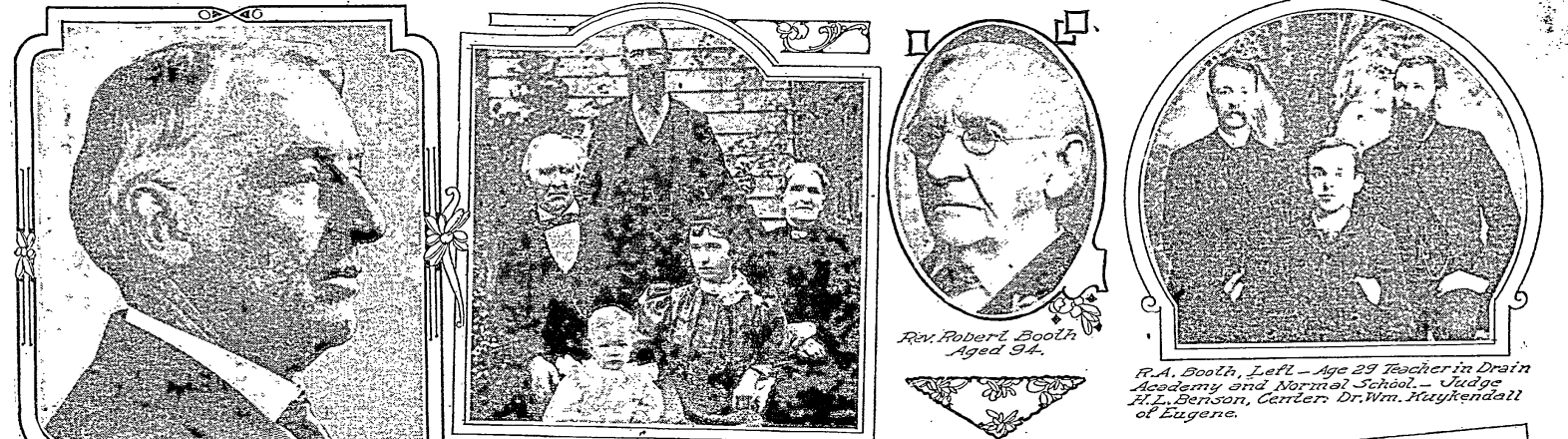


# ROBERT A. BOOTH, SON OF HARDY PIONEER, IDEAL MAN

Addison Bennett Reviews Life of Republican Candidate for United States Senate and Finds Him to Be Fitted Admirably for High Post.



Rev. Robert Booth, Aged 34.

R.A. Booth, Left - Age 29 Teacher in Drain Academy and Normal School, and J.P. Benson, Center, Dr. Wm. Kuykendall of Eugene.

R.A. Booth's Parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Booth, (Mrs. Booth is the oldest son, U. O. Booth, his daughter, Blanche, is the child, Ailene Duffer, (Now of Grants Pass).)

Robert A. Booth, from a Recent Photo.



Robert Booth and Family, with Sons and Daughters-in-law and Grandchildren.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Booth, Center Front Row, U. O. Booth, Eldest Son, Right, Mrs. Mary Hockley, Mrs. Jennie Wee, J. H. Booth, R.A. Booth, Mrs. Sarah Peterson, Mrs. Viola Reyes, Mrs. Ida Belknap, Mrs. Cora Singleton.

BY ADDISON BENNETT.

When Robert Booth and his wife and family crossed the plains from Iowa to Oregon in 1852, little did he think, little did any of his friends think, that he would be the founder of a family that would, within a half century become one of the most remarkable in Oregon. If any person should have suggested to him or his wife that the head of the family, then 22 years of age, would be living in health and comfort 62 years later—well, they would not have believed it, but would have thanked God from the bottom of their hearts for the mercies and blessings already bestowed upon them, and for the future would have said "Thy will be done."

But this is not to be a story of Robert Booth and his family only as such a story bears upon the life of the member of that family—Robert A. (Asbury) Booth. Robert A. Booth is no matter how far away from the highest office within the gift of the people of Oregon, which is also one of the most honorable positions any man can hold in our country—the office of United States Senator. Mr. Booth is the nominee of the Republican party, having received the nomination at the convention held in June by one of the largest pluralities ever given a candidate, opposed or with a clear field in Oregon.

**Candidate Not Offenseless.**

It behoves the voters of the state to look well upon a candidate for any office but with greater scrutiny upon one so high an office. So I am going to tell the readers of The Oregonian a disconnected story about Robert A. Booth, which may be of some interest to me, inasmuch as I have seen and know him as I know him.

Not Robert A. Booth, the offenseless, for he is not, never was, never will be an offenseless for the sake of the honors or emoluments of office. Indeed, he did not allow his name to be advanced before the primaries until he had told him, either personally or through his friends, received such an overwhelming vote in the primaries. Mr. Booth now is in the campaign just like his sons into every year of his life—with all his mind and all his strength.

**Career Concluding Test.**

How are we to judge a man who aspires such a high office? Are we first to inquire into the character of the man and then into his ability? Or is it the proper way? No, neither we confine ourselves to such matters as they appear today. Character is something of slow growth. Ability is best shown by deeds, by a long series of deeds. And there is something else that appeals to us in the character of a man. It is the ability to explain with cold type—the balance, the fiber of the man as a son, a brother, a husband, a father, a friend, a business associate and an employer.

It is conceded that a man who has been a loving son, a kind brother, a constant and always-reliable husband, a just and

ful father, a faithful friend, an able and honest business associate and an employer whose employes look upon as their best friend—I think a man can fill up that measure in a man to be trusted. Still, there is the further matter of the man's ability, still further, of money. Not that the latter ought to cut any figure with the candidate, but in these times when a man is to go father, deeply into a man's pocket, the purse, the size of their bank accounts, the amount of their income tax. However, if I go on in this article, I will not get anywhere. That I put, as I said earlier in this article, is to lose up to this present from the poorest days and show you what sort of a man R. A. Booth is by showing his early opportunities, the way he embraced them and what his career has been.

Robert A. Booth's Home in Eugene.

I take it that all will agree with me that it is not out of place for me to say that the man who has the family affairs of the Booths. I know they will not enter into the money, still further, of money. Not that the latter ought to cut any figure with the candidate, but in these times when a man is to go father, deeply into a man's pocket, the purse, the size of their bank accounts, the amount of their income tax. However, if I go on in this article, I will not get anywhere. That I put, as I said earlier in this article, is to lose up to this present from the poorest days and show you what sort of a man R. A. Booth is by showing his early opportunities, the way he embraced them and what his career has been.

**Family in Oregon in 1852.**

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**Reverence of the Methodist** death, the first among the children, of Rev. George M. Booth, at The Falls, in 1857. Little Robert, born in 1857, was then about 9 years old. He had attended school a short time back in Yamhill County. But now his education began in real earnest. He was then eight of nine years of age when he went to school in Oregon. Owing to the fact that Mr. Booth was in cash, he had half rates for his children, but the sum had to be paid in cash, or its equivalent.

**Work Pays Tuition.**

So to help his family out 9-year-old Robert became the janitor of the school, and not only paid his own tuition, but that of four more of the family. For his pay for about three hours work a day he received the sum of \$2.50 a month. He remained a janitor until his brothers and sisters—rather, his family—received credit for it. So on the third day of September, 1867, when 9 years, 2 months and 31 days of age, Robert became a member of the breadwinners of this remarkable family. As he began his work as janitor, he was looking over the records of the old academy a few days ago. In doing so I noted that always for the eight years he attended that school, he stood not lower than thirty in any of his classes, usually at the head.

He graduated in 1875 and taught a summer school at Civil Bend, Douglas county. In the Fall of that year the family removed to Crook County, where Robert went to work for his father on a farm. In those days I supposed that a son had to work for



R.A. Booth, Aged 30 Bookkeeper at Grants Pass for Sugar Pine Door & Lumber Co.

his parents until 21. In the Booth family that had to be the rule. Necessity required. The elder Booth, however, made it a rule to give a horse to every child upon reaching his or her majority. This rule was adhered to faithfully. But in Robert's case the money was returned to the father because he had been guilty of a wrong, so far as I have ever learned.

Robert Booth now resides in Salem. He is in his 94th year. He is hale and rugged. His health is excellent and he looks good for 20 years yet. I do not suppose there is another parent in the country who is prouder or who has greater reason to be proud of his family than Rev. Robert Booth.

**Farm Head's Work Done.**

From the time Robert was 15 until he became of age he did the ordinary work of a farm hand. Coming of age he made an arrangement with Henry Suttler to sell fruit trees, and did very well. He then borrowed \$200 from Fendler Suttler and went into a business college in San Francisco for one term and he was also janitor there. Returning he again sold trees and made enough to repay Mr. Suttler and had \$25 left, which he put in with his brother in a store at Yoncalla. He remained there until 1853, when he sold out for \$100.

**First Oregon Press Bought.**

Mr. Benson was often heard to remark that the Kuykendall boys furnished the skill and muscle. Kuykendall, Sr., turned the capital, and (Benson) furnished the brains. I examined a good many copies of the (Booth) and it was a rather neat and newsy little sheet. It was originally at Oregon City, but they bought it from the old firm of Palmer & Ray.

Taking what capital he had, Mr. Booth arranged with a Portland firm for the machinery for a sawmill. From



R.A. Booth - Age 84 and Brother W.A. Booth.

he could not handle the deal on his own money, he again went to Fendler Suttler, "who," Mr. Booth remarked to me, was about the only man in Southern Oregon who had any real money in those days," and borrowed \$2000. The mill was located at Yoncalla, and made money from the start. A year or so later he sold it to George and Thomas Applegate. Then he bought out his brother's share and ran it a couple of years. His then engaged in selling lumber, ash, doors, etc., for the Sugar Pine Door & Lumber Company of Grants Pass. It is Miller being the principal owner. Later he became bookkeeper for the concern and a stockholder.

**Bank is Organized.**

In the Fall of 1858 what Mr. Booth calls his real business career began. At that time he organized the First National Bank of Grants Pass and became its cashier. Mr. Booth was the sole employe of the bank, being cashier, teller, bookkeeper, messenger and janitor. Always janitor! Surely Mr. Booth may be considered competent to give expert testimony on the duties, powers and prerogatives of the janitor.

At this time Mr. Booth's assets consisted of \$1865. I saw the figures set down in his cash book, which shows all his early financial transactions. But he took \$3000 of it stock in the bank to occupy his spare time, so he and the other members of the bank, Dr. William Kuykendall started the Drain Echo, the doctor's sons doing the mechanical work.

Perhaps in all the West there has been no concern that has received more notoriety than the Booth-Kelly Company. It is simply because it has been wonderfully successful. If the Booth-Kelly Company had done every thing that it has done and timber and lumber lands had gone down or stood still instead of advancing a few thousand

# ROBERT A. BOOTH, IDEAL MAN

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The firm had received a standing, they were incorporated and many stockholders taken in. So that at the present time the Booth & Kelly interests are less than a third.

I have gone into this portion of the business career of R. A. Booth because the firm of which he was and still is a member has suffered the same criticisms as nearly all our latter-day successful concerns have suffered. A good many people seem to think business success is a crime. Even many of the Government officials act on that theory. So loud did the howls become against the firm that they were prosecuted by the Department of Justice. For what?

Why, of all the million acres or so of land they had handled titles of three claims, taken by relatives of the Booths, were attacked. Judge Bean made short work of the case, but Judge Gilbert, in the Circuit Court of Appeals, has taken it up to the Supreme Court. Perhaps even in the "hand-picked jury" cases there was not a case with less merit than this case against the Booth-Kelly Company.

### Working Time Reduced.

One of the first acts of the Booth-Kelly Company after beginning operations was to reduce the hours of the men from 11 to 10 and to raise their pay 25 cents a day. That act alone ought to show how the company stands on the labor question; how it respects the men. But I wanted full knowledge on this question, so I went out the other day to the Coburg mill and the Springfield mill and mixed in with the men. But I am a little ahead of the story. I first went to the offices in Eugene and interviewed a few of the older employes there. I talked first with A. C. Dixon, the manager. He has been with the concern 27 years, has worked up to his present position by strict attention to duty. I asked Mr. Dixon how the employes generally looked upon Mr. Booth.

"As a friend," he replied with vehemence. "Robert Booth has never seemed to any of us as other than a friend and companion, save when we were advised by his counsel. Then we looked upon him as a second father. I think I could cite hundreds of cases where he has acted as arbitrator and has settled difficulties, great and small, that have come up between some of our men. And his decisions have always been considered just and have stood."

### No Friction Among Workers.

I asked Mr. Dixon about the pay of the men and found the wages averaged \$3.25 a day in the woods and \$4.25 in the mills. This is inclusive of the pay of the superintendents and bosses and does not include the office forces. I then inquired into the matter of labor troubles, such as walkouts, lockouts, strikes, etc. I was assured by Mr. Dixon, as I had been by Mr. Booth, that never in the history of the firm had there been the least friction between the management and the men, not even a demand for higher wages.

"The men have always known that this company pays the top prices for labor, usually a little more," said Mr. Dixon.

He then remarked that as to Robert A. Booth there was a side of his character unknown to every body except Mr. Booth, his family and himself (Mr. Dixon). That was his charities.

"He has made some notable gifts which have found their way into print without the consent of Mr. Booth. But the public knows nothing about the large list of needy individuals he regularly remits to. I know this, because he is a big game regular. But Mr. Booth is not the man to make a ten-dollar or a thousand-dollar gift and rush into print, hoping to get the amount back, with interest, in the way of advertising. He is not built that way. And I am satisfied that he gives considerable sums for charitable purposes that even I know nothing about. He is as shyly touched by the pleas of the unfortunate and his check-book is always handy. I know he uses it frequently, unknown to anybody save himself; perhaps later to tell his wife."

### Labor Troubles Unknown.

Remember, the Booth-Kelly Company for a number of years in the Republican times had on their payrolls as many as 1500 names. Even in these times they have to see that they And never a bit of labor trouble; always fair and just to employes. Mr. Booth acted as counsellor and friend whenever called upon, which was frequent. Mr. Booth knew nearly all of the men by name and took an interest in their home affairs, particularly the young men. That is why these employes say they are going to vote for Robert Booth in November practically to a man. Could anything make Mr. Booth prouder than to know that these men are going to give him their support? I believe nothing could please him more.

Thomas Roche is another employe

who has been in the office for 15 years. He is a fine specimen of an Irish gentleman. He is a graduate of the Dublin University.

"Mr. Booth is our friend rather than our employer. I have asked him many favors, financial and otherwise, and he has never failed me. Nobody but Mr. Dixon knows what a long roll of needy look to him for their support, and I am sure Mr. Dixon comes far from knowing all," said Mr. Roche.

I went out to the mill at Coburg and talked with the superintendent, Hugo Fallon, a native of Sweden. He came to Oregon in 1900 and went to work in the woods for the firm and has worked his way steadily up.

"Mr. Booth is one of the fairest men and best friends a man ever worked for," he said. "I have prospered ever since I came here. I have a lovely wife, four fine children, a nice home and quite a pile of other property, all made by working for the Booth-Kelly Company. I would not quit them if I promised double the pay I get here."

### No Complaints Heard.

So I went right down the line. I interviewed perhaps a half hundred, trying to find just one dissatisfied employe, just a single knocker. I asked for one such, but not a man could point one out.

"Haven't you," I asked, "even one of the shiftless, class who is dissatisfied—one who thinks Mr. Booth ought to divide, by fair means or foul, some of his wealth among the 'ner-dowells'?"

"Not that I know of," would be the answer. "Once in a while one of those chaps drop in and work a few days, but quite a job of it for me, as I am to him, so he hikes along to some place where there is more excitement."

Then I went to bankers and business men, to lawyers and doctors, both in the City of Eugene and in Springfield and Coburg; to men who have known him all the way from 10 to 45 years, and always the same story: "The man never was fairer man, a better friend or a better citizen."

There is another side to be considered—his fitness for the office he seeks. I have shown his business ability, and that goes a long way in the United States Senate. Some of the ablest leaders who ever sat in that body were sent there from the bank counter, the workshop, the room or the farm. Some of them were there today came directly from the direction of their own large business affairs to take part in directing those of Uncle Sam.

It seems strange that the only honorary title that Mr. Booth ever had was Senator. Senator he will undoubtedly remain. He served (and it was the only time he was ever elected) to in the State Senate for eight years—1906-1908—and then refused further service, owing to business affairs. This office was not sought by him; he was nominated and elected and re-elected three times against his will. I asked a gentleman who served the entire eight years with him what sort of a legislator he made.

### Record as Senator Bright.

"One of the ablest men in the bodies he sat in," was the reply. "He always stood for right and justice and cleanliness. He was a hard and conscientious committee worker, was a constant attendant upon the sessions and was one of the clearest and most incisive speakers and ablest debaters that sat in the Senate while I was a member."

I went further and asked this fellow Senator of his what sort of a figure he thought Mr. Booth would cut in the United States Senate.

"What sort of a figure?" he inquired. "Why, he will stand shoulder to shoulder with the big men in that body. He will make a Senator that will be the only one for you can tell you he will not only look out every moment for the interests of his constituents, but for the interests of the whole people of the Nation."

I am going now to touch upon one more side of Mr. Booth's character and then I am done.

Mr. Booth was married May 15, 1881, to a girl named La Raut. In looking over the old records of the Wilbur Academy I found the name that most frequently stood as close to the head, or at the head of the classes as young Booth, was that of Clintona La Raut. I also knew that La Raut was a prominent name in Southern Oregon for many, many years.

"Yes," said Mr. Booth, "this is the same girl who was married on my 21st birthday; we had been sweethearts for eight years."

I found that there were only a few days' difference in their ages.

They have had four children, but the oldest, as said before, died several years ago at the age of 4. Those living are: Robert R., Floyd W., and Barbara W. The boys were married on the 21st birthday. Robert is a farmer near Yoncalla, his father being his partner in the ownership and management of a 1700-acre farm. They are going to specialize in raising high-grade cattle, sheep, swine and horses and in the rotation of crops and in feeding. In fact, they began this two

years ago. Robert and his wife have two fine children, the eldest of course bearing the name of Robert, being the fourth of that name.

### Sons Work at Plant.

Floyd for a time was a partner with his brother. But his wife did not take kindly to farm life, so her husband came back to Eugene and entered the employment of the Booth-Kelly Company. And he began at the bottom as a laborer. He runs a little electric truck around the logging lumber in the yard. On a Monday morning, while visiting the Booths I heard a commotion about 5 o'clock. I later learned that it was Floyd getting an early breakfast so he could get to the mill at Springfield by 5:30 to get his truck in order for the day's work.

Mr. Booth has seen to it that upon considering age both the boys have well provided for. They are worth considerable money, enough for a competency, considering their frugal habits, if they did not choose to work another day. But none of the Booths was ever built that way.

It is just possible some person has called your attention to the fact that Mr. Booth lives in a palace, or in a hotel, or the best hotels the ocean has and the teller of the tale. I wish you could dissect the house he does live in—a house that belongs to the youngest boy, Floyd. It was at first, I think, a dwelling of one room. Later a couple more rooms were added; then, after a few years, I suppose the family of the occupants expanded and a few more rooms were added. And so on, until it is really four or five houses built into one. I would not go so far as to say the quickest way to get up stairs in that house is to start down cellar, but I can safely say that it is considerable of a job to get from one part of it to another.

### Home Life Beautiful.

The family of Robert A. Booth cannot be described properly as father, mother, two sons and a daughter. More properly it is a household composed of three young gentlemen and two young ladies; still more properly it is a quiet, happy home with a sister. Why, bless your soul, each one of them thinks that home is the brightest spot on earth, as it is the happiest. And right straight to the family circle goes every trouble, every sorrow and every joy. Mr. Booth never makes a deal, important or unimportant, without going over it fully with his wife and children. The boys never have a trouble that does not come before that loving tribunal.

"I suppose," remarked Robert, Jr., to me as we were riding out toward Coburg, "many people wonder how it is that I go out so little. I scarcely ever go up town on an evening; never home. I and brother and sister can almost always be found at home. If we are in town, I will tell you why—because that is the place where we enjoy ourselves the most; that is where we are all the happiest."

The same can be said of the senior Booth. He never cares to be away from home a moment beyond the actual requirements of his business. He is a typical man as far as a father and as ever lived and as loving and constant a husband as woman ever had.

### Tribute Paid to Mother.

A word about Mr. Booth's mother; a word to tribute to her from her son. I asked him a very personal question, as to the underlying principles of his successful career and the establishment of his character. Quick as a flash, his eyes brightening and his countenance lightening, he replied:

"My mother! Yes, all that I am or ever am is due to my mother, the sweetest, best, most loving, most patient mother that any person ever had; and not only a mother to her family, but to the entire neighborhood. No matter how hard the day might have been, how severe the labor, how great the troubles of her own, she was ready on the instant, at any hour of the night, to visit, far or near, any person in distress and remain as long as her services were needed."

"And the best thing that I can say about my father, my sisters and my brothers is that we were always ready to assist this good woman in every way we could. When she was called away on her visits of mercy the household work went along smoothly, so far as the daily routine of cooking, eating and keeping the house in order went; but what a joyous moment it was when our mother returned to us!"

I wonder if a man who has demonstrated that he has business ability of a high order; that he has always been upright, honorable, just; that he has ever been a good son, a kind brother, a loving and dutiful husband, a gentle and noble father, a fair and honorable employer, and added such a man would not make Oregon a capable and honorable Senator?

The verdict is with the people, but I have confidence enough in the electorates of the State of Oregon to feel that when a man like Mr. Booth comes before them and asks their votes—asks them on his own and his party's record—that the voters will not say him nay