

KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON TERRITORY.

THE county of King, now in Washington Territory, but then in the immense territory of Oregon—which included all of what is now Oregon, Washington and Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming, an area of four hundred thousand square miles—was created by act of the legislature, December 22, 1852. In September, 1851, Henry VanAsselt, L. M. Collins and Jacob and Samuel Mapel had located claims in the Duwamish valley, and at the same time, John N. Low, Lee Terry and David T. Denny temporarily fixed themselves on Alki point. Early in November, these men were followed by A. A. Denny, C. D. Boren and W. N. Bell, with their families. In the spring of 1852, the Alki point settlement moved over to the eastern shore of Elliott bay, of which Alki was the western outward limit. They there laid the foundation for what is now the important, live and promising city of Seattle. Dr. D. S. Maynard and Chas. C. Terry came about the same time, and from that time on, for three years, the town and the Duwamish and White river farming settlements, just beyond, were in receipt of frequent accessions to their population, numbering, in the aggregate, not far from three hundred souls, at the outbreak of the Indian war, in 1855. It was the courageous, enterprising, determined pioneers named, and a few others who had joined them, who demanded the organization of a new and more convenient county government, and whose demand was heeded, as stated, by the Oregon legislature, in December, 1852. The new county was cut off on the south as at present defined, but on the north was continued down the east side of Puget sound to the British Columbia line. Later, by acts of the Washington legislature, three new counties were created, and King became what it now is.

As at present constituted, King county includes the very considerable area of two thousand and forty square miles, an extent of country about equal to that embraced within the state limits of Delaware, and more than one-half greater than that included in the state of Rhode Island. It lies wholly on the western slope of the Cascade mountains. The drainage of this region is great, and with the exception of one river—the Snoqualmie—it all tends one way. The natural trend of the country is toward Elliott bay, or Seattle harbor, the White, Green, Stuck, Cedar, Samamish, Black and Duwamish rivers, and Samamish and Washington lakes, with a score of lesser streams, all pouring their waters into that capacious and beautiful bay. The Snoqualmie, through the medium of the Snobomish, flows into the sound near the northern line of King county. The county lines are also made to include Vashon island, in mid sound. The

surface of the country is necessarily varied. There are lofty and rugged mountain sides, and low and level valleys, with rolling country between. The mountainous area occupies one-fourth the whole, and the valleys as much more. No part is worthless. The earlier general opinion of Puget sound was that it was not of much good. People came, took a trip by boat and went away, saying there was nothing but a fine body of water and a lot of big timber, and that when the latter was removed, the few inhabitants would have to go; that there was no soil fit to farm, the Cascade mountains were impassable to railroads, the fisheries were limited, and that it was impossible for the country ever to amount to anything. The settlers, however, felt that these representations were false, and they went on as best they could, getting their relatives and friends to join them, and inducing as many strangers as possible to do likewise. Their faith has been more than justified by the results. The first timber, near the shore of the sound, was taken long ago, only to find that a vast deal remained further back; also, that in this country the timber quickly renews itself, making it possible to relog land every twenty or thirty years. Not only was this discovered, but it was found that the valley lands were of unsurpassed fertility, the depth of soil, where wells have been sunk, being found to exceed one hundred feet. These lands produce enormous crops, in well-attested cases being known to have yielded one hundred bushels of oats per acre, five tons of timothy hay, four thousand pounds of hops, six hundred bushels of potatoes, thirty tons of cabbage, and forty tons of sugar beets. These products are so much in excess of anything of the kind in the states east of the Rocky mountains, that this report will, doubtless, be received with incredulity. It is true, though, and can be established by numerous affidavits, if necessary.

Not only have farming lands been found, but minerals also. The country abounds in coal, iron, lime, different kinds of stone, gypsum, gold, silver, etc. The precious metals have been discovered in many places, but not yet in quantities warranting their extensive search. But little has been done with the iron discoveries. They have been located by enterprising men, and formally entered at the government land office. They are near the summit of the Cascade mountains, away from navigable streams and railroads, and for this reason their development has so far been impossible. This bar, however, is now in process of removal, as a line of standard gauge railroad is building from Seattle through that section, to be completed during the current year. Companies have also been formed to work the mines, and local expectations will be sadly disappointed if a thousand