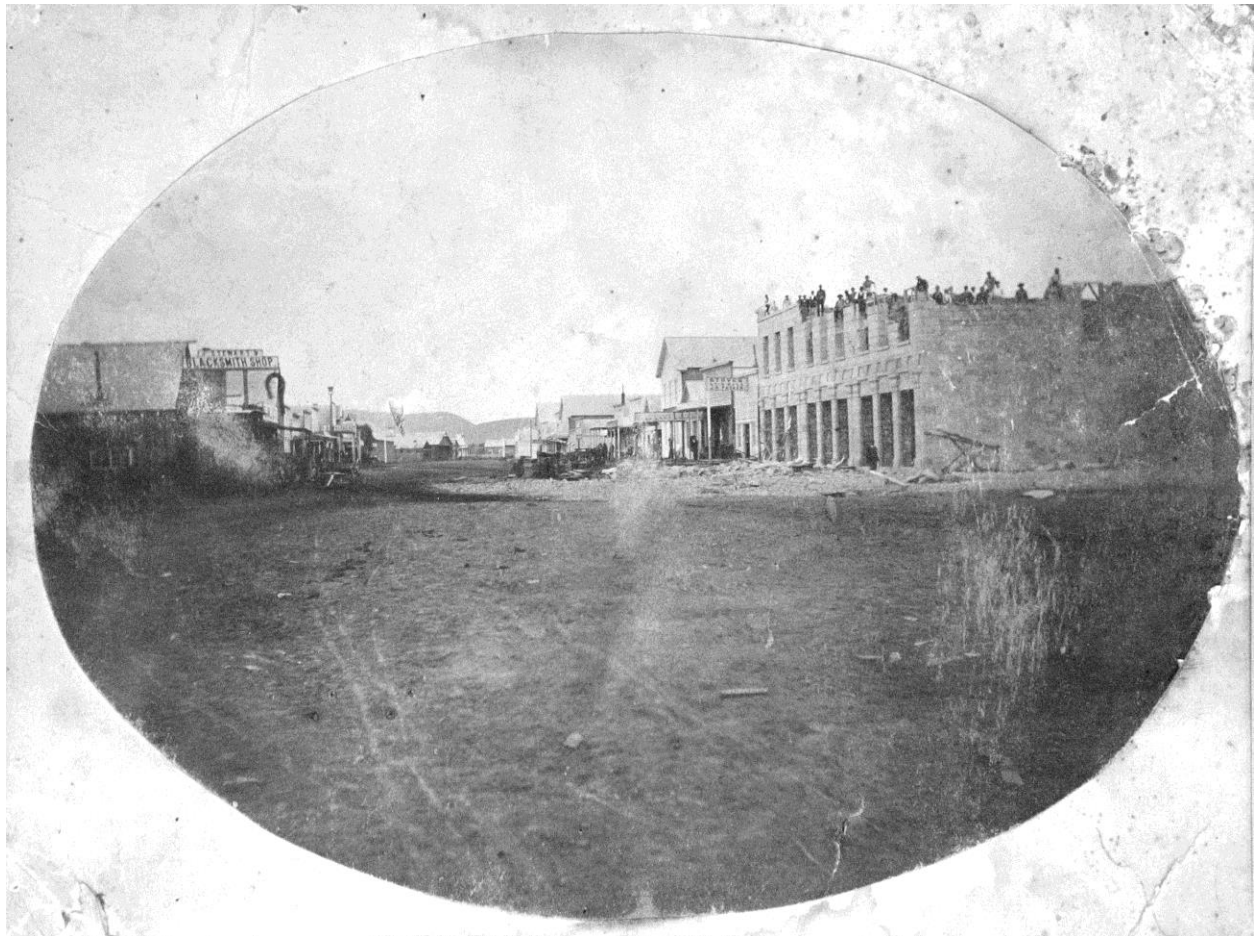


The section line labeled "Main" runs N/S through the farm fields.

But there is no other evidence that Pierce engaged in mining. The Pierce family soon moved to Auburn. During two years in Auburn, Pierce was admitted to the practice of law by the newly formed Baker County Circuit Court. Besides practicing law, Pierce saw a great opportunity to become a land developer.

Pierce platted a land claim at the south end of Powder River Valley and began selling lots. Immigrants to Baker County saw the commercial and residential advantages the site offered over Auburn, which was rapidly losing population due to placer mines playing out and miners discovering other mines throughout Baker County, plus many miners were leaving to join the gold rush in Western Idaho.

In 1865 Pierce moved his family from Auburn to a house he had built on the west side of the new town. Pierce, the town's first lawyer, set up an office in a modest wooden building on the northeast corner of Main and Court. In 1870 Banker James W. Virtue built a block of two-story business buildings of native stone, the first non-wooden structures in the new town. On the site of Pierce's office, in 1874 Catholic priest Rev. Father De Roo built the two-story Arlington Hotel, the town's first brick structure.



Virtue Block at right at corner of Main & Court. View is south.

Pierce's name rarely appeared in contemporary issues of the *Bedrock Democrat* newspaper (grandfather of today's *Baker City Herald*), which began publishing in 1870. We learn from Pierce's obituary that in the early 1870s Pierce built a toll road from Baker City to Keating and resided on what was known as the Pierce farm on lower Powder River. The move to Keating Valley may have been precipitated by bitterness he harbored about losing title to land in the town he founded. In his obituary we learn he

claimed the loss came about “through tricks and fraud.” (More about the land dispute in the section below about Founding Father Dr. J. M. Boyd.)

In 1880, after 27 years of marriage, Pierce moved to Challis, Idaho, about 160 miles north of Pocatello, leaving Ann and their children in Baker City. Several of the Pierce children were adults by then, but three were still juveniles. During the 1880 Census conducted in the Virtue District of Baker County, including Keating Valley, Pierce was listed as lawyer and his son James, age 27, as butcher. A month later they were both listed in an Idaho census as living in Challis, the largest town in newly-formed Custer County, where mining was the major industry. Apparently their move to Challis took place between the two census takings. Later James Pierce ended up back in Baker County.

Royal Pierce founded the first newspaper in Challis, the *Idaho Messenger*, the first issue of which appeared May 21, 1881. Pierce published the newspaper for seven years before selling it in 1888. The newspaper’s name changed to *Challis Messenger*. In 1899 Pierce’s name appeared in a curt notice in his old newspaper: “Royal A. Pierce vs Elizabeth Pierce — divorce granted.” On that same date Pierce celebrated his divorce by marrying Phoebe Larter. In the 1900 Census of Challis, 72-year-old Royal Pierce and Phoebe, 40, were listed along with her five children.

In the May 7, 1907, issue of the appeared an article about Royal A. Pierce’s last days. On April 24, 1907, Pierce, who had been quite ill for some time, departed Challis on the stage for Pocatello, against advice from friends. He said his ultimate destination was Boise where he had business before the Idaho Supreme Court. But he died within a few hours after reaching Pocatello, where his son Abel lived. Pierce is buried in the Mountain View Cemetery in Pocatello.

Apparently Pierce’s former wife, Elizabeth Ann Turk Pierce, did not acknowledge the existence of a divorce or that Pierce was still alive. In the 1900 Census she was listed as a widow, seven years before her former husband’s death. In several Baker City Directories, Elizabeth A. Pierce was listed as widow of Royal and living at 1615 Campbell St. Ann had purchased that house in 1897. It still exists but is located not on Campbell Street but rather on the southwest corner of East and Vine, a short street located on the south side of the Natatorium building. Long ago Vine St. was demoted to the status of alley. Today the address of Ann’s former house is 2445 East St.

After living in Baker County for 18 years, in 1880 Royal A. Pierce moved on to Idaho, a new career, and eventually a new marriage. But he left behind a legacy as founder of Baker City and father of several children.

In the 17 years between 1854 and 1871, Royal and Ann had nine children, on average one child born every two years. Five children were born in Wisconsin. First and second born, Lily E. Pierce, born 1854, and Royal Augustus Pierce, born 1856, both died in infancy and were buried in Wisconsin. The couple’s third child, James A. Pierce, was born in 1857; fourth, Abel John Pierce, born 1858; and fifth, Nelly A.A. Pierce, born 1860. A sixth child, Martha H. D. Pierce, was born in Auburn in 1863. The next three children were born in Baker City: seventh child William Alfred Darling Pierce, born in

1866, just one year after the founding of Baker City; eighth child, Mary Ellen Victoria Pierce, born in 1868; and ninth child, Royal August Pierce, Jr., born in 1871.

What happened to the seven Pierce children that survived infancy? Third child, James A. Pierce, died in 1893 at age 36 and is buried in Mount Hope Cemetery in Baker City. In the 1880s the fourth child, Abel John Pierce, followed his father to Idaho sometime before 1890. When Abel died in Pocatello in 1936 at age 78, he was considered an early Idaho pioneer and one of four surviving members of the Idaho Constitutional Convention of 1889. At that time he was still living in Challis.

Abel's death notice said he had lived in Pocatello since 1895 and that after the funeral his body was sent to Portland for cremation. Fifth child, Nelly A. A. Pierce Willson, married John Willson (1859-1930). Nelly died in 1951 at age 91 and was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery next to her husband. Sixth child, Martha H. D. Pierce Sturgill, married Stephen Douglas Sturgill (1860-1933) in 1880. Martha died in 1903 at age 40. Martha and Stephen are both buried in Mount Hope Cemetery. Sturgill remarried after Martha's death.

Seventh child, William Alfred Darling Pierce, lived his whole life in Baker City, where he died a bachelor in 1954 at age 88. He is buried in Mount Hope Cemetery. The 1941 Baker City Directory listed William D. Pierce as a miner living alone at 1525 Fourth St. Eighth child, Mary Ellen Victoria Pierce Perkins, married Tulle Brent Perkins (1862-1941) of Wingville in 1888. Mary died in 1959 at age 91. Both Nelly and Tulle are buried in Mount Hope Cemetery. Ninth child, Royal August Pierce, Jr., was born in Baker City. He died in 1965 at age 94 and is buried in Mount Hope Cemetery.

Elizabeth Ann Turk Pierce, mother of the nine Pierce children, lived the rest of her life in Baker City. She died in 1918 at age 86 and is buried in a family plot in Mount Hope Cemetery.



Elizabeth Ann Turk Pierce family plot, including six Pierce children.

Founding Father # 2: Dr. J. M. Boyd (1837-1906)

Royal A. Pierce, Founding Father # 1, was the first to plat land for Baker City. But equal billing as a "Founding Father" of Baker City should go to Dr. Jacob Mackley Boyd, usually referred to as J. M. Boyd. On April 10, 1868, Boyd, upon discovering that Pierce had not perfected his land claim, filed on the same land with the Federal Land Office. The southeast corner of his claim was where Hotel Baker stands today, and extended west and north from there, as had Pierce's claim. Since Boyd's claim overlapped Pierce's claim, there followed years of property title litigation.

Finally the competing claims were adjudicated in 1871 at a hearing before Federal Land Office Commissioner Willis Drummond, who ruled that Boyd had followed the proper procedure to perfect a claim and Pierce had not. Drummond further ruled that persons who had already bought lots from Pierce were exempt from Boyd's claim. The doctor had out-lawyered the lawyer.

Boyd was born in Ohio on April 6, 1837. He arrived in Baker County in 1865. Little is known about him before 1870. In the 1870 Federal Census, Boyd was listed as 31 years old, engaged in stock raising, with real estate valued at \$1,200 and personal worth of \$9,700 (\$218,000 in today's dollars), making him possibly the richest man in Baker County. Also listed were wife Pamela, age 26, keeping house, born in Tennessee, and five children: Edward J., age 14, attending school, born in Iowa; Laura, age 12, attending school, born in Iowa; Carlos, age 5, Esther E., age 2, and Mattie, 7 months old, all three born in Baker City. One can deduce from the ages of the two older children and the age of Pamela, that she was too young to be their mother. Boyd also had a daughter named Josephine (unknown birth date), who on June 1, 1880, married Adolph G. Hemple in the Episcopal Church in Baker City. Josephine was also too old to be the daughter of Pamela. I've not discovered who Boyd's first wife was or what happened to her. Also not known is when and where Boyd got his medical education.

Fortunately more information about Boyd is available in extant issues of Baker County's first newspaper, the *Bedrock Democrat*, which began publication in May 1870. The newspaper became the source of much information about the social, political, and economic life of Baker City. From that source we learn that Boyd was very active in Baker City for thirteen years. The 1870 census did not list Boyd as a practicing physician. The reason appeared in the *Bedrock Democrat* which reported, "Dr. J. M. Boyd gives notice that he has positively withdrawn from the practice of medicine."

In 1867, before Boyd gave up medicine, he entered into a pharmacy and grocery store partnership with John Wisdom, an 1862 Baker County pioneer from Missouri. Their store was on the southwest corner of Main and Valley streets. For five years Wisdom had been farming near Wingville and supplementing his income by hauling freight from the Port of Umatilla on Columbia River to as far east as western Idaho. By 1867 Wisdom was ready for a new occupation. Under Boyd's tutelage he learned the pharmacy trade. A year later Boyd sold out to Wisdom, who conducted a pharmacy on that corner until 1917. Wisdom lived another twenty-one years, dying at age 98. In 1878

John Wisdom (1840-1938) and wife, Mary Sturgill Wisdom (1853-1937), build a two-story house on the southwest corner of 2nd and Broadway streets, which today is a bed and breakfast rental and one of the oldest houses in Baker City. The Wisdoms are buried next to each other in Mt. Hope Cemetery.

In 1870 Boyd, concerned that not one church had been erected in the six years since Baker City was first platted, donated a whole block to the Catholics, upon which they constructed a modest chapel, known as St. Francis de Sales Mission Church, on the site where St. Francis de Sales Cathedral stands today. Catholic priest Father Leopold Dielman (no known relation to author) was the first priest assigned to the new chapel. In 1870 Father Dielman began traveling from John Day to administer to Baker City Catholics in their new chapel. In 1903 Pope Leo XIII created a new diocese comprised of all the Oregon counties east of the Cascade Mountain Range to be called Baker City Diocese. Reverend Charles Joseph O'Reilly (1862-1923) was the first Bishop of the new diocese. Under his direction construction of St. Francis de Sales Cathedral began in 1905 and was completed in 1908. The original chapel was moved to the northwest corner of 1st and Madison streets, where it still stands as a private residence. O'Reilly served as Bishop of the Baker City Diocese from 1903 to 1918, when he was transferred to the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska.



St. Francis Cathedral shortly after completion in 1907.

In 1873 Episcopalians built an Episcopal Church on four lots at the southwest corner of Church and 1st streets across the street from the Catholic property. Boyd donated two lots and the church paid him for the other two lots. Boyd also donated land to the state for construction of a school on the west side of 4th Street between Broadway and Washington streets. In 1869 a private corporation obtained the land from the state and built Baker City Academy, a two-story wood-frame building. In 1885 School District 5J acquired the building, used it until 1889, then tore it down and replaced it with an impressive three-story brick structure, which served all twelve grades. In 1934 it too was razed and replaced by the present Helen M. Stack Junior High School building.

Benjamin Franklin Koontz, early resident of Hereford Valley, pioneered the route from Bowen Valley over Dooley Mountain to Bridgeport. A company, of which Boyd was a member and principal stockholder, purchased the road known then as the Boyd Toll Road. In June 1871 John Dooley bought Boyd's interest, and the name was changed to Dooley Toll Road. In 1889 Dooley sold it to Baker County and it became a public road.

Quitting the practice of medicine freed up Boyd to enter into politics. In 1873 he ran for the office of Baker County sheriff winning a two-year term (1874-1876), during which term he also served as U. S. Marshal for a wide area of eastern Oregon. In 1878 Boyd moved to Walla Walla, Washington, and began practicing medicine again. As he had in Baker City, Boyd took an active role in the community, including serving two terms as Walla Walla's mayor. In 1891 he moved to Spokane, where he became administrator of a sanatorium.

Boyd's third wife, Hannah, immigrated to Walla Walla Valley with her parents in 1862. Date of their marriage is not known. Boyd's daughter Josephine was not mentioned as part of Boyd's family in the 1870 census. All that's known about Josephine is obtained from the Baker City Episcopal Church registry of marriages, which lists her marriage in 1889 to Adolph G. Hemple.

In 1900 Boyd's son Don Carlos purchased the *Advocate*, an Ontario newspaper, renamed it *Ontario Argus*, and changed its political affiliation to Republican. He sold the *Ontario Argus* in 1908. During his newspaper career Carlos bought and sold other Oregon newspapers. In 1885 Carlos teamed up with E. L. Eckley and others of La Grande to establish the *Argus*, first newspaper in La Grande after the business district in Old Town moved down by the new railroad tracks. Other newspapers Carlos owned included the *Junction City Times* in Lane County in 1891, the *Yaquina Bay News* in Lincoln County in 1897, and the *Oakland Tribune* in Douglas County in 1919.

In 1905 Dr. Boyd, age 68, was struck by a bicyclist in Spokane resulting in serious injuries. After a visit to Baker City that same year, Boyd moved from Spokane back to Walla Walla, where he died March 20, 1906. At the time of his death he was survived by his wife, Hannah Randall Boyd of Walla Walla, and his children Edward, Mark, J. B., Mrs. Josephine Boyd Hemple, all four of Baker City; Frank of Spokane, WA; Don Carlos of Ontario, OR; and Mrs. Laura Darling of Summerland, CA. Laura had married Stuart Darling of Summerland, CA (near Santa Barbara), who was a pioneer of the early oil industry of the area. Three of Dr. Boyd's children are buried in adjoining graves in Mt. Hope Cemetery: Fannie Belle Boyd (1867-1870), Ester Ettie Boyd (1868-1876), and Mark M. Boyd (1875-1906). Mark, who died just a few months after his father, was a printer in Baker City. Dr. Jacob Mackley Boyd, Baker City's Founding Father # 2, is buried in Walla Walla.

Founding Father # 3: Charles B. Fisher

Not much is known about Charles B. Fisher before he came to or after he left Baker County. Nevertheless, he should be considered as one of the founding fathers of Baker City for three reasons: First, his cabin is on the 1864 Baker County Township Map in the middle of the future Baker City town site. Second, Fisher acquired land between Powder River and Main Street and from Auburn St. to Campbell Street, which today is known as Fisher's Addition. Third, he designated some of his farm land on the southeast side of Baker City for a cemetery.

Charles B. Fisher came to Baker County in 1862 during the first flood of emigrants after gold was discovered. At some time before the spring of 1864 Fisher located in what became the middle of future Baker City. Surveyor field notes tell us whose "house" was symbolized by a tiny square on their map located between two shaded-in agricultural fields along the east side of where Main Street runs today. Surveyor notes tell us that, when surveying north on the boundary between sections 16 and 17 of the township, the surveyors entered the south edge of a field (today's Court Street) and 850 feet further north left the field, crossed a road (Auburn Road) a few feet later, and 264 feet further north they saw "Fisher House" located less than a football field distant to the east.

Those surveyor field notes are corroborated by a 1909 *Morning Democrat* article. "His (Fisher's) cabin was located where Mr. P. Crabill's residence now is." The 1903 Baker City Directory gives the address of Philander Crabill's two-story house as 2300 Resort, present parking lot of the Dollar Store (earlier occupied by Albertsons). That would place Fisher's cabin about 500 feet from the south side of Geiser-Pollman Park, exactly where the 1864 township surveyors placed Fisher's cabin on their map.

According to Isaac Hiatt, "Mr. Fisher owned the land east of Pierce's claim, and he made an addition to the town between Front (Main) Street and the river," the area known today as Fisher's Addition. North of Fisher's cabin was a grove of cottonwood trees, which early residents of Baker City called "Fisher's Grove." Later the area was called "Rust's Grove," apparently acquired from Fisher. It was named for Henry Rust, the Baker City owner of a brewery and Rust Hall, where U.S. Bank is located today.

The 1870 Federal Census tells us that twenty-nine-year-old Charles B. Fisher came from New York, occupation mail carrier, with real estate worth \$2,000 and personal wealth of \$2,000 (totaling \$80,000 in today's dollars). Fisher must have been a bachelor, since the census lists no other persons living in the residence. The 1870 census says nothing about Fisher being a farmer with land on the east side of Baker City. That's where Fisher planned to make land available for a cemetery. A newspaper article (date unknown but probably before 1874) recounted that Baker City's first cemetery was on Hillcrest before the hill became a residential site. Placing cemeteries on a prominence like Hillcrest was, and still is, a common practice. The newspaper article explained why present Mt. Hope Cemetery on Fisher's property was a better site.

Owing to the very rocky character of the ground now used as a cemetery, the time will come when it will be abandoned for a better site. In some instances the ground is so full of boulders that it is almost impossible to dig a grave; and in every instance the cost for digging one is double or treble of what it would be were the ground free of rocks and boulders. We understand that C.B. Fisher, Esq., of this place has a piece of ground situated in the northeast corner of his farm, adjoining Baker City, which he proposes to survey and lay off into lots for burial purposes. This ground is free from rocks, hence a grave can easily be made, and at much less cost than in the graveyard on the hill, besides it is in a fine site and is just about the right distance from town.

In 1880 Fisher left Baker City, according to an item in a December 1891 *Morning Democrat*. "Charles B. Fisher, the original owner of a portion of the town site of Baker City, after an absence of eleven years, returned last Friday on a visit to his sister, Mrs. J. M. Swift." The article reported that Fisher was in Long Valley, Idaho, engaged in stock raising.

Fisher did not stay in Baker City, but he left a lasting legacy by planning to put a cemetery on part of his farm land southeast of the city. The man who carried Fisher's plan to fruition was Joseph W. Cleaver, who purchased the land Fisher intended for a cemetery. That is the transaction described in this December 16, 1874, *Bedrock Democrat* article.

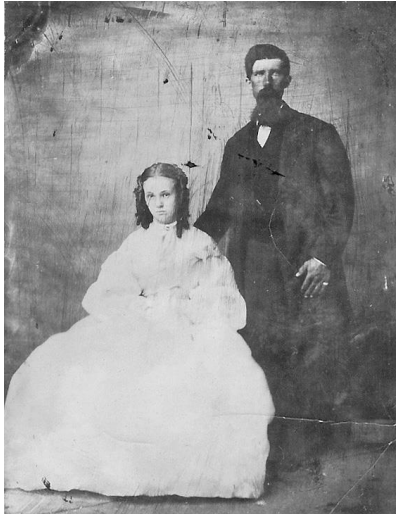
J. W. Cleaver has procured some fourteen acres of ground about three fourths of a mile southeast of our city, which he has surveyed and laid off into small lots suitable for Cemetery purposes. The locality is a very suitable one for the purpose intended; the ground is accessible of being easily beautified, and can be made a beautiful resting place for loved ones who may pass from time to eternity. Those wishing to procure lots in this Cemetery can, by calling on Mr. Cleaver, seek a plat of the ground.

Joseph Wraith Cleaver (1825-1901) is not one of the four Baker City Founding Fathers, but readers may like to know more about the founder of Mt. Hope Cemetery, where family and friends are buried.

The 1870 Federal Census listed the Cleaver family as residents of Baker City. Joseph W. Cleaver was 45, a hotel keeper, originally from Canada, with real estate worth \$3,000 and personal worth of \$1,000. His wife, Sarah from Illinois, was 31 and their three children were Isabella 9, Charles 6, and May 2, all born in Oregon. According to the 1880 Federal Census the family grew by one child, Frank, age 9. Joseph's occupation in 1880 was furniture maker and origin listed as England, probably by way of Canada.

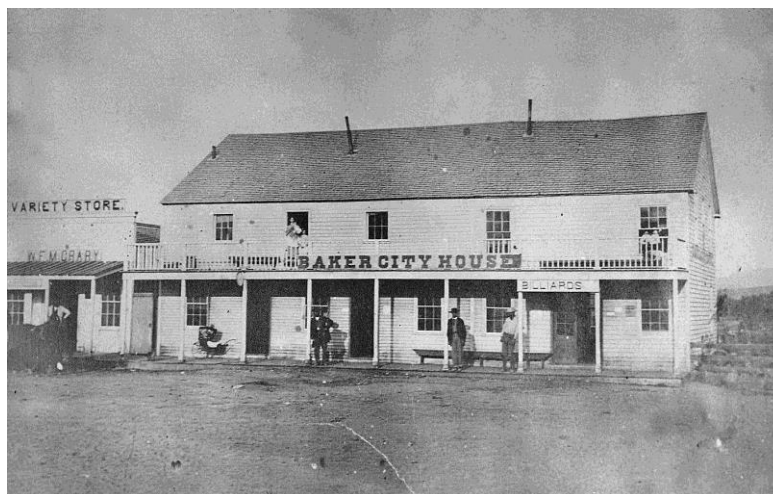
Cleaver's 1870 occupation "hotel keeper" is documented in a couple of sources. An undated newspaper article reported that "a Mr. Peters of Portland, who first went to

Auburn, then moved to Baker, built the Peters Hotel, a large two-story frame structure on the site of the present IOOF temple. After its completion he had it about one year when he sold it to Joseph W. Cleaver." Jacob W. Peters was the father of Joseph Cleaver's wife, Sarah. Peters Hotel, renamed Baker City House, was one of the earliest structures built in Baker City.



Joseph and Sarah Cleaver, probably a wedding photo.

More detail was added by local historian Helen Rand, who wrote a note on the back of a photo of Baker City House, which is in the Baker County Library historic photos collection. "The original of this picture belonged to Mrs. May Cleaver Wright. She said that it (hotel) had been started but was bought in an incomplete state by her father, J. W. Cleaver, and finished. He ran it as a hotel and this picture was taken in 1868.....Mrs. (Jessie Mae Cleaver) Wright thought that she was the baby being held on the upper porch. This building was between Valley and Auburn on the east side of the street. I took these notes from Mrs. Wright herself."



Sarah Cleaver holding infant daughter Jessie on balcony.

A little later Cleaver built a two-story building on the southeast corner of Resort and Bridge streets. On the ground floor was his cabinet shop, a furniture store, and an undertaking business. In those days it was common to combine furniture, coffin making, and undertaking in a single business. The second floor was called Cleaver Hall, a large room for meetings, dances, and performances by traveling shows. In 1910 Cleaver's building and others on the block burned down.

I ran into a mystery when researching Cleaver and his family. Curiously, Cleaver is not listed as buried in his own cemetery. However, the Mt. Hope Cemetery database shows that his wife, Sarah, daughter Ada, and sons Arthur and Frank are all buried there. Sarah, Ada, and Arthur are buried in IOOF #25, lot 273, graves 1, 2, and 3, but "exact locations unknown," which I interpret to mean it is not known who is buried in which grave. And none of the three graves is marked by a memorial stone. I thought, if the records are not complete, then perhaps Joseph Cleaver's burial record had been lost. Employees at Baker City Hall, where Mt. Hope Cemetery burial records are kept, could find no record of Joseph Cleaver being buried in his own cemetery.

Searching www.findagrave.com solved the mystery of the missing grave and added earlier information about Joseph W. Cleaver. He died in 1901, not in Baker City but in Portland, where he is buried in Lone Fir Cemetery. I have not found the reason for Cleaver's leaving Baker and going to Portland, where he died about a year later. This death notice appeared in a Portland newspaper.

J. W. Cleaver, Who Died Yesterday

J. W. Cleaver died at his residence on Mount Tabor yesterday morning, at the age of 76. His demise is notable from the fact that he was the pioneer furniture manufacturer and undertaker of the Pacific Northwest. He was of English birth (Kent, England), and went to Canada in his early youth, and to California in 1849. In 1850 he came to Oregon and started a chair factory in Portland, and to this day many of his chairs are yet in evidence, so thorough was his workmanship. He combined with his furniture business the undertaking of funerals, and made the first interment in Lone Fir Cemetery. Later he transferred his business to Baker City, where he remained for many years, but returned to Portland about one year ago, leading a quiet and retired life. He was married to the second daughter of the late J. W. Peters, and left his widow and three adult children to mourn his loss.

Visitors to Mt. Hope Cemetery entering at the north entrance find themselves on Cleaver Lane, so-named in recognition of Joseph W. Cleaver's importance to the founding of the cemetery.

Founding Father #4: John Jackson Campbell (1811-1892)

John Jackson Campbell, known as “J. J.,” was a wealthy farmer from Albia, Iowa. Born in Virginia, J. J. also lived in Indiana before landing in Iowa. In about 1833 J. J. married Lydia Noland (1817-1857). During their approximately twenty-four-year marriage, they had ten children. After Lydia’s death, J. J. married widow Nancy Gordon Mock (1821-1897) in 1859. Nancy Mock’s husband, Reuben Mock (1805-1851), whom she married in 1836, had died in 1851. Nancy was left with seven children; following were their ages in 1862: John F. Mock, 24, Mary Jane Mock, 22, Catherine Mock, 19, Martha E. Mock, 16, Emmaretta Mock, 12, Matilda Mock, 10, and Rosella Mock, 3.

On May 14, 1862, J. J. and Nancy headed for Oregon. Four of J. J.’s ten children made the trip: William Henry Campbell (1835-1905); Benjamin Thomas Russell Campbell (1849-1933); George Washington Campbell (1851-1933); and Joseph Albert Campbell (1855-1939). The former three are buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery; the latter son is buried in Idaho. All of Nancy’s children made the trek to Oregon. When the Campbell party set out for Oregon it included eight members of the two families, several hired men, sixteen cows, three horses, and five wagons. Along the way they joined with other groups resulting in a wagon train composed of about 300 wagons.

Years later Nancy’s daughter Matilda described their October 22, 1862, arrival in Powder River Valley. “We landed where Baker is now. Our (log) house was the only one there, the first ever built. That winter was cold and snowy, and we had no wood for the fire except what we could pick up along the river. We lived on the dirt floor and cooked on the fireplace. But we were so happy to have a place to stop after such long traveling (over 1,500 miles).” According to one recollection, “Campbell bought a shack from a man which stood on the south (sic) side of the Powder River at the site of the present bridge by Natatorium Park. The Campbells lived there through the winter of 62-63 in the only house.”



Nancy Mock Campbell (1821-1897)

Matilda's and other claims about what was the first cabin built on the site of future Baker City cannot be verified. The site of Charles E. Place's cabin is shown on the 1864 Baker City Township Map. It also shows up in the oldest known photograph of Baker City taken around 1866-1868. The photo shows several buildings in the background—today's Old Post Office Square—with Place's cabin in the foreground near a crude bridge over Powder River, a convenient location to collect tolls. Place's cabin may very well have been built before the Campbell family arrived in October 1862. Place, born in Pennsylvania in 1790, may have been the very first settler in the area that became Baker City. Place purchased the toll road that connected Auburn with Durkee Valley and purchased Federal land, which he had obtained via a land claim. He platted the land and then sold lots to new residents of Baker City.

The exact site of the Campbell cabin is not known for sure. But three of J. J.'s sons ended up living on the street named for their father. Baker City Directories for the years 1901, 1903, and 1905 give Campbell Street addresses for J. J.'s sons. Although J. J. died in 1892, two of his sons continued living on Campbell Street for another 40 years. The most likely site of J. J. Campbell's 1862 cabin was where son George W. Campbell lived at 1718 Campbell, which is on the east bank of today's Powder River, present site of a log-style building constructed in the 1920's by Baker Rod and Gun Club; today it houses a Chinese restaurant. William H. Campbell lived at 1546 Campbell, which was on the north side of the street, present site of the Oregon National Guard Armory. Benjamin Campbell lived on the northeast corner of Campbell and East streets, across from the present site of York's Park Grocery.

At some point J. J. and his son G. W. acquired ownership of a sizable area north of Campbell Street. Today two additions to Baker City are named "J. J. Campbell Addition" and "G. W. Campbell Addition." The additions are bounded on the east by Cedar Street, on the south by the 1500 block of Campbell Street, and on the north by D Street. That area includes today's Leo Adler ball field on the north end and on the south end the Baker County Fairgrounds, including the old National Guard Armory.

The five-year-old marriage of John Jackson Campbell and Nancy Gordon Mock Campbell ended in divorce. In January 1864 Nancy took her children and moved in with John and Mary Shelton, who had built a cabin twelve miles east of Baker City in the area called Pleasant Valley today. The Sheltons had traveled across the plains in the same wagon train as the Campbells. County records from Auburn show that Nancy alleged she had been subjected to domestic abuse and "lived in constant fear for her life." J. J. admitted that he grabbed Nancy by the throat but only to get her to let go of his hair. The court believed Nancy and awarded her custody of her children. It's interesting to note that Royal Pierce, Founding Father # 1, was J. J. Campbell's attorney in the divorce case.

Within a month of arrival in Powder River Valley, Nancy's sixteen-year-old daughter Martha (1846-1879) married seventy-two-year-old Charles E. Place (1790-1870). The circumstances under which Nancy's mother consented to her daughter's marriage to a

fifty-eight-year-old man are not known for sure. But later Nancy also consented to the marriage of her fourteen-year-old daughter Matilda to a much older man.

Hasty as Martha's marriage was, it turned out monetarily quite fortuitous. Charles and Martha had three children during their eight years of marriage. Luther W. Place was born on April 5, 1864, reputedly the first child born in Baker City, although at that early date no city yet existed. Then came two daughters, Ida (1866-1907) and Linnie (1867-1894). When Charles died, the 1870 Federal census taken later that year recorded that Martha had property worth \$3,000 and personal worth \$5,000, totaling \$8,000 (\$160,000 in today's dollars). Her property would have included the toll road and considerable real estate. On the present "additions" map of Baker City, "Place's Addition" south and west of where his cabin once stood, includes land on which are located Baker City Hall and the old and new U.S. Postal Service office buildings, plus some property along Place Street.

Martha Mock Place died in 1879 at the young age of thirty-three. Charles and Martha's son, Luther W. Place, had earlier followed his grandmother, Nancy Gordon Mock Campbell Shumway, to Umatilla County. Orphaned daughters Ida, age 12, and Linnie, age 11, who remained in Baker City, went to live under the guardianship of their maternal cousin, Rosella Mock Shumway Palmer (1860-1886) and her husband, Charles L. Palmer (1849-1938), a grocer. By the time Rosella died in 1886, Ida and Linnie had achieved their majority.



Rosella and Charles Palmer

In 1889 Palmer married his former ward, Linnie Place, who by then was 25 years old. They had two children, Hannah Myrtle, born in 1889, and Charles L., Jr., born in 1894.

Linnie died not long after giving birth to Charles, Jr. Charles L. Palmer served as Baker City mayor on three different occasions: 1893-94, 1910-18, and 1924-26. In 1908 Hannah, who went by Myrle, married Menzie McKim (1889-1964), who had a machine shop at the intersection of Auburn and 9th streets. Menzie served as Baker City mayor from 1948 to 1950. Menzie and Myrle are buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery.



Ida and Lennie Place

Luther W. Place, the son of Charles E. Place and Martha Mock Place, was the subject of a short biography in the *Illustrated History of the State of Oregon* published in 1893. We learn that young Charles finished his secondary education at Bishop Scott Academy in Portland. After graduation he attended Portland Commercial College graduating in 1886 at age 22. He then returned to his place of birth, Baker City, where he opened a book and stationery store. In 1891 Charles and partner M. Miller opened a large grocery store. Charles served a term as Baker City Treasurer and two terms on Baker City Council. In 1892 he ran unsuccessfully as a Republican for the office of Baker County Treasurer. In 1887 Charles married Mollie McCall, who came to Oregon in 1885. They lived at 1535 2nd Street (southwest corner of 2nd and Place streets). Their stately two-story house with three bay windows sat far back on the lot. By 1911 it had been torn down. On that lot today there stand an apartment house and a private residence.

Life-time resident of Baker City, Dr. Robert “Bob” McKim (1938-), is a direct descendent of Charles E. Place, whose cabin was noted on the 1864 Baker City Township Map as being about 400 feet east and a little south of the intersection of Main and Auburn streets one year before Baker City was platted. Following is Bob’s direct lineage to his great-great-grandfather Charles E. Place:

Charles E. Place (1790-1870)

Place’s daughter: Linnie Place Palmer (1867-1894)

Linnie’s daughter: Hannah Myrtle “Myrle” Palmer (1889-1977)

Myrtle “Myrle” Palmer McKim’s son: Dr. Charles Palmer McKim (1909-1963)

Dr. Charles Palmer McKim’s son : Dr. Robert “Bob” McKim (1938-)