

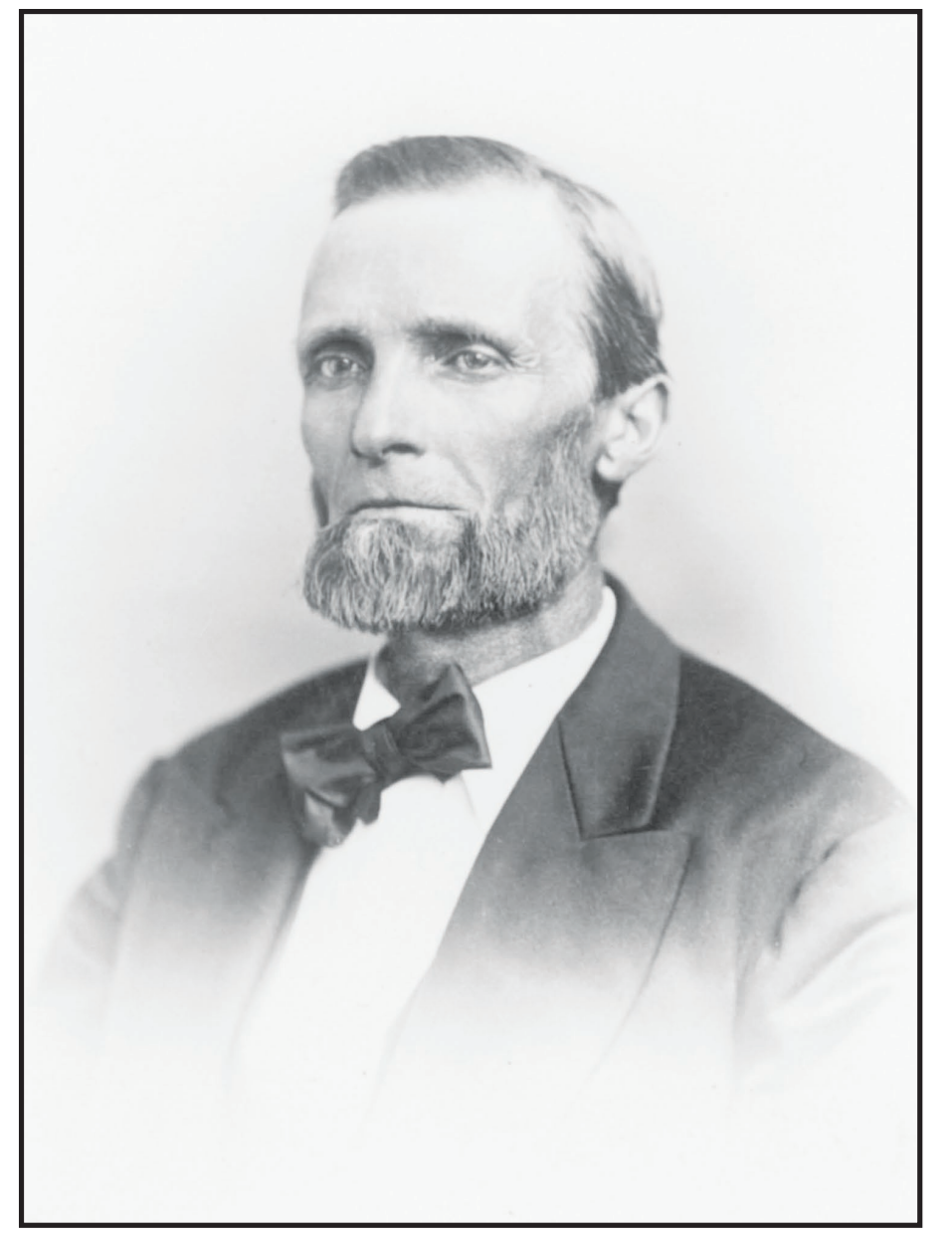


John & Alley Elmira Bigham
(P. Britt photo - SOHS #4820)

John Bigham of Bigham Knoll



The John Bigham family in about 1875
(P. Britt Photo - SOHS #20575)



John Bigham (1817 - 1884)
(P. Britt Photo - SOHS #20576)

Born on a Kentucky farm in 1817, John Bigham remained close to his family roots his whole life as he worked farms in North Carolina, Missouri and Oregon.

In 1852 the Bigham family, along with several friends, and two teams of oxen, headed West. In crossing the Great Plains the family had many exciting adventures. At Salt Lake the Bighams made the decision to head for Oregon. On the Snake River they were saved from an Indian massacre by winning the good favor of the chief. The little wagon train passed over the Cascade Mountains on April 14, 1853. The family spent the winter along the Clackamas River in northern Oregon. In 1854 John moved his family south to the gold rush town of Jacksonville.

Following their discovery of gold on Rich Gulch in 1852, James Cluggage and James Pool filed homestead claims on 466 acres of land that eventually became the town of Jacksonville. In 1859 James Pool sold part of his land claim to John Bigham and others for \$15,900, including the knoll that would eventually bear Bigham's name.

According to stories from the Bigham family, Bigham's Knoll was donated to Jacksonville School District No. 1. But Jackson County's 1866 financial ledger shows a \$3,000 warrant issued for the Knoll's purchase with the understanding that a schoolhouse would soon be built on the land. Perhaps the family donated some of the surrounding lots. An additional \$300 was spent on surveying and lumber for a fence to keep out the cows.



Bigham's Knoll about 1890
Photographed from Peter Britt's
home overlooking Jacksonville



Bigham Knoll February 2009



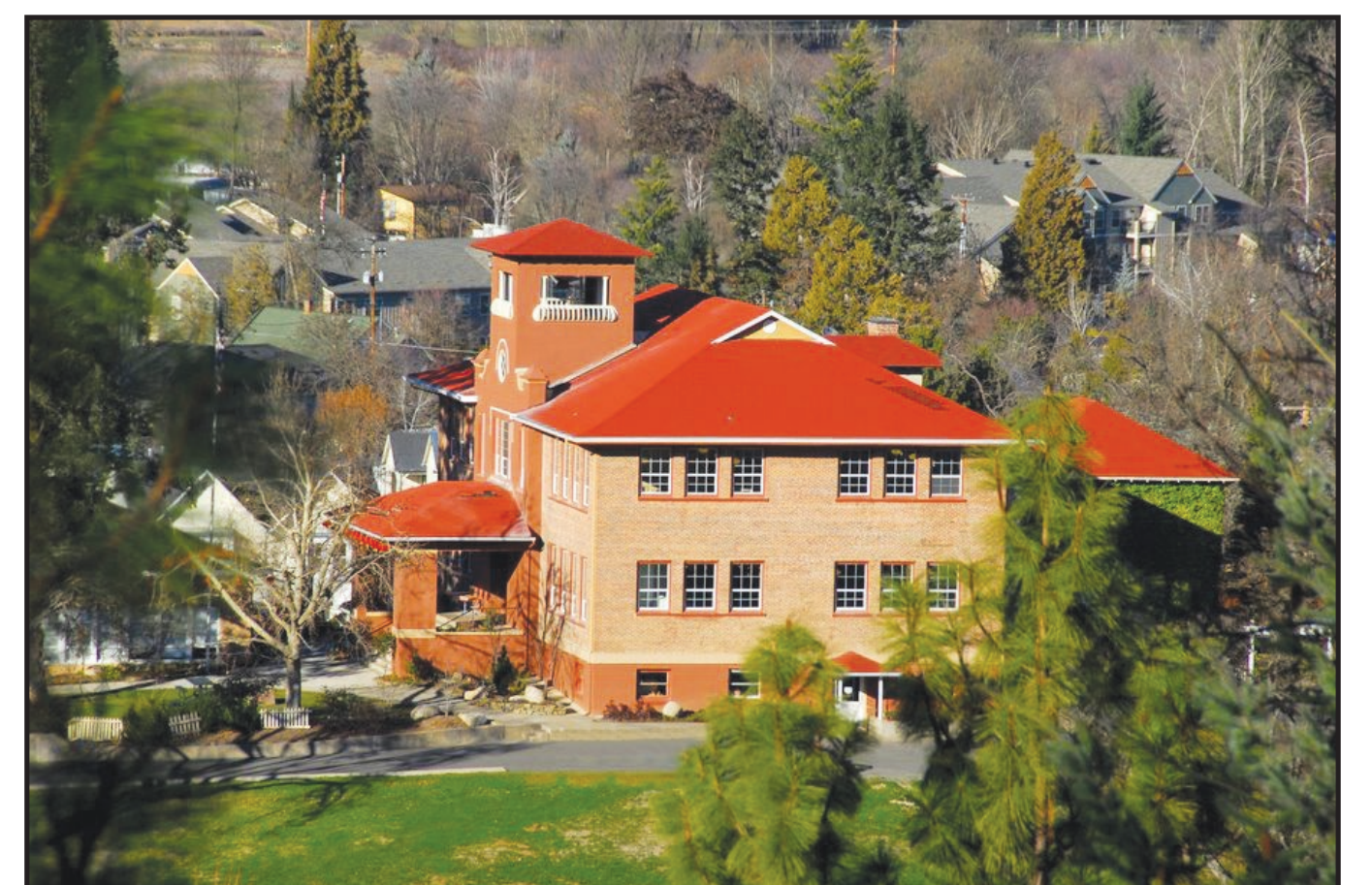
Color photos by Lloyd Smith

In 1867 Jacksonville School District No. 1 (established 1854) raised \$1,100 to build a two-story schoolhouse on Bigham's Knoll.

Subsequent fires destroyed three of the hilltop school buildings over the next 40 years. The schoolhouse that we see today was completed in 1908.

Mel and Brooke Ashland purchased Bigham's Knoll in 2007 from Cascade Christian High School and embarked on an ambitious restoration of the Old Jacksonville School campus. "Bigham's Knoll" was changed to "Bigham Knoll" by Brooke Ashland after the purchase.

"The Old School is my mission," says Brooke Ashland, gazing at the old campus. "I've been looking at that school for 20 years, and I'd like it to stay here so I can look at it for another 20 years."



Presented to Mel and Brooke Ashland
In grateful appreciation for their efforts to
preserve the historic and scenic values of

Bigham Knoll

by the Jacksonville Woodlands Association
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