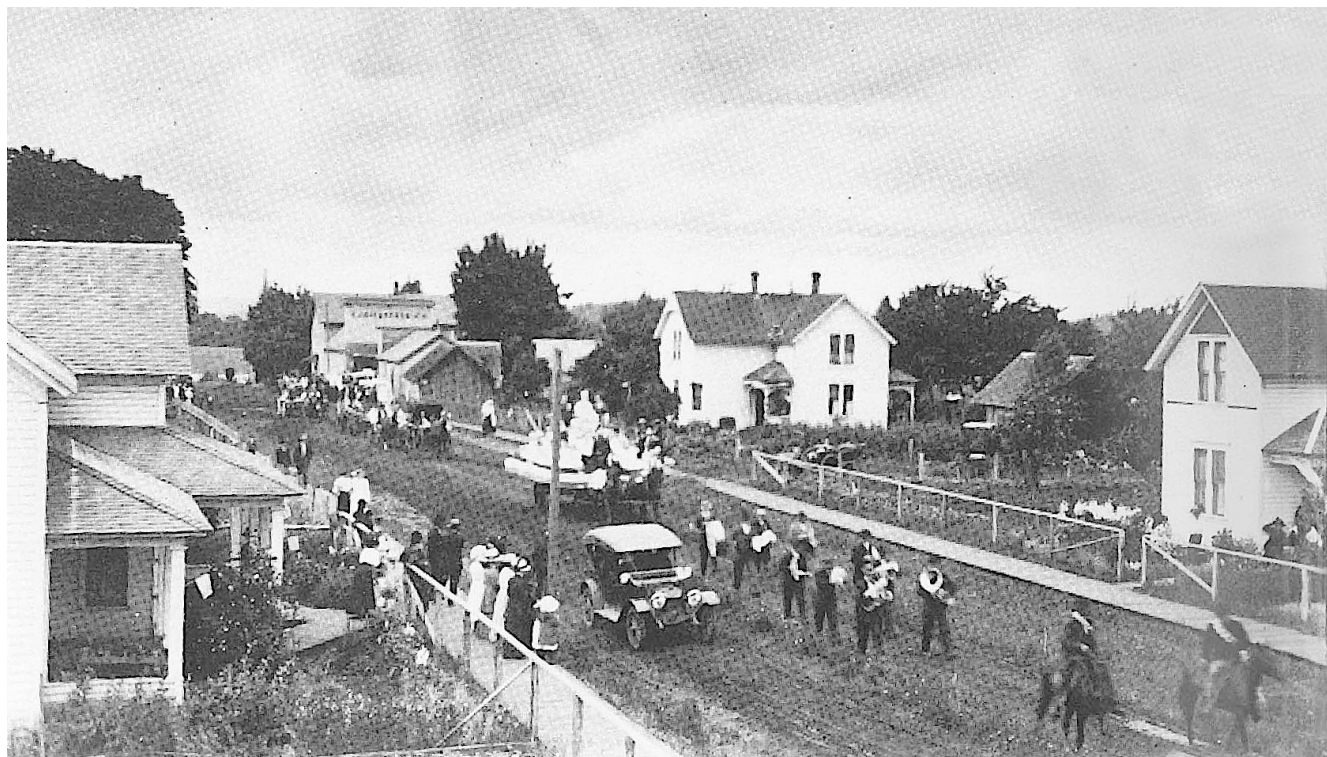


## John Denny, Early Settler, Credited with Naming Sublimity

by Mrs. Grace Ditter, Stayton Mail



HERE'S A BIG Fourth of July parade in Sublimity, probably about 1909 [1920?]. Street runs east and west with parade traveling east. Man riding horse on left in front of parade is Theodore Highberger, father of Lee Highberger of Aumsville. Grandpa Arnold Van Handel is visible leaning against fence rail at left. The "horseless carriage," was still a novelty at that time with horse-drawn vehicles predominating in the parade. Picture was taken by P. M. Hermens, father of Mrs. Mike Benedict. (Courtesy of Joe Pieser)

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By MRS. GRACE DITTER

Sublimity — John Denny, standing on the top of Benson hill, (east of Sublimity), and looking towards the Willamette river said, "Isn't this sublime — we will call this locality Sublimity!"

On April 10, 1851 John Denny accompanied by his wife, six sons, a daughter and their families, headed a small immigrant train of seven wagons, using horses instead of oxen, for their westward journey.

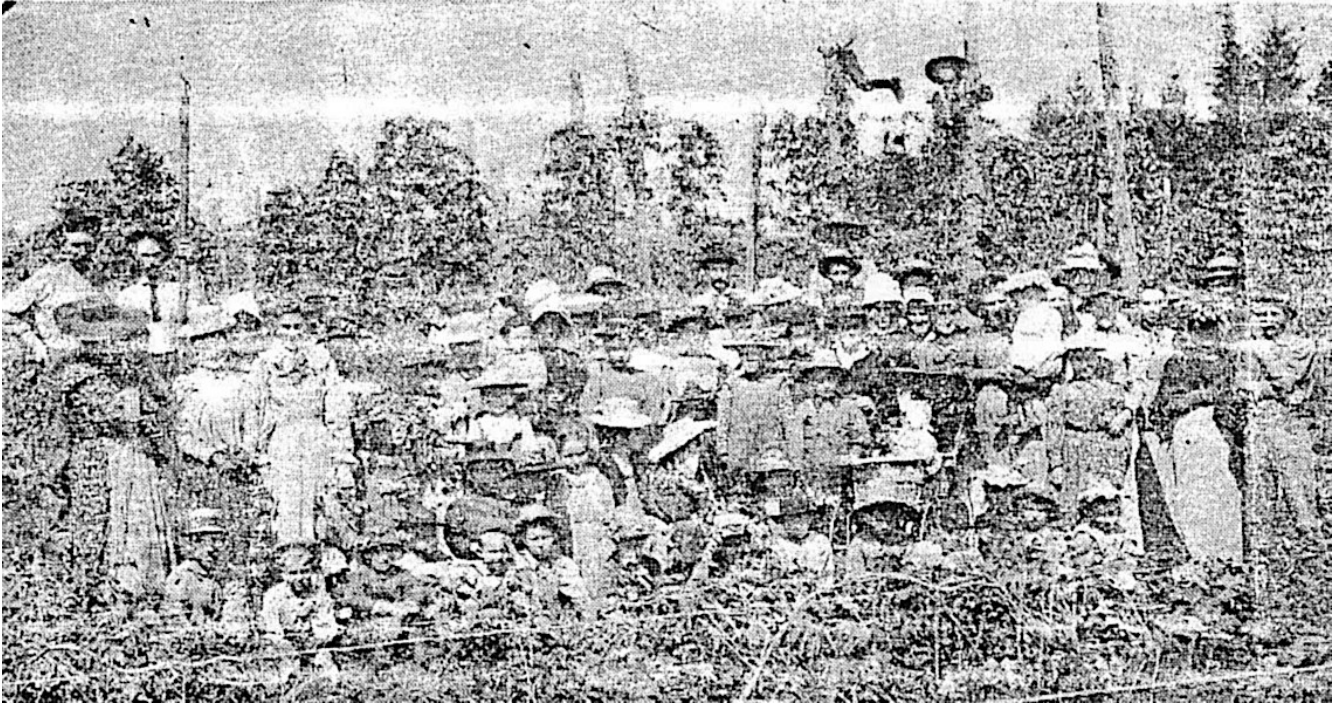
While the other Dennys took up land claims in the Willamette valley in the early 50's, John Denny and his son, James, took their claims on the present site of Sublimity.

The Denny family occupied a prominent role in the town's early history.

JOHN DENNY surveyed and laid out the first plot of the town of Sublimity.

James Denny gave the name to the town. Samuel Denny taught the first school in a little log schoolhouse on his brother's land. He later moved to Seattle where two of his brothers were among the founders of that northern city; the family name of Denny appears on a street of that metropolis.

## **Hops Once Were Important Crop in This Area**



THE CHARLES HOTTINGER HOPYARD is depicted in this 1898 photograph. (See next page.) The property, 1-1/2 miles southeast of Sublimity, now belongs to Hottinger's son, Fred. Hottinger may be seen right of center, wearing a straw hat and holding his oldest daughter, now Mrs. Theresa Van Loo of Verboort. Mrs. Hottinger is to the right and on his left, Mrs. Celine Miller, mother of Henry Miller of Sublimity. Mrs. E. A. (Grace) Ditter, who supplied both the photograph and identification, says she is the cute one in the baby carriage. Others identified are Bertha Klinger, in front of Mrs. Miller; George Bell, atop a pole, and Dr. Fred Hosch.

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James Denny was the first postmaster and he was also the first storekeeper at Sublimity, positions he held until his death in 1855.

Sublimity post office, established September 29, 1852 is ranked as one of the first six post offices in the state. (Tradition has it as the second or third oldest but this cannot be verified because of incomplete records in Washington D. C.

Sublimity honors the Denny family by naming one of its streets Denny St.

HADLEY HOBSON who arrived from California in 1847 was to play a part in the early history of Sublimity. He took a claim on Mill Creek, building a home on what is now the Henry Miller property between here and Stayton. The land was wild and densely covered with timber down to the edge of the swamp which was nearly impassable.

Mr. Hobson and family built his one-room log cabin without a single nail. It had no windows. Pieces of logs were used for chairs. Yet the place seemed a paradise compared to the hardships they had previously endured in California.

However, after establishing his family Mr. Hobson returned to California to mine gold. He later returned with enough gold to pay for the original ranch and purchase additional tracts nearby. Thus he acquired 1500 acres or nearly all the land from Sublimity to the center of Stayton,

and eastwards to a depth of over a mile. He introduced cattle and sheep into the area and attracted other settlers.

HADLEY HOBSON raised a family of 10 children, of whom William Henry survived until a few years ago. W. H. later known as Senator Hobson and well remembered by many here and in Stayton was only two years old when his father settled on the Miller place. At the age of 10 he attended the log cabin school (on the Odenthal place) with Samuel Denny, his first teacher.

From the little log cabin schoolhouse, Hobson later made his way to the Oregon state senate.

Soon a small town had started to arise near the crossroads north of Hadley Hobson's homestead, where the pioneers as well as the roads and mountain trails seemed to find a natural meeting place. This was known as "Hobson Corner," and seems to be the first name ever applied to the locality now known as "Sublimity," although it was only a casual designation, and never reached official recognition.

"HOBSON CORNER" was big enough by 1852 to ask for better mail service from the government. When people asked for a post office a name had to be submitted for the locality. Since Mr. James Denny thought it ought to be called "Sublimity" because of the sublime view he suggested that name. It was accepted by the government and Sublimity ranks as one of the first six post offices in the state. Statistics show that it is the only town by that name in the United States or in fact in the world. [Ed: apparently still true.]

People from Marion, Turner, Lyons, Stayton and other nearby points came to Sublimity to get their mail. Mail from the East came overland or by water to Salem once a month. A mail carrier traveled by horseback once a week to Salem for mail. About six letters arrived each week plus the Salem weekly *Statesman*, the only paper received here at that time. There being no postage, a fee of 10 cents was charged for each letter delivered from the post office in the Denny store. James Denny was the postmaster.

BETWEEN THE PERIOD of 1852 to 1858 Sublimity grew by leaps and bounds. In 1857 the town had a Chinese wash house, a gun maker, two saloons, five stores, each selling whiskey and anything from needles to drygoods, foods and simple hardware; a blacksmith shop two public schools, one Methodist church, a United Brethren church and college; a woodworking plant and last, but not least - the famous public well. This well with wooden equipment was located on the corner of the present site of Ditter's Store.

AMONG THE EARLY immigrants who found their way to Sublimity in 1847 was George W. Hunt He took up a donation land claim of 320 acres north of Sublimity, later trading with Paul Darst for an adjoining 320 acres, making a square mile or 640 acres. During the Civil War Hunt started a small country store, at which the early settlers could secure their supplies. This business he conducted over 25 years. He also started a blacksmith shop. Hunt was interested in military tactics and a fine company of militia was soon organized. An armory was built on land donated by him.

He called the small settlement Whiteaker and had a postoffice and rural route established in 1880 for the benefit of the community. Hunt was the first man to get a government permit to carry mail outside the postoffice by what is known as the "rural carrier" method.

Following his death the post office was discontinued and the store disposed of. About this time a disastrous fire destroyed the armory and Hunt's warehouse, and Whiteaker was a thing of the past. However, still standing as a ghost of the past is the old store building which housed the Whiteaker postoffice. This is now the property of W. J. Lensman.

Linking the past with the present, two of Hunt's descendants, Marion Hunt and Helen Hunt

Tate, grandchildren, are living on parts of the original grant signed by President Buchanan 108 years ago. Mr. and Mrs. Marion Hunt live in the house originally built by his grandfather George W. Hunt.

Jeptha T. Hunt, a son of George W. Hunt was a prominent farmer and stock raiser. He later became Marion county judge. He was the father of Marion Hunt and Helen Hunt Tate of Sublimity; Clarence Hunt, Alaska, and Norris Hunt, Bremerton, Wash.

Sarah Hunt Steeves, a daughter of George W. Hunt is the author of "Book of Remembrances of Marion County Pioneers, 1840-1860," from which source part of this information was secured.

PAUL DARST came to the Sublimity country in 1847 from Ohio, settling on the donation land claim about two miles north of Sublimity. Mr. Darst was a powerful man of wonderful ability who spent his early years teaching school. He also worked as a carpenter and built one of the most substantial houses on his farm of any in the country. The Frank Wolf family now live in the house and own part of his land claim. Darst served two terms as assessor of Marion county. His wife was Lucinda Phillips, an aunt of Al and Len Phillips. His three children, Phidelia, Parthenia and Charles, all remained unmarried.

IN 1849 PHILUP GLOVER JR., together with his father and mother crossed the plains by ox team. Their train consisted of 40 wagons taking six months to complete the 2000-mile journey.

Glover located his claim only about a half mile north of Sublimity on what is still called the "Glover Place" but now the home of Mr. and Mrs. John A. Frank.

Phillip Glover was one of the first mail carriers from Oregon City to Marion county. He owned and operated one of the first horse-powered threshing machines and one of the first grist mills. He was a lover of fine horses,

Thirteen children were born to Glovers in their farm house amid the grove of oaks north of Sublimity, but diphtheria carried away lives of six of these little ones in one month, the eldest a girl of sixteen. (Quoted from S. H. Steeves)

George E. Glover who died several years ago was one of the 13 children of Philip Glover Jr.

#### SUBLIMITY POSTMASTERS, RFD CARRIERS, ARE TOLD

Sublimity - Founding of Sublimity postoffice was December 29, 1852, with James Denny serving as first postmaster. Among the list of postmasters are the following names familiar to residents of this area.

Drury S. Stayton, who later founded Stayton; Hadley Hobson, whose story is told elsewhere in this edition of the Mail; Ernest Becker, a Civil War veteran and father of Mrs. Rose Riesterer and Mrs. Ida Steffes. Nicholas and Augusta LaCroix, owners of the LaCroix store, and parents of Mrs. William (Sylvia) Haberle, now residing in Stayton. John A. Ditter merchant and founder of Ditter's Store and grand uncle of E. A. Ditter.

Edwin E. McKinney, merchant; Bernard Prange, merchant; Frank Bell, farmer; Antoinette B. Hermens, mother of Mrs. Mike Benedict; Clara Neal, present postmaster from 1942.

Mail carriers who have served since the establishment of rural free delivery in April 1904 are: Bernard Prange, Bert Branch, Percy Munro, and James Ripp. Ripp has carried the mail continuously since January, 1915.

