

Charles C. Tautphaus and Sarah Kane Tautphaus

Charles C. Tautphaus, 1841-1906, of German ancestry, came to New York when he was six. He sailed to California where he settled.

Sarah Kane, 1841-1917, Irish, came to New York City as a 6 month old infant. At 15, she and a sister also sailed to reach California.

They met and married and lived in Anahiem, CA. Between 1871 and 1882, they had 5 daughters. In 1882, they moved by wagon to Butte City, MT, where Charles was a partner with Thomas Moffitt in the "Palace Meat Market" where they also bought and sold live stock, and engaged in mining and freighting.

Tautphaus bought a building here on Eagle Rock St. [also at times called Front St. or Railroad Blvd.] in 1885 for \$3,000 to house a new meat market. The building meeting rooms upstairs were used for the new Masonic Lodge and newer Odd Fellows lodge meetings in 1886.

Always thinking ahead, Tautphaus could see the potential of the area once water from the river could flow onto the thirsty fertile volcanic soil. In 1884, the Tautphauses and partner Moffitt had filed homestead rights on three sections of land south of Eagle Rock. The cost was \$1.25 per acre with only 25 cents down and the remaining \$1.00 due in 5 years. Moffitt then sold his land to Tautphaus. Tautphaus later purchased another 160 acres adjoining his other land, giving him a total of 2,080 acres or 3 1/4 square miles. [From Tautphaus Park, south, past York Road.] A great deal, but real value would come only when it could be irrigated.

In 1886 Charles and Sarah Tautphaus, aged 45 & 46, and the five daughters aged from 4 to 16. arrived in this area. Their dream was to develop an oasis in the middle of the desert, construct a large lake, with trees, orchards, flowers, and pastures. The lake was to be the focal point of the family dream. Remember, there were no dams on the river nor man made lakes or reservoirs around at that time. No Palisades Reservoir, Blackfoot Reservoir, Island Park Reservoir, American Falls Reservoir, Jackson Lake, Gem Lake - - - You get the idea, a lake here in the middle of the desert was unheard of. With work horses and equipment, the lake was dug. The locals thought Tautphaus was a bit strange for digging his lake in the middle of the desert where there wasn't any water. His plan was to get water from Sand Creek several miles north east of his ranch. He started digging a canal from Sand Creek but abandoned it when he found out what the natives already knew; that Sand Creek wasn't a dependable source of water. Water must come from the Snake River later.

Perhaps the greatest contribution Tautphaus made to the area and local economy was his formation of the Idaho Canal Company. It was founded, by Tautphaus and others, in 1889 to get water to the thirsty fertile valley soil. It was capitalized at \$500,000 of which he was the principle stockholder with a 37 % ownership. Tautphaus had previously filed on 100,000 inches of water to be taken out of the river 8 miles above Eagle Rock which was to provided the water for the Idaho Canal. Pioneers Nels Just and his son James held the construction contract. The Idaho Canal System waters 55 square miles of some of the most fertile farms in the valley.

His careers encompassed cattle broker, butcher, road builder, canal builder, developer, farmer, and miner. Ever the entrepreneur, he spent great efforts on many new projects, from Alaska gold to railroad plans for supplying Wyoming coal to Eastern Idaho. He died of pneumonia on April 3, 1906, while pursuing a hauling business in Nevada.