

the military post which had been established near by, and the banks of Mill creek, now worth thousands of dollars for business purposes, were but a camping ground for teamsters. At that time the entire region lying between the Columbia and Snake rivers, and the base of the Blue mountains, was considered of little agricultural value. Arable land was supposed to be confined to the comparatively narrow strips of alluvial soil along the margins of the streams, known as bottom lands. There were a few persons who had embarked in agriculture, on a limited scale, and several others who had driven bands of cattle into this region, to graze upon the nutritious bunch grass which covered the hills, over which large bands of Indian ponies—the "Cayuses" of none too enviable reputation—had ranged for years.

In 1860, an event occurred which changed the entire aspect of affairs, and infused a life and vigor into this region which has converted a supposed desert into a land of bountiful harvests, and reared up cities and towns teeming with life and energy, and possessing the enjoyments, conveniences, wealth and business facilities incident to our modern civilization. That event was the discovery of gold at Oro Fino, Idaho, followed rapidly the next two years by similar discoveries in Idaho, Eastern Oregon and Montana. Early in the spring of 1861, the tide of gold hunters from Oregon and California began to pour up the Columbia, passing through Walla Walla, where they purchased provisions, tools, camp equipage and pack animals. There was a sudden demand for farm products, which the few farmers were totally unable to supply. The entire wheat crop of that year, amounting to sixteen thousand bushels, was sold at \$2.50 per bushel. When winter set in, many came out of the mountains and spent the season in Walla Walla. Many

stores had been opened, and in a very few months quite a city had sprung up on the banks of Mill creek.

The following year the rush to the mines was still greater, and the merchants reaped a rich harvest. The prospective market for farm products and cattle induced a great many to locate farms, and soon the most desirable bottom lands along the various streams were taken up. Many thousand head of cattle were driven into the country and ranged upon the bunch grass hills. During the year eighty buildings were erected, being an increase of one hundred per cent. A second flouring mill, a planing mill and a sash and door factory were among the additions to the place. The city was incorporated that year, and four hundred and forty-two votes were cast at the first charter election. Throbbing with life, business and energy as it was, Walla Walla was then by no means the beautiful city of to-day. Instead of the fine blocks of brick which now give such an appearance of solidity to Main street, business was transacted in small frame structures and log houses. In place of the fine yards and ample shade trees which now adorn the city, was to be seen a dry, cheerless plain, with but a slight fringe of trees growing along the streams. In the years that have since passed away, those crude structures have one by one, and sometimes a score or more at once, succumbed to the devouring flames, or been demolished or moved away, while in their places have sprung up substantial blocks of brick. The transformation has been gradual, but permanent, and a glance at the engraving of Main street, given on another page, will reveal the valuable and stable character of the structures in which the immense business of the place is transacted.

For several years the city grew at this rapid rate, and then came a halt. Other