

# ST. JOHNS REVIEW

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Devoted to the interests of the Peninsula, the Manufacturing Center of the Northwest

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## St. Johns the Pittsburg of Oregon

Story of Phenomenal Growth from Village Set in Forest of Firs Ten Years Ago to Present Modern, Thriving City of Enormous Industrial Interests. Factories Here Obtain Ideal Locations Where Transportation Facilities and Ready Market for Output are Close at Hand.

Situated at the Conjunction of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, Its Future is Assured, Making it a Veritable City of Destiny.

It has been the history of the founding and building of every great city that those who laid the foundation for future greatness sought primarily a location affording natural means of transportation; the greatest cities of the world today stand upon the banks of the navigable rivers or are built by the harbors that afford anchorage for the deepest draft vessels that go down to the seas.

The great transcontinental and trunk railway systems seek these places as their terminals, for after all it is the ocean going craft that make possible the construction of the great railway systems.

What, then, are the possibilities of a city that is built upon one of the greatest inland waterways of the United States and at the same time affords rail transportation over the lines of two of the greatest railway systems of the world?

Such a city is St. Johns, the key to the transportation on the Columbia and Willamette rivers.

### A Little History.

Ten years ago there stood on what is now one of the most prosperous manufacturing cities of the Northwest a few scattered dwellings in a vast forest of firs. Then the solitude and silence of the forest was unbroken, and but few had entered it, except, perhaps, in quest of game. The din that follows in the wake of development, the shriek of the whistles of factories, and the buzzing of the saws of mills were as foreign as the war-whoop of the red man. The only sound emanating from the industrial or commercial world was the splashing of the wheels of a passing river steamer, which plied on its ways to ports on the Columbia.

But the genius of commerce and industry does not long allow locations that offer pre-eminent advantages to remain unutilized. The keen competition between the transportation systems causes scouts to be sent ahead to find those places that by natural advantages are destined to become industrial or commercial centers.

Nine miles to the south of St. Johns lay Portland, a growing city. Her future greatness depended and depends upon her water transportation facilities. St. Johns was nine miles nearer the mouth of the Columbia and the confluence of that mighty stream and the Willamette.

The possibilities opened by this fact were first realized and appreciated by what is now known as the St. Johns Lumber Company, one of the largest saw mills on the Pacific Coast. A small, and comparatively insignificant mill was installed. Then followed the Jobs Brothers with a flour mill, and then one by one other captains of industry, with far-seeing and unerring judgment saw the wonder-

ful opportunity offered them at St. Johns.

With the establishment of these industries began the building of St. Johns, which today stands high above, on a plateau, the water front, where are located her industries, which today is a city of 6000 inhabitants, throbbing with the multitudinous activities of a manufacturing center.

### The Modern St. Johns.

But it is with the modern St. Johns, the gateway to the Willamette and the key to the transportation of Portland and southern cities on the magnificent stream that drains one of the richest and largest valleys on the face of the globe, known as the Willamette Valley, that we wish to deal with in this article.

Embracing within her city limits the entire point of the Peninsula, whose point is washed by the waves of both the Columbia and the Willamette, St. Johns has a great water frontage. The day is not far distant when this entire water front will be a solid line of docks and industrial plants.

It is inevitable, because with the marvelous development that is now going on in the Northwest, and with the two great railway systems seeking this Peninsula as a terminus for their all-the-way water grade lines from the passes in the mountains that give entrance to the East, the demand for manufactured articles and for industrial activity will increase in proportion to the increase in population.

Great transportation experts have declared emphatically that the Peninsula, in other words St. Johns, is eventually to become the New York of the West.

That the possibilities of this city have been appreciated by many progressive business men and investors is clearly evidenced by the fact that four years ago the taxable property in this city amounted to \$200,000; today it aggregates \$2,500,000.

This remarkable growth has been in no way the result of unnatural methods, nor can it be classed with the boom variety. It was the natural, inevitable result of a full comprehension and a complete realization of a desirable location on the part of thousands of progressive American people, coming from every section of the United States to the Northwest—the land of opportunity—and to St. Johns the coming metropolis of this mighty empire, embracing the states of North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Northern California, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon.

Controlled by that wonderful Western variety of progress, the inhabitants of St. Johns have surrounded themselves with all the institutions that are the product of modern times. A magnificent city hall, built on the

old colonial style of architecture, graces one of the prominent locations of the city, providing a home for the municipal officers, and shelter for the performance of all civic functions.

### Schools and Churches.

While this is essentially and primarily a manufacturing and industrial center, the call of modern times for education of the younger generation has not remained unheeded. Nearing completion today is one of the most magnificent high school buildings in the entire state, which was erected at a cost of \$40,000, while two grammar, or graded schools, are afforded those of the children of our people who have not as yet advanced to the high school curriculum.

True to their history the churches of all denominations have one by one established themselves in our midst as the population increased and the demand for spiritual ministrations grew. The Methodist, the United Evangelical, the Baptist, the Congregational, the Christian, the Adventist, the German Baptist, the Catholic, and many of the societies banded for religious worship, have splendid edifices here.

The moral atmosphere of St. Johns is such that no person need hesitate to invest here, build a residence, make a home and rear their children in this environment. The people of St. Johns believe in so regulating the affairs of their city that it shall rank high with those of this and other states as a city of homes, as well as a city of industry.

### Public Service.

Absolutely necessary to the permanent and enduring greatness of any city are public service corporations that serve the public in the fullest sense of the word, and that do not overstep the bounds that are set by the statutes of the state, and imposed by the ordinances of the city. In this respect St. Johns can boast of better facilities than any city in the Northwest of comparative size.

The Portland Railway, Light & Power Company, one of the foremost public service concerns in the West, furnishes ample transportation, lighting and power facilities. It operates an excellent streetcar service between this city and Portland, the fare for the nine mile ride being only five cents. In connection with the street car service is maintained the Portland Suburban Express Company, which runs daily freight and express cars between this city and the more southerly one on the Willamette. A gas company furnishes the city with gas for heating, lighting and cooking purposes at a reasonable rate.

In nearly every instance the first questions that a person asks when contemplating investing in a city is concerning the water system. St.

Johns can boast of as good water as any city in Oregon, it having been analyzed by the state chemist and declared to be pure. The water supply is stored in huge tanks, with sufficient pressure in the standpipes to furnish every residence in the city with water for every necessary purpose.

Judiciously scattered throughout the city are fire plugs, with a heavy pressure, which, combined with a well-organized, and equipped fire department, gives ample protection from conflagration to the citizens.

The Pacific Bell Telephone and Home Telephone Companies, two of the largest telephone systems in the United States, serve St. Johns.

Municipally owned and controlled, the city dock, erected on the water front, affords the hundreds of vessels that ply the Willamette docking facilities. Every boat that comes in from the Pacific ocean, passes this dock and many of the biggest vessels dock there to discharge cargoes, or to take on cargoes for foreign and coast ports. This immense dock, one of the largest on the river, is all under roof and affords ample storage space.

### Tax Rate.

At first glance it might appear that with such extensive improvements in this city the tax rate would be abnormally high. Such, however, is not the case, as the books of the city tax assessor and tax collector show that the rate is lower than in any other city in Oregon of similar size.

### Character of Buildings.

The metropolitan appearance of the main business streets of this city invariably impresses the person who for the first time enters its gates. Substantial, costly, handsome brick and stone structures line the main streets, affording splendid facilities for store rooms, office buildings, etc.

In this connection it, perhaps, is well to lay stress on the fact that those desiring to build here will find that the building material can be obtained cheaper than in the greater centers of populations, due to the fact that the many industrial plants on the water front are turning out building material of every character, including lumber, sash, doors, windows, etc., while several big firms are extensive dealers in lime, cement and similar building material.

### Absolutely Independent.

The city of six thousand population, situated within a distance of nine miles of a city of 200,000 inhabitants, with interurban car service, that is absolutely independent of the greater center, is indeed an exception. Our merchants carry such a splendid grade and variety of goods, and our factories and industrial plants cover such a wide range, that every necessity of life is obtained in St. Johns—and at a cheaper rate than is possible in the

larger city to the south.

The civic spirit and pride is so strong in St. Johns that all support home industry. The merchant or business man who is looking toward St. Johns with a view of entering business here, need not for a moment hesitate because of its proximity to a larger city.

### Real Estate Investments.

It would be trite to attempt to describe the opportunities that are afforded in the Northwest for profitable investment in real estate, as its advantages have been exploited the world over and on each incoming transcontinental train, and vessel from other ports, are scores of persons who are seeking a home in the wonderful Northwest.

The keenest, most far-seeing and ablest business men of the state of Oregon recognize that St. Johns today offers the best field for remunerative investment in real estate.

But despite the fact that its superiority is universally recognized, the price of property today is reasonable. Several new residence tracts are now being opened. Business lots, 50x100 feet, can be purchased from \$1500 to \$5000, while residence property sells from \$200 to \$1000 a lot.

The rapid growth of the community makes an investment here not only absolutely safe, but certain of remunerative returns.

All of the residence property and business district of this city is situated on a high plateau, affording a splendid view of the beautiful Willamette river and the mountains on the other side. The residence district is one of the most attractive in this section of the state, and in it are found many of the handsomest homes that stand upon the banks of the stream that has been made famous by the songs of poets, and the word pictures of the most eminent writers.

### INDUSTRIES.

Differing from other cities in the Northwest St. Johns is not dependent on back country for her prosperity; it does not depend on the seasons; droughts have no effect on her; crop failures do not decrease her bank deposits. The output of her industries are shipped to every section of the United States and to every important port in the world. It is always in demand.

St. Johns is essentially an industrial and manufacturing center, and it is to those plants that were several years ago established here and that are now being established here, that she owes her greatness. Their immense payrolls go to swell the accounts of her merchants, to increase her taxable property, and to aid in the general development of the city. There are ten big industrial plants

located within the city limits of St. Johns, employing from 25 to 250 men each, and with pay rolls aggregating from \$1000 to \$15,000 per month.

It is self-evident that the men heading these concerns would not have located in St. Johns unless there was a well defined reason for it, and a decided advantage in doing so. The reason was that we are nine miles nearer the mouth of the Columbia river, the great outlet to the Pacific Ocean, than is Portland, the metropolis of Oregon. Every vessel that plies the Willamette must first pass the city dock at St. Johns before it anchors at the larger city.

### What the Industries Are.

The visitor to St. Johns will find a trip to the water front, or the industrial section of the city, both interesting and instructive, as here some of the biggest plants of the kind in the world are established.

The first company to begin operations was the St. Johns Lumber Company, which, but a few years ago, had a small mill here. Today it is one of the biggest sawers and shippers of fir lumber on the Pacific Coast, having a capacity of 235,000 feet of lumber every ten hours. It employs about two hundred and fifty men and its monthly pay-roll will exceed \$15,000.

The plant of the St. Johns Lumber Company is one of the most modern on the coast and the product it turns out is of such a high order that it is in demand in all the lumber markets of the world. The mill and yards cover more than three blocks of ground space. A great majority of the employees of this mill are either property owners in St. Johns or make their home here, the result being that the money paid out in pay-rolls is kept at home and spent with local merchants, invested in local property or deposited in local banks.

The Portland Woolen Mills, one of the biggest woolen mills on the Pacific Coast, is located at St. Johns. The output of this concern comprises a varied assortment of woolen goods, blankets, cloth, etc. The raw material used in this mill is obtained from the backs of Oregon sheep. Two hundred men and women are employed in this mill and the pay-roll aggregates \$7000 a month.

The Jobs Milling Company, the second oldest industrial plant in St. Johns, is the manufacturer of several brands of flour that find a ready market in Portland, Seattle, Spokane and other distributing points on the Pacific Coast. This company turns out about 300 barrels of flour daily and about fifteen tons of feed. From twenty to thirty men are regularly employed in this mill.

One of the newest and most rapidly growing concerns in St. Johns is the Modern Machine Works, which is

equipped to do all kinds of marine and railroad work, as well as logging and lumbering work. Its plant is a large one and requires the services of about thirty men. All kinds of iron work is accomplished in this plant, and its close proximity to the big plants on the water front makes it an almost absolute necessity in this city.

One of the new and highly important industries of this city is the Collapsible Box Factory, which manufactures collapsible, or folding boxes, coops and crates. This product has proven exceptionally popular with the shippers of this state and is in great demand. This concern is constantly broadening its field of action and enlarging its capacity.

The Marine Iron Works is one of the most extensive and widest known plants on the Pacific Coast and since its establishment in this city has held some of the biggest contracts that have been let by the government and individuals. It but recently finished the repairing of the United States engineering department's vessel, the Chinook, which was one of the biggest contracts the government has let in this section in a number of years. This company is equipped to do any and all kinds of marine iron work and its reputation has spread the length of the Pacific Coast.

There is a third iron works in St. Johns known as the L. M. Leach Iron Works. It is located in the outskirts of the city near the North Bank main line, and is recognized as one of the best equipped iron works and foundries in the entire state.

St. Johns also possesses a big ship building yard, which has attained a reputation that brings to it work from all parts of the Northwest and the Pacific Coast. This concern is prepared to build any character of vessel, no matter how large, and it has done some of the biggest contract work that has been given out on the Coast.

In addition to the above named industrial plants St. Johns can boast of one of the best laundries in the state, which receives work from many of the points on the Willamette and Columbia rivers, and that is constantly increasing its territory and adding to its efficiency. This is known as the St. Johns Laundry Company, and for several years it has done the laundry work of this city, as well as drawing a splendid patronage from Portland and other cities.

An up-to-date ice factory and cold storage plant, using a unique system of ice manufacture, is located within the city limits and furnishes the citizens with ice and cold storage facilities.

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