

routes for the transportation of passengers and merchandise to the mines of Montana and Idaho were opened, and Walla Walla lost its commanding position as the great distributing point. Meanwhile it had been discovered that the vast expanse of bunch grass hills, rolling between the Blue mountains on the one hand, and the Snake and Columbia rivers on the other, were fit for something else besides being merely a range for cattle, sheep and horses. Experiments proved that they would yield an equal, if not a greater, harvest of wheat than did the alluvial bottoms. As soon as this became an admitted fact—and it took several years to settle the matter beyond dispute—hundreds began taking up claims on the hills, and it was not long before Walla Walla was encircled by wheat fields miles in extent, and yearly widening their limits. Other towns sprang up as the area of cultivated land increased, all of them adding to the general business of the pioneer city, and helping to give it a metropolitan character.

The agricultural resources of the region tributary to the city had been so far developed by 1867, that more flour and wheat were produced than could find a market at home or in the mines. The exportation of the surplus to Portland was then begun, and that year four thousand seven hundred and thirty-five barrels of flour and fifteen thousand bushels of wheat were sent down the Columbia, at a freight tariff of \$6.00 per ton from Wallula, to which must be added the expense of hauling by team from Walla Walla to that point, a distance of thirty miles. Even under such adverse conditions, the settlement of the country advanced rapidly, the growth of the city steadily keeping pace with the general development. Year by year the volume of general business, and the quantity and value of exports increased.

After much agitation of the question of transportation, a narrow gauge railroad was finally completed from the city to Wallula, in 1875, chiefly through the persevering energy of Dr. D. S. Baker. Transportation rates continued to be almost prohibitive, yet the shipments of grain and flour increased at such a rate that in 1877 twenty-seven thousand tons were sent out by the little railroad, at an average rate of \$4.50 for the thirty miles between the two places, and as much more down the river to Portland. In 1882 the line of the Oregon Railway & Navigation Co. was completed from Portland to Walla Walla, absorbing the narrow gauge line, and branches built in various directions, offering, for the first time, transportation facilities nearly adequate to handle the rapidly increasing crops of that region. Under this influence, production has been wonderfully stimulated. The bunch grass hills of the Inland Empire, which, twenty years ago, knew not the plow nor sickle, now produce for shipment, a surplus of wheat aggregating five hundred thousand tons, or more than sixteen million bushels. A score of modern roller mills, located in various thriving towns, are manufacturing from three to four thousand barrels of flour per day, and besides supplying a vast region, are shipping thousands of barrels yearly to Portland, and thence to many ports of Europe, Asia and South America. To be sure, these mills are not all located in Walla Walla, nor is all the enormous grain crop shipped from that city; but, more than any other, it receives benefit from this stupendous traffic, and in a large degree, receives tribute from the surrounding farms and towns, covering a wide area. The transportation question has always been, and still remains, a vital one. The uniform rate on wheat and flour from that region to Portland, is \$6.00 per ton. Now that the Cascade