

Howard Sebree

Mayor 1893 & 1901



According to RootsWeb.com updated on 10/13/19, Howard Sebree was born near Owenton, KY on March 9, 1834 to Nimrod B. and Permelia Owens Sebree. Howard ran away from home when he was 17 years old, going to Frankfort, KY, and earned his apprenticeship in Blacksmithing 1855 and 1856 in Louisville, Kentucky. He followed the railroad to Salt Lake City in 1872.

When the Civil War commenced, Howard, an emphatic Southern sympathizer, was forced to leave the state and all of his property was confiscated. Howard recouped his assets working at his trade in Black Hawk, Colorado, during the years 1862-1866 when that town and its neighbor, Central City in Gilpin County, were feverish with a developing gold-mining boom. Howard then realized his dream of having a beautiful farm when he returned to the Midwest and accumulated 560 acres of land about three miles south of Carthage, Illinois. Subsequent business activities in the West took Howard to Colorado, Wyoming (where he helped lay out the city of Cheyenne), Utah, Idaho, and Montana. As a contractor he built the Greeley, Colorado, canal in partnerships

and alone he was involved in a variety of retail ventures, selling wagons, agricultural implements, groceries and dry goods. He owned forwarding and commission houses, manufacturing and banking firms. By 1892 Howard had liquidated most of his vast enterprise and retired to Caldwell, Idaho, a town he had helped lay out.

Throughout his life, he worked hard, traversing the yet untamed west, taking no less than 17 trips across the plains, establishing branches of his blacksmith shops in Blackhawk, CO & Leavenworth, WA and what is said to have been the largest blacksmith shop in the country located in Cheyenne, WY. He was approached with a request to leave Carthage, IL, and relocated to Salt Lake to open a store, and in 1870 Mr. Sebree did just that. With his wild success due to his honesty and business sense, branches were established in Utah, Montana and Idaho. These branches were bought out by the Church after a negotiation in 1884. He then relocated to Caldwell in 1885, organizing the Stockgrowers & Traders Bank and taking the presidency of the institution.

In 1887 he built the Sebree Canal, which carried water from Boise River to thousands of acres of land west of Caldwell. There is a Gulch between Boise and Mountain Home called Sebree Gulch. In 1888 he came to Caldwell, Idaho and helped organize the first Bank in Caldwell, the Stock Growers and Traders Bank. Two years later reorganized to First National Bank of Caldwell. He was President for 15 years.

In 1903, Howard Sebree, president of the First National Bank, told the Caldwell Tribune: "I realize the necessity for a good hotel in this town and am anxious to see one built." Because he was building a grand hotel, Sebree didn't expect profit from it for quite some time, and planned to build only if the city granted tax exemptions.

The Sebree's spared no expense to create an establishment "first class in all its appointments and fully up to the requirements of the place for many years." The steam heated building, 50 x 120 feet, had electricity, and included dining room, office, bar, and room for other offices. The second floor had suites, complete with bath and closets, and the third floor featured cheaper rooms. For \$2.50 a night, each of its fifty rooms supplied hot and cold running water, steam heat, and electric light, courtesy of the Sebree's own Caldwell Power Company. The hotel could accommodate 150 people and was one of the largest hotels in the Northwest. The initial cost was \$30,000 and an additional \$10,000 to furnish it. In 1922-23 a fourth floor was added and the building was refurbished. Sadly, the building burned in 1990.

Howard Sebree was the Mayor, the President of First National Bank, the organizer and president of Stockgrowers & Traders, an entrepreneur, known for his integrity and honesty; a successful businessman, father and husband, and known fondly as "Uncle Howard" by Caldwell residents.