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## SPECIMEN NUMBER.

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## THE UNITED STATES LAND LAWS.

COMPILED FOR THE WEST SHORE.

No country in the world can for a moment compare with our government in its liberal provisions for acquiring public lands.

To the foreigner it seems beyond belief that the United States should give away one hundred and sixty acres. Yet such is the almost literal fact. By a few years of intelligent industry, laborers from other countries can under our beneficent land laws acquire comparative wealth, social privileges and political honors.

The public lands of the great Northwest offer to all in the middle or eastern states—of native and foreign—rich rewards, while the unfortunate in business and those burdened with debt can start anew, for the homestead laws expressly provide that "no lands acquired under the provisions of this chapter (homestead) shall in any event become liable to the satisfaction of any debts contracted prior to the issuing of the patent therefor."

## THE HOMESTEAD LAW.

The maximum entry under this law is 160 acres. The land office fees and commissions are nominal.

The applicant is required to establish his or her actual residence in a house upon the land within six months from date of entry, and must reside upon the land continuously. If the applicant is a single person, the actual residence upon the land must be the same, and this must be continuous during the period of time required by law, viz.: Five years.

The applicant must appear in person at the local land office, present his application, and take the required oath.

In case, however, an applicant whose family or some member thereof is resid-

ing upon the land which he desires to enter, and upon which a *bona fide* improvement and settlement have been made, is prevented, by reason of distance, bodily infirmity, or other good cause, from personal attendance at the district land office, it may be lawful for him to make the affidavit required by law before the clerk of the court for the county in which the land is situated, and to transmit the same, with the fee and commissions, to the register and receiver. In such cases the affidavit must state that the party, or some member of his family, is residing upon the land, and that a *bona fide* settlement and improvement has been made thereon; it must also state the cause of the inability of the applicant to appear at the local land office. In such cases the applicant should understand that the clerk of the court is, in no sense, an officer of the Land Department. The applicant attains no rights whatever until the application is presented at the local land office, accompanied by the affidavit and the fees and commissions.

The final affidavit and proof, however, may be made before the judge, or, in his absence, before the clerk of any court of record of the county and State, or district and Territory, in which the land is situated. This proof must be transmitted, by the judge or the clerk of his court, to the register and receiver, together with the same fees that said officers would have been entitled to had the testimony been reduced to writing by them.

A homestead settler may, after an actual residence of six months and cultivation and improvement of the land, make proof and payment for the same, and this action will not affect his rights as a pre-emptor, except that he cannot move from said tract and settle upon other public land in the same State or Territory and claim the same under the pre-emption law.

An honorably discharged Union soldier, or sailor, who served 90 days or more in the rebellion, is entitled to deduct from the five years residence the time he was in service, not to exceed four years. In case of the death of the soldier or sailor, his widow, if unmarried, will

be entitled to all the privileges of the soldier. Each soldier or soldier's widow must reside upon the land at least one year before he or she can make final proof and obtain a patent.

In case of the death or marriage of the widow, the minor children of the soldier, by a guardian duly appointed and officially accredited at the Department of the Interior, may be entitled to all the privileges to which the father would have been entitled. In such cases, however, neither the guardian nor the minor children are required to reside upon the land entered, but the same must be cultivated and improved for the period of time during which the father would have been required to reside upon the tract. Soldiers may, upon the payment of a land-office fee of \$3 00, file a soldier's declaratory statement upon a tract of land, and thereby obtain a preference right to enter said tract at any time for a period of six months, but before the expiration of six months the entry must be made in due form, or said preference right to enter will be lost. The homestead declaratory statement may be filed by an attorney in fact. After entry the settler must reside upon, improve and cultivate his land, and in all respects show his good faith.

In the Pacific and other political divisions, viz., on lands in California, Nevada, Oregon, Colorado, New Mexico, and Washington, and in Arizona, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming and Montana, the commissions and fees are to be paid according to the following table:

Acres.	Class of Land.	Commissions.		Fee.	Total sum paid.
		Payable when entry is made.	Payable when certificate issues.		
160	\$2 50	\$12 00	\$12 00	\$10 00	\$34 00
80	2 50	6 00	6 00	5 00	17 00
40	2 50	3 00	3 00	5 00	11 00
160	1 25	6 00	6 00	10 00	22 00
80	1 25	3 00	3 00	5 00	11 00
40	1 25	1 50	1 50	5 00	8 00

## ADJOINING FARM HOMESTEADS.

An applicant owning and residing on an original farm, may enter other land lying contiguous thereto, which shall not, with such farm, exceed in the aggregate 160 acres. Thus, for example, a party owning or occupying 80