

PIERCE COUNTY, W. T.

THIS region is better known by the names of its two principal localities—Tacoma and Puyallup Valley—than it is by the distinctive county name of "Pierce," bestowed upon it in honor of Franklin Pierce, just after his election to the Presidency. The county was created December 22, 1852, by the Legislature of Oregon before Washington Territory was established. It lies along the southeastern extremity of Puget Sound, and includes in its area of 1,800 square miles a number of fertile and wooded islands in that great "Mediterranean of the Pacific." Across it flow the Nesqually, Puyallup and White rivers, all of which have their source in the mountains surrounding Mount Tacoma or in the icy glaciers of that giant peak. Numerous creeks, lakes and springs also aid in supplying an abundance of pure water to every portion of the county. It contains a greater proportion of valley and plains land than any county bordering on the Sound. Along the Nesqually, Puyallup and White rivers are large tracts of fertile valley land that have been placed under a high state of cultivation.

Among the farm products noted in the Assessor's last report were: One hundred thousand bushels of potatoes, 15,000 bushels of apples, pears, plums and other fruit, 3,200 tons of hay, valued at \$45,000; 750 tons of hops, \$329,350; 28 tons of butter, \$16,640; beef, mutton, veal, etc., \$30,000. Other statistics given were: Fifteen thousand sheep, 1,000 neat cattle, 900 horses, 17,000 apple trees, 7,000 pear, plum and prune trees, 750 peach trees and grape vines, an estimated population of 10,000 (since much increased), 30 school districts, \$36,787 worth of school property, 2,365 school children, and a total assessed valuation of property of \$4,385,062.

The most important agricultural section is Puyallup Valley, lying along the river of that name, southeast of Tacoma. The extreme lower portion of the valley is within the limits of the Puyallup Indian Reservation, which extends around the east side of Commencement Bay into King County. Above the reservation the valley is well settled and cultivated. This portion has an area of forty-five miles, and contains about 16,000 acres of land adapted to hop culture, the greatest industry of that region. The soil is a rich, black, vegetable mould of great depth, the accumulations of years of washings of the soil and luxuriant vegetation of the Cascade Mountains. All kinds of cereals and vegetables are produced in abundance, but hops are the leading product. To these the soil and climate are especially adapted. The long roots penetrate to a great depth into the rich soil and draw upwards an abundance of moisture even in the driest seasons. The crop has never failed nor the price fallen below the cost of production. Neither lice nor any form of disease has ever attacked the vines, an exemption ascribed to climatic conditions, and therefore likely to continue. About one hundred men are engaged in the industry, having a total area of 1,300 acres of vines. The picking is done chiefly by Indians, who are very expert, and gather there in great crowds during the picking season. This industry began in 1865, when L. F. Thompson

planted two acres of roots, purchased in Sacramento for \$100. The acreage and number of growers have increased year by year, until now the Puyallup Valley contains a greater number of prosperous, and even wealthy, farmers than any region of equal area on the Pacific Coast. The future of this industry there it is difficult to predict, though it admits of wonderful possibilities. With but 1,300 acres now in vines, and nearly 15,000 more of soil adapted to hop culture, vines exempt from scourge, hops admitted to have no superior in size and quality, an average yield per acre nearly double that of the great hop fields in the East, and the cost of production at a minimum, it would seem as though this was destined to be the great hop region of the world in a few years.

Through the valley runs the Cascades Division of the Northern Pacific Railroad, extending from Tacoma to the coal fields further up the stream; also the line which branches off from it and runs to Seattle. There are four towns in the valley—Puyallup, Alderton, Sumner and Orting. Puyallup has a population of about 250, and contains three general merchandise stores, drug store, jewelry store, two saloons, two hotels, steam stove factory, market, millinery establishment, blacksmith shop, wagon shop, etc. It has a public school and Baptist and Methodist churches. The shipments of hops, staves, hay, grain and produce are very large. Sumner has a population of 150, and contains Presbyterian and Christian churches, a public school, two saw mills, a general store, drug store, hotel, shops, etc. Its shipments are considerable. Alderton has a population of 100, a steam saw mill, hotel and school. Orting contains a general store and railroad station. Elhi is another post office in the valley. A portion of White River Valley lies in Pierce, and the hop industry is just being developed there. Marion is the post office of that region.

Wilkeson is the present terminus of the Cascades Division of the Northern Pacific. It has a population of 150, chiefly miners, and is a shipping point for coal. Carbonado is three miles distant, and is connected with it by a branch line. Here are about 500 miners, employed in the coal mines. All the coal shipped at Tacoma comes from this region. One general merchandise store at Wilkeson and two at Carbonado supply the needs of the people.

On the line of the Northern Pacific, south of Tacoma, are the towns of Lake View and Hillhurst. The former has a general store, shingle and hoop factory, saw mill and flouring mill. Considerable grain, flour, lumber, shingles and hoops are shipped from that point. The population is about sixty souls. Hillhurst has about 100 people, and ships much hops, grain and other produce. It has three stores, saloon, shops, etc.

Steilacoom City is a town of about 300 people, situated on the shore of Puget Sound, twelve miles southwest of Tacoma. This was for years an important military post, the headquarters of all forces stationed on the Sound. Opposite the city is McNeil Island, where the United States Penitentiary is located. One mile from the city, at the site of the old fort, is the Territorial In-