

**THE OBSERVER**

BRUCE DENNIS  
Editor and Owner.

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**THIS CONFUSION HURTS.**

Surprising as it may seem the great metropolitan paper of Oregon did not consult the state's history and remember the legislative act which gerrymandered the county lines in Eastern Oregon when it printed an editorial attention to the decrease in rural population in Union county.

The cold figures of the census and commercial estimates do show a decrease in farming population in this county during the past ten years, but neither the government nor the commercial bodies making computations have seen fit to give the explanation which is due. That explanation tells of a large area of Union county's thickly populated section being cut off from this county and attached to Baker county. At least three thousand people were given to Baker from Union county when the "Panhandle" was set off.

In justice to this county at least

the Oregonian should have given proper mention of the Panhandle and not held up to the large multitude who read that paper Union county's loss from the farms, when the same is incorrect and not justified.

To give an idea of the editorial in question the Observer reprints what the Oregonian said:

"It is not particularly encouraging to learn from the census report that more than three-fourths of the immigrants whom Oregon has received in the last ten years have flocked to the cities of the state while less than one-fourth of them have settled on farms. The contrast between the gains of town and country come out startlingly in the analysis of the census returns which has been prepared under the authority of the Commercial club. This shows that while the farming districts of the state have increased their population only 29 per cent since 1890, the cities have grown 101 per cent. The state as a whole has received an addition of 260,233 people, but of these no more than 66,000 found homes in the rural districts. More than three times as many have gone to swell the population of the towns.

"Outside of the municipalities some of our counties, five of them to be specific, have actually less people now than they had ten years ago. Curiously enough, Marion is one of these regressing counties. No doubt the attractions of Salem are too great for the farmers to withstand, so they forsake their ancestral acres and seek its benignant shades.

"Wheeler county has lost 8 per cent of its rural population in the last ten years, Gilliam county 10 per cent and Grant 11 per cent, but the most regrettable figures are shown by Union county which has a smaller rural population now than ten years ago by fully 30 per cent, if we may depend upon the Commercial club's calculations as no doubt we can. Of course both La Grande and Union in that county must exhibit lower increases, but this does not compensate for the loss of farming population.

"The growth of towns without a corresponding development of rural life is a sort of hypertrophy. It extorts admiration only from those who do not know that it is a disease. Some small comfort perhaps may be obtained from reflecting that most of our sister states suffer from the same complaint. Indeed, Iowa's case is worse than ours. That commonwealth has actually lost population in its rural sections taken as a whole since 1890 while our decrease is only sectional.

"As a rule the country districts of Oregon are more populous than they were ten years ago, but not much more. The lamentable decrease in Wheeler, Grant and Union counties is said to be accounted for by the merger of small holdings into huge wheat farms. The owners dispose of their little tracts to the grain kings and seek jobs which pay them better in Pendleton, La Grande and so on. For this process nature and indifferent cultivation are partly to blame. Wheat can be raised more cheaply under the prevalent wasteful method on the large scale than on little farms. The owner of 10,000 acres has every imaginable economic advantage over his small competitor. Hence he must be expected to swallow him up. Still, it is homes and homebuilders that make a commonwealth great, not huge feudal holdings, no matter how productive they may be."

**WHO ? ? ?**

The La Grande Evening Observer—Who is to blame for the rotten work of laying the water pipe on Second street between Jefferson avenue and the reservoir which was done last summer, and why should the taxpayers be called upon to dig up \$12,000 or \$15,000 to tear it up and relay it again, when it has been in less than one year?

These are some of the questions being asked by every taxpayer of the city, who have noticed the work now done by the city employes on said



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**THEATRE**

"Mammy's Ghost".... Vitagraph  
A southern war story worked out with care.

"Love in Madrid"..... Pathe  
A love story of the spanish town. Settings are interesting as they reproduce scenes in a Spanish town.

"Faithful Indian"..... Essansay  
A western Indian picture full of action and good scenery.

"Tricksters Tricked"..... Pathe  
A lively comedy.

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Cowan—Pianist and tenor soloist.

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Our friends have helped to make this one of the largest and strongest banks in the West. We have helped in their making, too.

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streets. If some one will please answer the above questions, they will confer a great favor on the taxpayers of this city.

**TAXPAYER.**

**THIS DATE IN HISTORY.**

May 5.

1776—The second congress met in Philadelphia.

1789—Opening of the states-general of France at Versailles.

1811—Dr. John William Draper, who made the first photograph, born near Liverpool, England. Died in New York city, Jan. 4, 1852.

1902—First congress of the Cuban republic met in Havana.

Benjamin Franklin said:  
"Show me how your graveyard is kept and I'll show you what kind of people live in the community."

**The Blue Mountain Marble Works**

Has just received a carload of Vermont marble. Place your orders at once for monuments, head stones and markers.

**Decoration Day**

Will soon be here. You should see that the graves of your dead are properly marked.

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