

OUR FIRST HISTORICAL AND DEVELOPMENT EDITION FOR POLK COUNTY

POLK, A COUNTY OF VARIED RESOURCES WHERE DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN MARKED

The Soil, the Climate, the Timber, the Growth and Wealth of Polk County
The County as a Center of Education

Polk county is almost in the center of the Willamette Valley and is one of the best counties in the state when it comes to considering soil, climate, timber, dairying, stock raising or educational advantages. While it does not excel as a fruit center as does Hood River or Southern Oregon, yet whenever a horticulturalist takes hold of a fruit farm he gets just as good results here as he does in any section of the West. The soil is here, the climate is admirable and the results are what we could and do expect, but here the general farmer sees more profit in dairying, in hogs, in thoroughbred sheep and goats, and in hop raising.

When we consider that in the period from 1900 to 1910, the population of the United States showed an increase of but 21 per cent, while among the entire number of states Oregon ranks fourth in the increase of population with a percentage of 63 per cent, it is not a far guess to see in this state almost the greatest progressiveness of the United States. In this article we are going to consider Polk county from the standpoint of development—past and prospective—and we see no reason why one looking for a land in which to locate should look further.

At the outset, we wish to state that we will give you reliable statistics—facts that you can prove by looking up county, state and government records. This is not a real estate edition, nor a boom edition, it is not backed by commercial clubs or boost organizations. It is an edition published by the editor from statistics that he can substantiate.

The Willamette Valley, of which Polk county is a part, has an area of 60 miles in width and 150 miles in length. Polk county extends a length of 24 miles north to south, bordered on its east boundary by the Willamette river the whole distance, thus giving it in its first organization an outlet for its products, and transportation for its people by boat. From east to west the county is 33 miles, giving the county an area of 750 square miles, or an exact acreage according to the assessment roll of 476,860 acres. Of this acreage but 15,240 acres are unappropriated and unreserved. All is surveyed. Of the assessed appropriated land 281,704 acres are cultivated and 165,693 acres are uncultivated.

In 1900 the cultivated and improved area consisted of 256,847 acres valued at \$4,977,240 or 24,857 acres less than in 1913, but the assessed valuation has grown during that time to \$9,746,990 or almost an increase of 100 per cent in valuation. The population in the period of ten years, from 1900 to 1910, grew from 9,923 to 13,469, or a little more than 33 1-3 per cent, and today we believe we are safe in estimating the population of the county at more than 15,000 people.

Many people in looking up a place to locate wish to know the nationality of the people with whom they are to mingle. In Polk county the commissioner of labor states that 80 per cent of Polk county's population are native born. Of the remaining 10 per cent one-fourth are from Canada, the remaining 7 1-2 per cent are Germans, English, Russians, Scandinavians, Swiss, Scotch and Irish.

Turning to the soil, Polk coun-

ty is divided into river bottom land of deep gray sandy loam, gray loam upland, red and gray hill land, prairie and mountain



The State Normal School, Monmouth, Oregon

timber land. The soil around Monmouth is gray loam, of a high percentage of phosphoric acid and humus, but is low in potash and lime. This is an excellent soil and should be well drained. The red hills of the Eola section rich in iron, which gives them their color, they carry an abundance of lime. These hills have wonderful wearing qualities under continuous cropping. The soil in the vicinity of Dallas is admirably situated for prune raising, while along the streams hops do well, and in the valley section lying west and north there are some fine crops of grain, clover, and other hay raised. The river bottom land produces the largest and best crops and when all cleared and in cultivation brings the highest price for acreage. One reason for the richness of this river bottom land is that it overflows annually and a good crop is always assured. This is the hop section of the country, although small yards are profitably producing crops annually on the small streams in Polk county that feed the Willamette.

Polk county has about the same rainfall that the rest of the valley has and at Portland the precipitation is placed at an average of 45.5 inches annually. Louisville, Ky., has 44.3 inches annually; Nashville, Tenn., has 48.5 inches; New Orleans, 57 inches; New York, 44 inches; Vicksburg, Miss., 63.7 inches, showing that this section has no greater rainfall than the section of territory bordering on the Atlantic ocean and the Gulf of Mexico.

One great wealth of Polk county is her timber area, comprising as it does about 300 sections in all or about 192,000 acres, we find her credited with 6,594,853,000 feet of timber. This wealth alone sold to the mills and factories at \$1.00 per 1,000 feet would bring a total of \$6,594,853 to the owners of the timber. State statistics tell us that the plants in Polk county handling the lumber business for this section are valued at \$364,000, and their daily capacity is 3,000 handles, 81,000 feet of planing machine work, 480,000 feet of sawed lumber and 20,000 shingles, and if run at their fullest capacity it would require 37 years to cut the timber of this county alone, but the mills of

this county are all running much below their fullest capacity. In Polk county there are at the present time 3 planing mills, 1

shingle mill, 4 saw mills, 4 saw and planing mills. The average daily wages of the 244 men in the woods is \$2.85; of the 140 skilled men, \$3.28; of the 384 unskilled men, \$2.00, making a monthly pay roll of \$119,605 for the skilled labor, and \$362,000 for the unskilled labor in the lumber industry of the county. The lumber output of the county will be greatly increased when timber of the Siletz is opened by the Valley & Siletz railroad and the timber of that section of Polk and Lincoln counties is brought to the market at the mills planned for erection this year by the Falls City Lumber Company at Independence.

Next, turning to the income that comes from the industries and resources of the county, a low estimate gives us annually \$1,000,000 from our timber, our hops will produce annually an average of \$1,500,000, our dairy and creamery products alone will bring in close to \$700,000 annually, and we think it safe to estimate the wheat, oats, clover, wool and mohair crop at close to a \$1,000,000 annually, and this gives to this county an annual income of about \$4,200,000 or an average of \$265 the person—man, woman and child in the county; and this does not include and consider the amount of product consumed at home, the amount of money that goes out in exchange for profits, or the business interests of the country that should increase the net returns to every man, woman and child two or three times the figures given above.

The assessment roll of Polk county shows the value of improvements on deeded and patented land at \$612,210 lots at \$630,580, improvements on lots at \$776,990, improvements on land not deeded or patented at \$35,850, 21 miles of electric light line at \$10,500, manufacturing machinery \$190,380, merchandise \$254,020, farming implements \$87,970, money and notes \$56,850, 1359 shares of stock valued at \$90,790, household goods worth \$153,530, 5080 head of horses and mules worth \$301,660, 6705 cattle valued at \$121,560, 11,912 sheep assessed at \$29,200, 14,334 goats placed at \$16,060, 3421 swine valued at \$16,700 and 691 dogs worth \$7,280, this with the deeded land brings Polk county's wealth to \$13,149,000, exclusive

of her telephone, telegraph and railroad lines. If we add these values we find the total footing \$15,240,845, and placing the population at 15,000, we have an average wealth in Polk county for every man, woman and child in the county of \$1,000. Allowing five persons to the family, we have the average Polk county family worth \$5000 at the assessed valuation as placed by the county assessor.

The favorable conditions of soil, climate, moisture and elevation render Polk county wonderfully productive of almost all

grain and stock farm. These are being divided under the pressure for more diversified farming. Polk county, while producing well in wheat, oats and barley, can do better as a money making and soil enriching crop from clover, vetch, kale, rape, etc. In horticultural lines she can successfully grow prunes, plums, cherries, pears and apples, while in the small fruits no better strawberries, loganberries, or blackberries can be produced. Potatoes, cabbage, onions, asparagus, beans, peas, beets and general garden stuffs grow abundantly. In hops Polk county produces more than any county in Oregon, and Oregon grows more hops than any state in the Union. Historically it might not be amiss to mention here that probably the first hops in Oregon were planted in 1872 by George Wells at Buena Vista, and Sam Beckett and J. W. Hodson in 1873 or 1874 planted 10 acres at Eola and Hodson in 10 years on this 10 acres cleared \$10,000. Ed P. Dove started in the hop business with 2 1/2 acres and later this year reached the extent of 40 acres and was then the largest yard in Oregon. This 40 acres is now a part of the E. Clemens Horst 600 acre hop ranch. Now there are three and possibly four hop yards in a radius of five miles of Independence having an acreage of 300 acres each and better. Polk county also excels in blooded cattle, horses, sheep, goats and hogs, the early climate, winter pasture, and pure water being important elements. These conditions contribute largely to the successful and extensive industry



Court House, Dallas, Oregon

large homesteads—the inability of dairying and it was with this to reach a ready market—and the point in view that K. C. Eldredge



The Largest Creamery in Oregon, at Independence, Oregon

habit of taking that which was easiest to do caused the extensive

recognized as the largest and best creamery in Oregon. This creamery, situated in the very center of the wealth of Polk county, in a state exhibit, took the blue ribbon at the state fair last year in competition with 70 of the creameries of the state.

Polk county has excellent railroad connections, a complete story of which is told in another column of this issue. The same is true of the stock and dairy industry and many other county features, but in closing we wish to call your attention to the educational features in Polk county. This county is the first county to establish the home credit system and has made it a success. Prof. Muerman came to Polk county to study the school system of this county as a part of his government work and reported he chose Polk out of all counties in Oregon on account of her advanced position as a school center. Then she



Falls City Falls on the Lucklamute

has added in her high schools the manual training, domestic science and physical features that are helping to build up a perfect system. Polk county is also the home of the State Normal School a technical school for teachers.

POLK COUNTY FACTS

In 1904 the assessed valuation of Polk county was \$4,146,110, in 1905 it had grown \$4,388,970, in 1907 it totaled 8,738,670, in 1907, 10,079,430, in 1908 it was 10,506,460, in 1909 the figures have reached 13,838,629 and in 1910 they are 14,519,130 and in 1911 it is 15,131,720 and in 1912 and 1913 the amounts have made good, substantial increases showing that land values are growing every year.

In order to give an idea of the climate we wish to say that for a period of ten years the average rainfall annually was 45.32 inches, amount of snow 4.8 inches, mean temperature 54 degrees, number of rainy days 139, number of cloudy days 170, number of part cloudy days 66, number of clear days 130.

OUR OLDEST PIONEER

The subject of this sketch is Oregon's oldest pioneer. He was born in Connecticut Nov. 5, 1835, and was brought to Oregon by his father, coming from New York by water, via the Sandwich Islands, staying there three months, waiting for a vessel to come to Oregon. He arrived in

Bottom. He is now a resident of Polk, and he's healthy, energetic active. He has one child, 3 grand children and one great grand child.



BENJAMIN BEERS

TRADES FARM FOR HICKORY SHIRT

And Sells Town Site of Portland for Three Hundred Dollars

No emigrant now living in Polk county has the story of an eventful life that Jas. E. Elkins has. In 1845, with the Tetherow company he came to Oregon, being in the noted Weeks cut off company—the blue bucket mine company of Oregon.

When he arrived he domiciled



JAS. EDWARDS ELKINS

himself at the place where Portland now stands. He bought the whole townsite of Portland of a man by the name of Cornelius for \$300 and sold it to a man named Pittigrew who started the first store started at Portland.

In May 1846 Elkins came to Polk county and has been here ever since. He took up a claim where part of Monmouth now stands, and sold it in 1854 to a man by the name of Hodge—getting a hickory shirt for the farm. The farm was later owned by N. L. Butler.

In 1848 he took another claim near Monmouth, improving it and later selling it to a minister by the name of Parrott. He got \$300 in gold for this farm, this being the first gold he had seen since leaving the eastern states. With this money he purchased a good outfit and went to the mines in California where he took up a mining claim and worked two months, making good money. The exposure brought on chills and fever and he returned to Oregon.

He next took up the Elkins donation land claim on the Lucklamute, south of Monmouth, where he farmed for forty years. He later rented it out and then sold it six years ago, moving to Independence. In May 1851 he married a Miss Zumwalt. His first wages he earned of Mr. Thorp, working 100 days at \$3.00 per day installing and running the mill. He was a mill wright. He also worked in leather and bought leather of the Eola tannery to make harness and shoes. They made a fair quality of leather at Eola in those days but my best leather I ordered in Portland.