



WEBFOOTER EXTRA

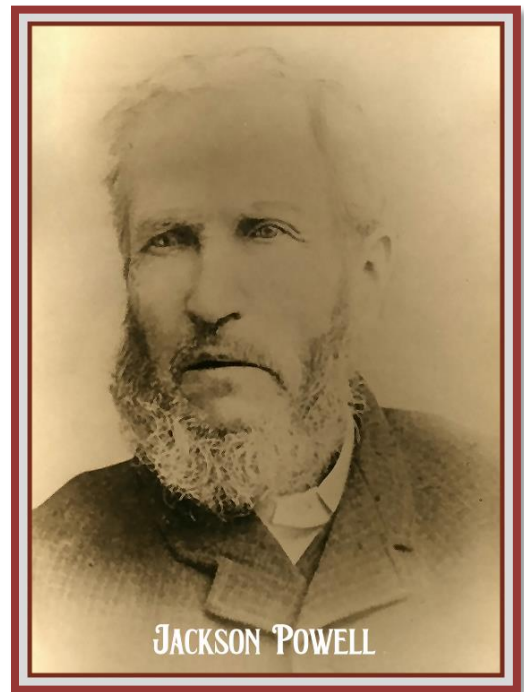
FEBRUARY 2025

POPULATING POWELL'S VALLEY

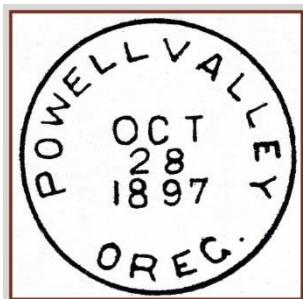
If you are familiar with the Pacific Northwest, you have probably heard of Portland's Powell Boulevard which runs east from the Willamette River in Portland to Gresham and further east, becoming Powell Valley Road.

In 1847, four Powell brothers, William, John, Jackson and David, left Missouri and traveled by wagon train to Oregon. William died in the Blue Mountains, but the remaining brothers reached The Dalles, Oregon.

They cut timber and whipsawed logs into lumber from which they made a scow and continued down the Columbia River to the Sandy River near present-day Troutdale, Oregon. Jackson and John worked in the forests, falling trees into the Sandy and floating them down the Columbia to the nearest sawmill at Vancouver, Washington.



POWELL'S VALLEY GETS A POST OFFICE



The first post office in the area was established on February 13, 1873 as Powell's Valley, Oregon, approximately three miles east of present-day downtown Gresham. The first postmaster was William H. Bond.

Later, the name was shortened to "Powell Valley" on April 5, 1894. The post office was discontinued on February 28, 1903 and it was absorbed into the Gresham post office.

POPULATING POWELL'S VALLEY

BY MARK MOORE



Greetings from Powell Valley postcard. Postmarked August 6, 1909 in Gresham, Oregon.



Real photo postcard with a Birdseye View of Gresham, near Powell Valley Road and Main Avenue, lower center, circa 1905. Postally unused.

David, John and Jackson Powell made their way to the gold fields of California, but returned to Oregon to establish their donation land claims and establish new homes with their brides, the Pugh sisters. Jackson Powell, who was born in Kentucky in 1816, was the first settler in the Gresham area in 1851. He married Nancy Reames Pugh on July 30, 1853.

Jackson Powell made his way along an Indian trail through dense woods to a place where there was a bend in the creek around a wooded volcanic butte, settling a plot of 320 acres, the amount of land available to a married couple. His claim stretched from what is now Cleveland Avenue to Hogan Road, from north of Division Street to Hall Road. James and Eliza settled a claim adjoining Jackson and Nancy's claim and it was located south of present-day Powell and Main Avenue, east to Cleveland Avenue and stretching north of the current Gresham High School near Burnside Road and Main Avenue. Jackson Powell died July 22, 1890.

Powell Valley School was established as Multnomah School District No. 26 in 1857. In the 1870s, a religious Camp Meeting Ground was established near present-day Powell and Roberts Avenue and this became a popular stop-off point for people traveling to Portland. The first sawmill began operating in 1880 and the first church was established in 1884.

Benjamin Franklin Rollins is credited with bringing the first post office to Gresham, and in so doing, named the town. In the mid-1880s, Samuel Metzger and his step-son, Ben Rollins, built a General Goods store on the southeast corner of present-day Main Avenue and Powell. Rollins petitioned the Postmaster General, Walter Q. Gresham, to establish a post office in this area and he requested that the new town be christened "Gresham."



Real photo postcard at the Family Farm at Powell Valley, Oregon on May 30, 1916. Published by Calvert Studio, Oregon City, Oregon, Postally unused.



Real photo postcard at the Family Farm at Powell Valley, Oregon on May 30, 1916. Published by Calvert Studio, Oregon City, Oregon, Postally unused.



Real photo postcard at the Family Farm at Powell Valley, Oregon on Sunday, April 1, 1923. Published by Calvert Studio, Oregon City, Oregon, Postally unused.



Real photo postcard of students and faculty at Powell Valley School in 1908. Postally unused. This district was established as Multnomah County School District No. 26 in 1857.

GRESHAM EXCHANGE

Don't Say Underwear—Say Munsingwear



Let



**MUNSING
WEAR**

UNION SUIT YOU

POWELL VALLEY STORE

J. A. LIEDFORS, Prop.

General Merchandise

Hood Tubes and Tires

Call Phone 1078 and we will
deliver your order.

Advertisement for the Powell Valley Store in 1922. Stephen Kenney Collection.

According to *Post Office Publications*, Gresham briefly had a second post office under the name of "Camp Ground," which operated from May 19th to June 9th in 1884. This post office was closed when postal officials in Washington D.C. realized that they had already approved another post office named Gresham near the same site on May 15, 1884. Prior to the establishment of this first post office, town residents had to travel ten miles to Portland for newspapers and letters. No postmarks from Camp Ground are known to exist.

Officials in Portland saw a need for supplying fresh water to its residents. An elaborate water purification and delivery system was built through Gresham to transport water from the Bull Run Watershed to the residents of Portland and the surrounding areas in 1893. The first telephone line was installed in Gresham in 1894 and the first road to Gresham, Baseline Road, opened in 1895. As early as the 1890s, farmers used the dirt path that would become Powell to take their wares to market. Paving of Powell Valley Road began in the early 1920s.

The first rural mail delivery service routes were established in Gresham in 1901 under the guidance of postmaster Iona McColl. They were horse and buggy routes of 23 and 27 miles. The carriers were E.L. Thorpe and George Preston who each had two horses so that one could rest on alternate days. City delivery service was instituted in 1947. Prior to that, residents collected their mail at the post office. The current post office was built on the corner of Miller Avenue and Powell Valley Road in 1941 and it was later expanded in 1989. Gresham is currently the fourth largest city in Oregon, behind Portland, Salem and Eugene.

Powell Valley Store

JOHNSON & OLSON

Flour, Feed and General
Merchandise

Low Prices and Courteous Treatment

Gresham P. O.

Phone 268

Advertisement for the Powell Valley Store in 1919. Stephen Kenney Collection.

For the latest news, visit our website: email: webfootersinfo@gmail.com



www.thewebfooters.com

Find us on Facebook 



WEBFOOTERS POST CARD CLUB

PO Box 17240
Portland OR 97217-0240





**SAVE THE DATES
SEPT. 19-20, 2025**



**Wellfooters
Post Card Club**
Antique Paper Sale - Public Welcome
www.thewellfooters.com