

A PLATEFUL OF UMPQUA MAMMOTH BLACKBERRIES

Berries
Grow
Wonder-
fully
in
the
Valley



GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF DOUGLAS COUNTY

Position — Boundaries — Area — Topography — Water Courses — The Umpqua River — Attempts to Navigate the Stream — Channel Improved by the Government — The Cascade Mountains — Grand Scenery — Snowy Peaks and Mirror Lakes — Game and Fish of the Cascades — The North Umpqua — The Coast Range

OF ALL THE COUNTIES of Oregon, Douglas is among the largest. It is bounded on the north by Lane county, on the east by the summit of the Cascade mountains, on the south by the counties of Jackson and Josephine, and on the west by the Coos county and the Pacific Ocean. Its area is estimated at 4,950 square miles, or about one-twentieth of the whole state of Oregon, of which it is one of the most important and prosperous counties. Its shape is quite irregular, since its boundary lines follow principally the course of rivers and mountain ranges, and its greatest length is 21 miles, running north-west and southeast.

Douglas county includes the region commonly known as the Umpqua valley; but this term as we shall see is a misnomer. The only resemblance to a valley consists in the basin-like depression which the whole county forms when contrasted with the height of the mountains which encompass it. To the east lie the Cascades, north are the Calapoosias; south are the Canyon and the Rogue river mountains; while on the west lies that portion of the Coast Range known as the Umpqua mountains. These ranges are mostly co-incident with the county boundaries as established by the law, hence it can be seen that nature has set apart this region and surrounded it with rocky walls. The interior of the great basin is composed of small valleys, plains, canyons, gorges, hills and mountains. Irregular ranges proceed from the mountain chains and cross the county in various directions, causing an endless variety of hill and dale, meadow land and high elevation. The highest spurs proceed from the Cascades, and diverging, enclose between them the various eastern

contingents of the Umpqua, serves a somewhat extended description. In 1879 it was surveyed by government engineers, from whose report the following is condensed. It rises in the Cascade mountains and flows westward for 140 miles, measured along its sinuities, entering the Pacific ocean 175 miles south of the mouth of the Columbia. Its principal branches are the North and South Umpqua, which unite ninety-six miles above its mouth. It drains with its tributaries an area of 4,200 square miles of mountainous country. Scottsburg, situated on the north bank of the river, twenty-six miles from its mouth, is the head of navigation. Above this the channel presents a succession of rapids and deep pools. From Scottsburg to Gardiner, at the head of the Umpqua bay, a distance of seventeen miles, navigation at present is carried on by means of steamboats, which make regular trips between the two points, carrying the mails, passengers and freight. Six miles below Scottsburg the river is from 300 to 1,500 feet deep, except at shoals hereafter to be noticed. Along this section it flows between steep, rugged hills of terraced sandstone, from 500 to 1,000 feet high, whose slopes extend generally in an unbroken line into the water. Five miles below Scottsburg the river begins to widen. From this point to the head of the bay its width varies from 1,000 to 2,400 feet, while the summits of the hills

receding from the banks, leave several strips of level land from three to six feet above mean tide level. All of the arable land on the Umpqua, below Scottsburg, is contained in these meadows, whose combined area does not exceed 2,000 acres. They are well adapted to agriculture and grazing, the soil being rich and the vegetation easily cleared.

Umpqua bay, from its entrance to its head, is eight miles long, and from three-fourths to one-half mile wide. On portions of both sides, marshes, intersected by tidal sloughs, extend to the hills. These lands cover about 1,800 acres, which when reclaimed by diking, will be valuable. The bay is perfectly land-locked, affording a sheltered anchorage of 1,500 acres, with depths ranging from fourteen to thirty feet at low tide. It is the deepest just below Gardiner. The entrance to Umpqua bay presents the same principal feature and general outline as the sea. Rugged hills, covered with fir timber on the south, a long line of sand spit, strewn with drift, on the north, the channel running westward to the outside of the general shore line. No change of importance is perceptible in the form and position of the bay, as shown by the United States coast survey of 1852. The engineers made soundings across the bar, and found thirteen feet the least depth at low tide. Sailing vessels provided with pilots who know the bar, can enter in favorable weather. The floods of the Umpqua occur in the winter. The highest recorded is that of December, 1861, which rose to a height of forty-five feet above low water mark at Scottsburg, and covered the marshes in the bay to a depth of two feet.

The survey mentioned was requested by the citizens of Scottsburg for the purpose of ascertaining the feasibility and cost of removing the obstructions to navigation between that point and Gardiner. These consist of three bars, existing at Brandy Island, Echo Island and the mouth of Douglas's creek, and of a number of rocks in the channel just below the steamboat landing at Scottsburg. These bars have been formed recently, as within a few years the river has drawn seven and a half feet ascended to within a mile of Scottsburg. They are composed of sand, mud and gravel overlying rock, with a ruling depth of two and a half to three feet at mean low tide. The materials required in building jetties to increase the scour are found in abundance in the vicinity. The estimated cost of improving the three bars is \$11,110. With this report the matter was dropped, no subsequent action be-

ing taken. The navigability of the Umpqua was formerly discussed, and Curtis Stratton attempted to demonstrate the feasibility of running flatboats laden with agricultural produce down the river to Scottsburg and there selling the vessel for what the lumber would bring, having no hope of being able to ascend the river with any craft. This bold navigator made his experimental voyage in a small skiff, manned by two or three persons, and for the sake of impressiveness carried a flag and a tin horn whose tootings resounded through the wooded hills and rocky canyons of the Umpqua. Their report of the difficulties they encountered destroyed all hope of navigating the river, for a time at least, steam power not then having entered into the calculation. The Swan, a steamer commanded by Captain Hahn, ascended the river as far as Roseburg in 1870. The distance from Scottsburg to Roseburg was stated to be nearly 100 miles. The latter place is situated at an elevation of 224 feet above the ocean, according to the topographical engineers; but later surveys make it somewhat more. Winchester is 308 feet above the tide water, and Canyonville 516. A move was made to secure appropriations from the general government for the purpose of improving the channel, as Captain Hahn reported that the expenditure of a few hundred dollars would enable vessels like his to pass the rapids with facility, except in seasons of extreme low voyage a company known as the Merchants and Farmers' Navigation company, was incorporated with the object of "navigating the Umpqua river from Gardiner to Canyonville or as far as practicable." The directors of the corporation were J. C. Flood, president; T. P. Sheridan, J. C. Hutchinson, D. C. McClellan and S. W. Crane. Asher Marks was treasurer and James Walton secretary. The capital stock was fixed at twelve thousand dollars. Captain Hahn's services were engaged and a suitable steamer was immediately constructed. This vessel was built under the direction of Captain Hahn, and was completed in August, 1870. Her name was the Enterprise, and her cost with incidentals was about \$8,000. The directors of the company advertised their rates for freighting from Gardiner, which were as follows: To Scottsburg, three dollars per ton; to Calapoosia, ten dollars; to Roseburg, twelve; and to landings above the latter place, fourteen dollars. The rates down river were just one-half the up river tolls.

In editorial comment upon these events, the Plaindealer remarked: "There is now no doubt that the Enterprise will be able to come to Roseburg for at least four months in the year, and with a very little improvement of the river, will be able to make regular trips for eight months. The difficulties in the way of navigating are more apparent than real, the distance from Scottsburg to Roseburg being one hundred miles, and the altitude of the latter place being about three hundred feet above the mean tide. The improvement required consists principally in blasting rocks from the channels. There is sufficient water to secure navigation all the year around if confined in one bed, and the improvements, if once made, will last forever. Some few windmills may be necessary on the South Umpqua, but the expense of these will be comparatively trifling. The estimated cost of these improvements is \$75,000, which would open to commerce a more productive country than the Willamette valley. Senator Williams, the champion of Southern Oregon, introduced a bill in congress to authorize the secretary of war to make the necessary improvements, but the bill failed to pass. While we believe it to be the duty of congress to make improvement upon the navigable streams, we are happy to say that in this matter we shall not wait for their action, but will help ourselves."

About the first of February following, the Enterprise left Scottsburg on her first trip up the river, and ascended beyond Sawyer's rapids, but finding the water diminishing, she returned to Scottsburg, and made no further effort. The winter was uncommonly dry, and the Umpqua remained very low. In January of 1871, the state legislature memorialized congress for an appropriation of \$75,000 to improve the navigation of the Umpqua. Some months before this, namely, in 1870, two officers of the U. S. engineer corps, Colonel Williamson and Lieutenant Herren were detailed to make a survey of the river, in order to ascertain its naviga-

bility. They reported that it could be made navigable for about seven months in the year, with a depth of four feet above low water, from Scottsburg to Roseburg for about \$22,000; and that a steamer could then carry freight to Roseburg for \$20 per ton, and the amount saved annually on imports would pay for the improvements.

The community had not by this time recovered from the pleasant sight of seeing a steamer floating in the South Umpqua at Roseburg, and upon that event quite a "boom" had been built up. Aided by the reports of the government engineers and the action of the state legislature, an appropriation was secured, congress giving the sum of \$22,000 for the purpose of removing the obstructions to navigation. This took place in March, 1871. In the same month the Plaindealer said: "We are confident that ere two years have elapsed Roseburg will have daily steam communication with the coast for seven months in the year. Farmers, plant grain!" It is noticeable that for two or three years the newspapers argued manfully in the rainy season in favor of steamboats on the Umpqua. In summer, with diminished floods, their thoughts took another turn, and railroads were their topic, until the advent of the Oregon and California road.

The appropriation becoming available, the question of how to expend it became an important one for the whole country. Contracts were let for removing the rocks at the most dangerous rapids, and W. B. Clark undertook the work. The work was duly carried out and accepted. Mr. Clark received some \$14,000 of the sum, the remainder, it is understood, not having yet been drawn. The results as to the navigation of the stream do not appear to have equalled expectations. No vessels have been able to ascend the river, or, rather, it does not appear that any have tried. Probably the idea of navigating a stream which falls on an average three feet each mile is sufficient

to deter every experienced navigator. Since the coming of the railroad, the trade of Scottsburg with the interior has almost ceased, and the demand for river traffic has ceased with it. The steamers of the Merchants and Farmers' Navigation Company (they had purchased the Swan of Captain Hahn) were engaged on the lower river, between Scottsburg and Gardiner, and after a time the Enterprise was taken around to Coos bay for service on that body of water. Captain Hahn, the veteran navigator, the Columbus of the Umpqua, removed from the scene of his triumphs and perils, and withdrew to California. The railroad projected from Roseburg to Coos bay will finally remove all necessity for navigation of the Umpqua.

Near the eastern boundary of Douglas county lies a very interesting and remarkable region, whose peculiarities deserve a somewhat lengthened description, unique as they are in many respects. It is a region of trees, or rocks, and of waterfalls. Here nature is seen at her grandest. The precipitous sides of the lofty mountains are clothed with evergreens. In the shade of the mighty forest the streams flow from slope to slope, tracing their lonely way over rock and through chasm, leaving the mossy boulder and bearing away minute fragments to the land below. In summer this is an enchanting land. All nature as seen in the temperate zone, conspires to make interesting and sublime the country of the Cascades. It is of the higher altitudes that mountaineers and travelers speak when they describe the glories of the scenery. The region is one of wonderful beauty, grandeur and picturesque-ness, with towering heights, mirror-like expanses of water, limitless forest and rushing torrents, make up a scene that even the most prosaic of humanity can but regard with interest and awe. The mighty Cascade range culminates at the head of the Rogue and Umpqua

streams. It is there that are massed and concentrated the grandest views, the most romantic situations, the fairest of nature's works. In no other region of equal extent are found a greater number of objects attractive to the tourist, the lover of nature or the pleasure seeker. Eleven grand snow-peaks are ranged within view. Mounts Scott, Tule, Pitt, Old Baldy, the Bohemian range and Diamond Peak, crowned with everlasting snow, seem to crowd upon each other. A score of beautiful lakes, tenanted by the gamiest fish, lie about the bases of the giant peaks. Grater lake, to the southward, on the confines of Jackson county, lies surrounded by its five sentinels, objects to rivet the eye and the mind. The volcano lying within the magic circle formed by the upper waters of South Umpqua, presents its ruined and demolished walls as evidence of the mighty agencies which built up the stupendous range, and later on covered a vast region with pumice and scoria. This mountain, or rather the remains of what was once a mountain, and perhaps one of the largest and highest of all the Cascades, lies southwest of Cowhorn Peak, and but a few miles distant. It consists of a rim of rock a few hundred feet in height, rising steeply from the east and nearly perpendicular from the west, toward which the rim is concave like the arc of a circle. This arc partly incloses the space upon which sit, but whose internal forces destroyed it and blew it in fury from its resting place. Four small lakes filled with clear water and alive with trout, sparkle in the place where once such mighty energies were at work. Five hundred feet perpendicular rise the rugged rocks to the east, forming an inaccessible mass which now overlooks the placid and quiet scene. The altitude of the higher peaks varies from 8,500 to 9,250. Diamond Peak and Mt. Scott being of about the former.

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To All Our Friends a Prosperous

1926

YOU ALL
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PERFECT
SANITATION

Roseburg Dairy and Soda Works