

PIONEERS OF OREGON.

Tuesday, June 15, the Oregon Pioneer Association held its fourteenth annual reunion at Oregon City. There were present visitors from widely different localities, who had come to renew old friendships and greet again those who had endured with them the privations, and braved the dangers, of pioneer days.

At eleven o'clock the members formed in procession, arranged in the order of the year of their arrival, and marched through the city to the park just above, where the ceremonies and festivities were to be held. About two thousand people assembled at the park and listened to a programme of entertainment, which consisted of music, prayer by Rev. J. W. Sellwood, address of welcome by the president, J. T. Apperson, the annual address by Col. John Kelsay, occasional address by Hon. M. C. George, and an address to the Indian War Veterans by Col. L. F. Mosher. Officers for the following year were chosen, as follows: M. Wilkins, president; J. W. Grimes, vice president; George H. Himes, secretary; J. M. Bacon, F. X. Mathieu, Joseph Watt and Clark Hay, directors. When the exercises were concluded, the pioneers adjourned to the spot where an immense barbecue was in progress and partook of the broiled meats and the contents of their baskets. Mirth and social enjoyment were the order of the day. In the evening the pioneers gathered about the camp fire, while the younger generations enjoyed themselves at the pavilion. The reunion was a thoroughly pleasant one in every respect. A series of sketches depicting incidents of the reunion are given on pages two hundred and twenty-three and two hundred and twenty-four.

A brief resume of the history of the pioneers will show by what undeniable right they thus annually gather to celebrate their advent into this country and commemorate the deeds and events which wrested Oregon from foreign domination and added her to the ever-increasing circle of the Union. Such results are worthy of commemoration, and the hardy men and women who achieved them are deserving of honor from those multitudes who now enjoy the blessings won for them through privations, toil and dangers, by the perseverance, patriotism and moral and physical courage displayed by these pioneers in a thousand different ways.

In 1840, all that portion of the United States lying west of the Rocky mountains and north of the line of California, Nevada and Utah, embracing Oregon, Washington, Idaho and a portion of Montana, was known as "Oregon." Title to this vast region was in dispute between the United States and Great Britain, and, under a temporary compromise, it had been open to joint occupation by the subjects of both nations for twenty-two years. Joint occupation was, however, more nominal than real, since the entire region was dominated by a great English corporation, the noted Hudson's Bay Company, which maintained a great central headquarters at Fort Vancouver, on the north bank of the Columbia, and had numerous other posts established in various sections

covering the entire country. So firm a grasp did this great organization hold upon Oregon, and so great was its influence with the natives, that all efforts at joint occupation by Americans for the purpose of trade had met with disastrous failure. Several efforts to induce emigration of settlers had resulted in nothing, except to lay a foundation for future settlement.

The opening wedge for American settlement of Oregon was the Protestant missionaries. In 1834 the Methodist Board of Missions dispatched Rev. Jason Lee, Rev. Daniel Lee, Cyrus Shepard and P. L. Edwards overland to Oregon, and these zealous men, traveling first with one brigade of trappers and then with another, finally reached the Willamette valley, and founded a mission ten miles below the present site of Salem. In 1836 Dr. Marcus Whitman and wife, Rev. H. H. Spalding and wife, and W. H. Gray, representatives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, reached Oregon in a similar manner, and established a mission at Waiilatpu, a few miles from the site upon which Walla Walla was subsequently built. These missionaries received accessions to their numbers from year to year, and annually a few American trappers established themselves in the Willamette valley, as did, also, many former half breed and Canadian employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Catholics, too, established missions in 1839. This gave, in 1840, a population summarized as follows: American settlers, thirty-six; American women, thirty-three; children, thirty-two; Methodist ministers, thirteen; Congregational ministers, six; Protestant missionaries, not ministers, thirteen; Catholic priests three; American physicians, three; English physician, one; Canadian-French, sixty. This gave a population of one hundred and thirty-six Americans and sixty-four subjects of Great Britain, exclusive of the officers and employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, who outnumbered them largely.

The first regular immigration from the East arrived in 1841, beginning that steady stream of young and vigorous life which has annually flowed into Oregon for nearly half a century; and the end will not be seen for many years to come. There were deep and lasting causes for this resistless stream to force its way across the trackless plains, through rugged mountain ranges and across barren alkali deserts and flow on unceasingly in its deeply-cut channel to Oregon. Trappers who had visited the Pacific coast sang the praises of the lovely and fertile valley of the Willamette, where winter was unknown and the grass remained green the year round, where destructive storms were unheard of, where the summer days were not excessively warm and the summer nights were deliciously cool, and where there was no rain in harvest time to destroy the labors of a year. The western frontiersman caught up the refrain as it passed from cabin to cabin, and in a few years the tale was an old one with the hardy settlers of the Mississippi valley. The publication of Irving's "Bonneville" and "Astoria," of John Dunn's work on Oregon, of Dr. Parker's travels, and a letter written by Robert Shortess,