

THE WEST SHORE.

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ASTORIA, THE SEAPORT OF THE NORTHWEST.



NE who will be at the pains to examine a good map of the Pacific slope, will see that Astoria is situated at the mouth of the Columbia, a river discharging into the Pacific nearly, or quite, as much water as the Mississippi into the gulf, and draining a region greater in extent than the entire area of the New England states, together with New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio, or about 250,000 square miles. The residence portion of the town is on the firm land that rises from the water, though the height is not yet encroached upon to any great extent. The large number of salmon canneries, saw mills and other factories are along the channel of the Columbia river, where the largest ships afloat can lie alongside the warehouses and take on or discharge cargoes. From the river, which is seven miles broad opposite Astoria, the town presents a pleasing appearance. The immense warehouses and factories occupy the water front, and there is always more or less shipping at the wharves, and beyond lie the commercial and residence portions of the city. The brick business blocks and palatial residences of a few of the enterprising and successful citizens will compare favorably with those of any town of the northwest. As a marine shipping port, the boundless possibilities of Astoria are at once apparent to the most casual observer, and an examination of the charts of the river at this point and at the entrance to the river will satisfy the expert on such matters. There is sheltered anchorage and a depth of water enough for any ship afloat.

This town is the oldest in the northwest. It was settled in 1811, by an expedition sent out under the auspices of John Jacob Astor to establish a trading post at the mouth of the Columbia river and branches at suitable points in the interior. The ship, fitted out in New York, took the usual route around Cape Horn and to the Sandwich islands, thence to the Columbia, which was entered during a storm. The site chosen for the location of the trading post was on the present site of St. Mary's hospital, and it was named Astoria in honor of the promoter of the gigantic enterprise of which this was to be the nucleus. During the second war with Great Britain, this post fell into the hands of British authorities, and it remained subject to foreign influences until the treaty in 1846 confirmed Oregon and Washington to the possession of the United States, when the British fur traders relinquished Astoria and a number of other posts they had maintained in the disputed territory of Oregon. At that time Astoria had grown to be a frontier town of considerable importance, and with its restoration to American authority and to the benefits of American trade it immediately assumed a progressive tone and began to extend its business interests. The establishment of a federal custom house there in 1849, with General John Adair as collector, marked the opening of a new era for Astoria, and since that date it has experienced a steady and substantial growth. It now has about eight thousand inhabitants, and it occupies a very important position. It is the natural distributing point for the entire basin of the Columbia river and its branches, a region vast in extent and of unparalleled resources in agricultural, horticultural, forest, coal and mineral wealth, comprising nearly all of Western Oregon, part of Western Washington, and all of Eastern Oregon, Eastern Washington and Idaho.