

# DOUGLAS COUNTY MUSEUM

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Dial 503/672-5961

CURATOR

George B. Abdill

August 31, 1971

Mr. Omar C. Palmer  
3515 S.W. Shattuck Rd.  
Portland, Oregon 97221

Dear Slug:

Your good letter of the 26th came and I was happy to hear from you and to know that the photo of the Dayton Hotel arrived and was of some interest to you. Thanks for the biographical data regarding the Jacobs and Palmer families, and for the date when J.B. Riley took over the hotel from James Jacobs. Riley was born in Highgate, Vermont, if I recall the inscription on his tombstone in Brookside Cemetery correctly. I would have to dig out one of the old registers to check the date, but I believe it was in the 1890's that my great-grandfather ran the hotel for a short time. They lived neighbors to Andy McCann, who ran the hotel in later years.

I will look forward to seeing you and Mrs. Palmer in October, and I think you will enjoy seeing the Museum.

Hope you found Frank Palmer well, and that he could identify the photos for you. Laurence Palmer, who once lived in Springfield, had a photo of an Oregonian Railway engine and also an oiling torch that had belonged to Master Mechanic Maxfield of the narrow gauge, but I was never able to locate him to see these and do not know if they still exist.

Presume you have read The Country Boy by Homer Davenport, telling how he fired an engine for Johnny Palmer on the East Side Division of the Oregonian Railway. I would certainly enjoy seeing his book you mentioned when he was on the West Side Division out of Dayton. The story of the narrow gauge railroad has always fascinated me and I have done quite a little research on it. My great-grandfather helped build the original Dayton, Sheridan & Grand Ronde Railroad out of Dayton in 1878, where John Palmer began his career as a fireman. I enclose a print of John in the cab of his engine, reportedly taken at the Silverton water tank. The engine is Oregonian #8, named the C.N. Scott, and was a Baldwin 4-4-0 type woodburner.

I have often hoped someone would do justice to the General in a good







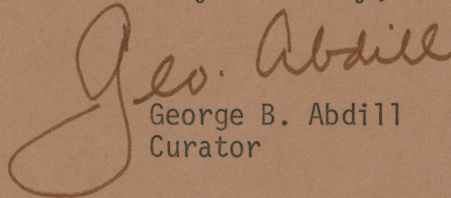
biography. The old boy really got around ! In 1849 he was with Levi Scott on the Applegate Trail, with 30 men from the Willamette Valley, carrying supplies east to meet the Mounted Rifle Regiment under Col. Loring. I presume you have information about the pack train he ran into British Columbia during the gold rush up there. A number of Dayton area men worked for him, including the Dorsey family. A son, Joel Palmer Dorsey, was named in honor of the General. J.P. Dorsey married a sister of my great-grandmother (Hutchins family from Webfoot).

I would certainly appreciate a chance to copy the photo you have of the General and if you can bring it down with you I will try to arrange to have our photographer on hand to shoot it.

Again, it was nice to hear from you and am glad to know the plaque dedication went off well. My mother visited us over the weekend and brought me copies of the Dayton Tribune with the story and picture.

Will look forward to seeing you in October.

Very sincerely,

  
George B. Abdill  
Curator

GBA/v1o



