

# THE WEST SHORE.

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## THE GRAY'S HARBOR COUNTRY.



**H**ARBORS on the Pacific coast are not so numerous as on the Atlantic seaboard, and a good harbor on this side of the continent is of correspondingly great importance. On the thirteen hundred miles of American Pacific coast line, from San Diego to Puget sound there are but four natural harbors accessible at all times to deep draught vessels—those at either end

of the line, and San Francisco bay and the Columbia river intervening. There are a number of roadsteads and small bays accessible during portions of the year or for light draught boats, such as Humboldt, Coos, and Yaquina bays and Port Orford, none of which, however, are entitled to be classed as entirely reliable harbors for sea craft. Perhaps ranking next in importance to the four principal harbors just mentioned is Gray's harbor, which is a perfectly land-locked natural refuge, accessible to boats of medium draught, and capable of being rendered suitable for the deepest ocean craft.

Gray's harbor is the name of an inlet from the Pacific ocean indenting the shore of Washington Territory about one-third the way up the coast from the Columbia river to the Straits of Juan de Fuca. It occupies a triangular area approximating one hundred square miles, extending inland about fifteen miles and being about twelve miles across at the bar, which is separated from the ocean by two points of land—Peterson's point, projecting from the southward, and Daman's point, from the northward. The entrance is between one and two miles broad and is obstructed by the usual bar, having a channel seven hundred feet wide, carrying at low tide a depth of twenty feet of water, with a well defined line of breakers on each side. There are no shifting bars about

the entrance to Gray's harbor, and the water, instead of becoming more shallow, is deeper now than when the bar was surveyed in 1882. The estimated anchorage area inside the harbor is four thousand five hundred acres, carrying at least thirty feet of water at low tide. The usual tides in the harbor are eight to ten feet, and spring tides about fourteen feet, so the largest vessels, by crossing the bar at high tide, may enter and depart in safety. Within the harbor are some shoal places, but they are by no means dangerous, and the bars could easily be removed by dredging. No money has ever been spent on this harbor to improve its navigability. The comparatively large commerce of Gray's harbor has been built up entirely without the aid of government improvements and upon the merits which the country naturally possesses.

Emptying into the apex of the triangularly shaped bay is Chehalis river, one of the most important streams in Washington territory. It drains an area of fully two thousand square miles and is navigable for sea going ships to Montesano, the Chehalis county seat, situated about fifteen miles from the mouth of the stream. This is as far as the effects of the tide are usually noticeable. Of course river boats ply many miles farther up the Chehalis. The official record shows that boats drawing three feet of water can navigate the Chehalis river a distance of seventy miles from its mouth during nine months of the year. Its chief tributaries are the Wynoochee and Satsop, both flowing from the northward and navigable a number of miles for small boats. The Black, Coquium, Delazene, Lincoln, Mock Chehalis, and Skookumchuck are branches valuable for floating timber from the woods.

The other streams flowing to Gray's harbor are, from the north, the Wishkah, the Hoquiam and the Humptulps, of which only the last mentioned is not affected by the tide and not navigable. The tide ascends the others twelve or fifteen miles, for which