

Prominent Seattle Pioneers

HON. ARTHUR A. DENNY.

There is no such thing as chance in this world, in the accomplishment of great things, and while men oftentimes build better than they know, because of their limitations, yet in the inception of plans that afterwards attain to large proportions there is well defined ideas in the mind of the instigator. Thus the city of Seattle is in no sense of a chance growth. The leader of a small company of people, the first to settle on the shores of Elliott Bay, was Arthur Armstrong Denny, the father of Seattle. Just fifty-two years ago the little company of emigrants, who had toiled all the summer to cross the mountains and deserts that divides this from the homeland of friends and kindred, sought shelter and a haven where now stands Seattle, the "Queen City." After providing shelter for his loved ones, A. A. Denny looked about him, and standing here on the banks of the American Mediterranean, his natural eye looking out upon its broad expanse, his mind's eye wandered over the sundown sea lying beyond, his prophetic gaze saw the march of oncoming thousands with the multiplication of human needs, the necessity for a center of population and industry, and the fitness of his chosen location to meet those demands, he, being a man of action and of destiny, as well, set to work to prepare for that which was so soon to be needed. A village was planned, its streets defined and property disposed of to those who desired. This, with many and various business enterprises conspired to bring wealth to Mr. Denny, but through the forty-seven years of his life in Seattle he was ever the plain citizen, the Christian gentleman, the approachable friend and valued counselor of all who sought of him. When duty called him to broader fields, as member of the territorial legislature and delegate to congress, he was found doing his duty for his chosen territory with the same benevolent simplicity and honesty of purpose that was such a marked characteristic with him. In 1898 Arthur A. Denny passed to his reward of the faithful, and his body rests in one of the beautiful cemeteries of the city that stands as a monument to his memory, but a far greater monument than even this great city of Seattle is that memory of a noble life well spent, not in selfish accumulations of things that perish, but in the doing willingly, patiently and unostentatiously, the common place, neighborly kindnesses and deeds of charity, that were such a part of his daily life. This monument will endure and is after all more honorable than the founding of a great city. Closely connected with the life work of A. A. Denny and a trusted companion, friend and co-partner in the building of Seattle and sharer with him of all the trials and labors incident to the building a home in the wilderness, was his brother, David T. Denny, who departed this life but last month.

ROBERT ABRAMS.

Robert Abrams rightly belongs on the page of the pioneers inasmuch as he was an associate of the honored Denny in laying the foundation of the present great city of Seattle and the records of this territory, state, county and city fully bear out this statement. Mr. Abrams reached what is now the state of Washington seven years after Mr. Denny had located here, yet he came to the Denny camp and took hold with a vim to help the brave pioneers mould a city out of the jungles of the forest and that they succeeded right well all of us now know. Heaven seems to have taken especial care in directing to this locality such noble souls as those whose names are inseparably linked with the founding and growth of this magnificent city. Once in the seventies Mr. Abrams represented this district in the legislature and subsequently he was elected one of the county commissioners of King county, and while serving four years in that capacity carved for himself in the annals of the history of the country a name that cannot be effaced. It was he who bought the site where now stands the King county court house, and it was he that fathered the election of voting \$200,000 bonds for the erection of the present magnificent edifice that would do honor to a Massachusetts county, his native state. He is now in his sixty-seventh year, but is still full of business life and activity. Robert Abrams is the soul of honor wherever he is known, and the latter day citizens are proud of the fact that such men as the Dennies, Hortons, Abrams and other noble pioneers cast their lot on the shores of Puget Sound, where now stands Greater Seattle.

LYMAN B. ANDREWS.

For over forty years the subject of this review has resided in Seattle, and is thus one of its pioneers. Reared on a farm of the old Knickerbocker state, he was schooled to hard work. His early years in the wild West were spent in surveying government land. In 1863 he made the first discovery of coal near Gillman and secured holdings which were afterwards disposed of at good figures. He has been engaged in various pursuits in his adopted city and always taken a lively interest in political affairs, and for years has been a prominent factor in county and state affairs. He has twice attended the national conventions of his party. As clerk of the United States district court for more than ten years, clerk of the territorial legislature, member of city council, member of the first state constitutional convention, and member of the state senate, abundant opportunity has been afforded him to display his genius along political lines. Having performed all these duties well, it was but logical that he should be selected as register of the United States land office in this city, which position he now holds with satisfaction to all and with honor to himself.

J. M. COLMAN.

Nothing succeeds like success, is an old yet true saying, but the capital of that success which succeeds is an indomitable will, an honesty of purpose and a genius for work that demands success. J. M. Colman, the subject of this sketch, has made a success in life, and is now passing the evening tide thereof in Seattle, the city of his adoption, and where his ultimate success was achieved, in a manner well becoming and well earned by one who has lived the strenuous life that has been his. A Scotchman by birth, he came to America in 1854, being at that time twenty-two years of age. A good machinist, with a technical knowledge of engineering, he found plenty of opportunity to work. In 1861 he took Horace Greeley's advice and came West. After lucrative employment for a time he went into the lumber manufacturing business, first at Port Orchard, then in Seattle. In spite of two or three times being burned out, yet he succeeded in saving sufficient means which, plus his indomitable will, enabled him to construct the first railroad in Seattle, that to the coal fields at Renton. This he conducted successfully for a time and was able thereby to force recognition for the city of Seattle, from the Northern Pacific people, who were disposed to ignore the superior advantages of this city for Tacoma.

L. W. BONNEY.

Just fifty years ago there arrived in the little hamlet on the shores of Puget Sound, in the midst of the wild, wild West, a child who has since become the head of one of the most substantial firms in the great metropolis that he has seen and helped to rise from nothing to its present greatness. In 1853 the infant Seattle looked good to the parents of L. W. Bonney, and time has proven the wisdom of their judgment. It is given unto man once to die, and, go where he may, sooner or later he requires the services of the undertaker. That the proper funeral rites might be performed for those who were compelled to "pay the debt," Mr. Bonney early established himself in the undertaking business and by courteous treatment and fair dealing has enjoyed a large share of patronage in his line. The Bonney-Watson Company, funeral directors, as before stated, is one of the solid firms of the city. Although at the head of the firm, Mr. Bonney has retired from the active management and in a semi-retired manner is enjoying the fruits of a well spent life.

Why Elliott Bay?

Was the selection of Elliott Bay, upon the shores of which was to be built a great commercial emporium an accident, a mere chance in the wheel of fortune, or was it the result of careful consideration after a thorough investigation of natural advantages?

An affirmative answer to this last question will at once give an insight into the character and intelligence of the founders of the city.

In "pioneer days on Puget Sound" Hon. Arthur A. Denny says, the number of persons at Alki Point at this time, November 13th, 1851, was twenty-four, of whom twelve were adults; that two of these, viz: J. N. Lowe and Lee Terry concluded to locate a townsite and with that in view, made a joint location at Alki Point and named the place New York."

This location by Lowe and Terry was in the nature of a chance location and evidently did not measure up to Mr. Denny's ideas, for he tells us in his book from which we have just quoted, that "toward spring, Bell, Boren and myself * * * had looked up the coast toward Puyallup . . . and did not like the prospect. In the month of February we began exploring Elliott Bay, taking soundings, and after a careful investigation of the harbor . . . we, on the 15th of February, 1852, located and marked three claims in one body." Further along in his interesting narrative Mr. Denny says: "Consequently Boren and I, on the 23rd day of May, 1853, filed the first plat of the town of Seattle."

So much by way of refuting the oft repeated statement that the location on Elliott Bay was an accident and that almost any other selection would have proved as favorable. Of course this is not saying there are not many other places along the shores and upon some of the many bays of the Sound where there are and will be other splendid towns and cities. That phase of the question we are not now discussing, but are simply answering the question as to why Elliott Bay was selected, not by chance but after careful and painstaking effort on the part of men of more than ordinary intelligence; men who had traveled for weary months and thousands of miles, not with idle purpose but with a determination to lay, here upon the shores of the most magnificent inland sea on the face of the globe, the foundation of a great city, backed by an empire of unlimited resources.

Why Seattle? Why not Some Other Name?

What in the eternal fitness of things could be more appropriate? Old Chief Se-at-tle (accent the second syllable), one of nature's noblemen, broad-gauge and far-seeing enough to realize that the white man belonged to a superior race, of which race he was therefore the old life-long friend. In thus perpetuating the name of the grand old man, these early pioneers honored themselves no less than the memory of the man whose name the Queen City so proudly bears.

Seattle—why not?

D. B. WARD.