

A THRIVING YOUNG COUNTY SEAT IS FOSSIL



VIEW OF FOSSIL, OREGON.

-Photo by J. B. McWilliam.

Wheeler County is distinctly a stock-producing country. It has much fertile land on which grain will grow without irrigation, but as the distance to a railroad is great the production of anything but stock for exportation is not profitable at the present time.

It differs from many other counties in Eastern Oregon where stock-raising is the chief industry in having but little public range. Hills and valleys on every hand are generally fenced into great private pastures and in these large herds are kept the year round, although the feeding of hay becomes necessary in the winter time.

In the course of time a railroad will probably be extended into the county as far as Fossil, the county seat, from the direction of the Columbia River and then other resources will be developed, but the stock industry will continue to flourish. Many of the hills are steep and broken and can never be utilized for anything but pasture, except where gold is found in paying quantities and mining will be carried on.

Then, again, there are localities where agricultural pursuits will not be limited to the valleys and level lands but where the hills are low and rolling and where grain and hay can be raised with profit when there is a market for it.

Stock raising in Wheeler County has always been a source of much profit. In earlier times the range was used largely for cattle, but now the range that is not

enclosed with fences is more generally used by shepherds. And there does not seem to be the difficulty here between the sheepmen and cattlemen that there is in some other sections, which is probably due to there not being much public range to contend for. However, it has been explained to me that cattle owners have often invested in sheep also, "just to get even with their rivals," and thus open opposition has been decreased.

But the amount of land enclosed in fences is being materially lessened, for a representative of the Government is causing the throwing open of all public domain that has been unlawfully enclosed by private fences. There seems to have been a large amount of land in this county that has been monopolized in that way.

In earlier times this fencing of Government land could be done unnoticed, nor did it matter to the people at large if such methods were practiced, for there was more range than the few inhabitants could fully utilize. But now as the country is becoming crowded with stock the less extensive owners complain of the methods of their more successful rivals. It was due to their reports that the Government was roused to look into the matter.

The following figures, which were obtained from the assessment rolls of the county, illustrate to what extent stock-raising is being carried on here. A year ago there were 12,567 head of sheep in Wheeler County. The commercial value of these is estimated at \$219,367.50. At the

same time there were 11,835 head of cattle, at an estimated total value of \$238,750. The number of horses and mules in the county that year was 522, and their commercial value is estimated at \$55,520.

Other counties in Eastern Oregon can show greater numbers than these, but it must be remembered that in area, too, those counties are larger and in proportion Wheeler County makes a good showing. The total assessed value of all property in the county in 1902 was \$1,135,323, or an average of more than \$40 for every man, woman and child in the county. The commercial value of all the property, it is thought, would be at least two and one-half times that, or an average of \$119 for each resident of the county.

And yet it does not require figures from records to prove that the people of Wheeler County are prosperous. Nowhere can there be observed any sign of poverty, except where one comes in contact with a tramp who has drifted away from the railroad line. There is a general atmosphere of contentment that cannot exist without prosperity.

Farming in Wheeler County.

As stated before there is little done in the agricultural line, although a flourishing wheat field is now and then seen. At Fossil there is a grist mill and enough flour is manufactured to supply the local demand and a considerable quantity to the south. In the northern end of the county are a number of farms on which wheat is being raised every year, but as a rule

farming cannot pay till a railroad line enters the country.

That the natural conditions favor farming is proved by the way vegetation grows without the aid of irrigation. Near Fossil is a field of alfalfa on which has just been harvested the second crop for the season. It has not yet been irrigated this year, and there will be another growth, though light, before the close of the season.

The climate is an ideal one for the production of fruit. There are peaches raised here that would be a credit to the most noted fruit sections of California. But fruit, like almost all other products, must be limited to local demand until some opportunity is obtained for shipping it to a distance.

Fossil, the County Seat.

In a little basin formed at the junction of two creeks is the beautiful little town of Fossil. Houses, some painted in white and some in colors, form an attractive hills on each side that makes the view of the town one that appeals so strangely to the artistic sentiments of the visitor.

There is a suggestion of newness about the place that impresses one when he first sees it, but a few time-worn buildings indicate that it has not sprung up in a

night. In brief the history of Fossil is as follows:

Near a fossil bed, about four miles from the present location of the town, there was established many years ago a post office. From the geological formation of the place the postoffice took the name of Fossil. It was in 1883 that a man concluded that the little basin in which Fossil is now located would be an excellent place for a store. Accordingly he built a house at that place and began to transact business. The convenience of the location was soon proved, and finally another store was built and the Fossil postoffice was transferred to the place.

Thus the town of Fossil obtained its name, but it did not grow much more till a little more than four years ago, when the county of Wheeler was formed from a portion of Gilliam and Fossil was made the new county seat. Since that time the town has experienced an invigorating growth, and the new buildings that have come into existence as a result are what gives Fossil its appearance of "newness."

At present Fossil is a town of about 600 inhabitants. It has a new brick courthouse that would be a credit to a much older county-seat. The public school building is also brick, and is of a modern design. Five teachers are employed in it.

An electric light system is planned and will probably be in operation in two or three months. The sidewalks are good, the streets are well kept and the general

appearance of the place indicates considerable enterprise on the part of its inhabitants.

There is one thing of which Fossil has reason to be proud, and that is its water supply. One might travel over the larger part of the world and find few places of a similar size that are so well supplied with water for general use as in Fossil. At a cost of \$15,000 a pipe line was laid and a large cement-lined reservoir was made that would furnish the town with cool mountain spring water from a distance of about three miles.

If the reservoir had been made at the springs, the hydraulic pressure would have been greater than desired, so it was placed on a hill near at hand is constantly being fed by the pipe from the spring.

Until the debt incurred by the building of the water system shall have been paid every family is charged \$1.25 per month for use of water for domestic purposes and \$5 per year for water to irrigate lawns and gardens. In irrigating each hose is allowed to operate five hours per day.

It is believed that when the debt will have been paid, the cost of water for each family will be less than 50 cents per month. As may be imagined, the water coming direct from a spring, as it does is of the purest and most wholesome quality.

The story of Fossil would be incomplete if it did not contain mention of the local organization of Oregon pioneers and its private park. It is claimed here that

this is the only organization of the kind that owns a park in its own name, and it is probable that such is the case.

There are a larger number of pioneers here and throughout Wheeler County, and between them generally exists a strong fraternal feeling. They are known collectively as the Wheeler County Oregon Pioneers' Association, and the enthusiasm that they show in the welfare and general advancement of their organization is proved by what they have accomplished. They have gained possession of 40 acres of timber land in the mountains 12 miles east of Fossil and they intend to keep it in its virgin state and use it as a picnic ground and Summer resort for themselves exclusively.

It is one of the most attractive spots to be found in the county, and to prevent cattle from eating out the grass and to keep other campers from intruding, the place has been enclosed by a strong fence. Within its borders are two springs of cool, clear water and the creek near by is filled with trout. It is an ideal spot for the purpose for which it is intended.

In the early part of June of this year the pioneers held an enjoyable reunion in their park on Service Creek. They went into camp for several days. In the day time there were meetings and entertainments, when musical and literary programmes were rendered, and in the evenings around the camp fires stories were told of the days of long ago.

LIONEL A. JOHNSON.

WANT RATES RESTORED

DALLIES MERCHANTS ANXIOUS TO STOP STEAMBOAT WARS.

Proposed Conference With Regulator Officials—New Light Station in Alaskan Waters.

The steamers *Ballou*, *Gatzert* and *Charles R. Spencer* continue to carry large crowds between Portland and The Dalles at the cut rates. The carnival is partly responsible for the heavy trade, though many Portland people are taking advantage of the low fares to visit the upper Columbia regions. Merchants of The Dalles look upon the rate war as an evil and are taking steps to bring it to an end. It is understood that a conference will be held in that city this evening between the merchants and the officials of the Regulator line and the former will try to prevail upon the steamboat men to restore rates to the old basis. While the hotels and restaurants of The Dalles are doing a good business with the crowds that the boats take there the storekeepers declare they are losing money, as many people of The Dalles are returning to the country south of Portland to make their purchases. Among the big crowd of passengers brought down on the *Gatzert* yesterday were several large parties from the country south of the Dalles, who drove into that city in wagons and there took the boat. It is in order to keep the trade of this class of people that the merchants there are seeking to bring the rate war to an end.

Captain Spencer says he was asked by a committee of business men to restore rates to the original figure, but he told the committee that he did not begin the rate cutting and could not go back to the old tariff unless the Regulator company did likewise. In the meantime, he is still looking for another boat to put on his line.

A rumor was current in steamboat circles yesterday that the O. R. & N. Company had cut the passenger fare from The Dalles to Portland to 50 cents, and the passenger department of that company it was said that no such cut had been made nor was one contemplated, as the rivalry between the steamer lines (so far has not affected the railroad's business).

WIND AND WEATHER IN OCTOBER.

Forecast for Coming Month in North Pacific Ocean.

The North Pacific pilot chart for October gives the following forecast of wind and weather for the coming month:

The chart of normal pressure for the month shows an area of high barometer (maximum pressure 30.20 inches) central in latitude 30 to 40 degrees north, longitude 120 to 150 degrees west. Around this area the winds circulate in the same direction as the motion of the hands of a watch, northwesterly and northerly winds prevailing between the maximum and the Coast; northeasterly and easterly winds (the northeast trades) on the southern slope; southeasterly and southerly winds to the west of the maximum; westerly and northwesterly winds along the northern slope. From 120 degrees west to 150 degrees east the steadiest trades will be found between the parallels 15 to 20 degrees north.

In Honolulu the average prevalence of the trades during October is 22 days. Tedious calms, often extending over several days in succession, will be met throughout the belt. 0 degrees to 10 degrees north, 120 degrees east to 150 degrees; also throughout a triangular area, the base of which rests on the American Coast, from Cape San Lucas to the Gulf of Panama, the vertex lying in 5 degrees north, 130 degrees west.

Along the American Coast north of 45 degrees the winds will go from southeast (with falling barometer) to southwest and west (with rising barometer). Immediately under the Coast the most frequent direction will be southeast, rising at times to gale force. Beyond 130 degrees the wind will blow longest and strongest from south and southwest. Between 40 degrees

ANDY MAHONEY ARRIVES.

Crew in Good Health—Foul Bottom Makes Long Cruise.

ASTORIA, Or., Sept. 16.—(Special).—The American four-masted schooner *Andy Mahoney*, which has been reported as practically a derelict on the Pacific with all on board in almost a starving condition, arrived in port this morning, 70 days from Santa Rosalia, and a cleaner schooner above the water line or a healthier crew never entered the Columbia. The schooner sailed from Santa Rosalia on July 7 after having taken on 65 tons of salt at La Trinidad for Portland.

She expected to make the passage in about 30 days, and only sufficient provisions for that time were taken, but owing to delays by continued calms and head winds, the vessel had only reached American waters off San Diego when 60 days had elapsed and alarm was felt that the stock of provisions would not last until port was reached. The trans-Pacific liner *Gaeltic* was sighted and from her the *Andy Mahoney* secured some fresh meat, milk, eggs, flour and potatoes, which amply supplied the wants of the schooner until she arrived here today.

The bottom of the schooner is exceptionally foul, the result of being in tropical waters so long, and her non-arrival after being spoken by the *Gaeltic*, which was announced in the San Francisco papers with sensational details, caused some alarm for her safety, but the alarm was unwarranted as the passage was uneventful excepting that at 8 o'clock on the evening of Friday, September 11, a severe northwest gale was encountered in 44°24' north and 123°31' west.

During the gale the schooner's job stay was carried away, necessitating the carrying of reduced sail since that time. Captain Anderson, master of the schooner,

Answer in Astoria Street Case.

ASTORIA, Or., Sept. 16.—(Special).—City Attorney Smith, who represents the city in the suit brought by Lone E. White and others against W. A. Goodin and the City of Astoria to join them from proceeding with the improvement of Sixteenth street, filed his answer in the Circuit Court yesterday. The answer makes general denial of all allegations in the complaint and further alleges that all the proceedings authorizing the improvement were properly acted upon by the Council in accordance with the provisions of the charter, that bids were advertised for and so far as known by the city committee let the contract to the lowest bidder in good faith. The answer then asks for a decree dismissing the complaint and assessing the costs against the plaintiffs. The case will be argued at the session of the court which will be convened by Judge McBride on next Monday.

Going Down River to Load.

The Steamer Gamecock Went to Vancouver, Wash., Yesterday to Take Out the Ship Two Brothers, which has been here for over two months, being delayed on account of the low water in the Columbia River. The ship has been lightened so as to draw only 16 feet and will be towed by St. Helens, where loading of lumber will be finished. The Two Brothers will carry cargo for the Southern Pacific Company to be taken to Oakland, Cal.

White Star Takes Over the Line.

NEW YORK, Sept. 16.—It is officially announced that the White Star Line has taken over the Boston-Mediterranean and the Boston-Liverpool services of the Dominion line.

Marine Notes.

Local United States Inspectors Edwards and Fuller will go to Wallula today to inspect the ferry steamer *Elsie May*.

The schooner *J. H. Lusman*, which is loading piles at Victoria Dolphina for Shanghai, will complete her cargo this week.

The steamer *Homer* left Astoria yesterday for Unimak Pass, Alaska, with light-house material. This will be her last trip North this season.

The steamer *Leggett*, towing the big *Hammond* raft, left Astoria yesterday morning for San Francisco after several

Domestic and Foreign Ports.

ASTORIA, Or., Sept. 16.—Arrived at 5 A. M.—Steamer *Heather*, from Puget Sound. Arrived at 8 A. M.—Schooner *Andy Mahoney*, from St. Rosalia. Arrived down at 8:30 and sailed at 12:30 P. M.—Steamer *Homer*, for Alaska. Sailed at 8:50 A. M.—Steamer *Francis H. Leggett* and log raft, for San Francisco. Arrived down at 2 P. M.—Schooner *R. V. Bartlett*. Left up at 5:15 P. M.—British ship *Peter Patriot*. Arrived at 6 P. M.—Steamer *South Portland*, from San Francisco. Condition of the bar at 5 P. M., smooth; wind, north; weather, clear.

Punta Reyes, Sept. 16.—Passed at 10:40 A. M.—Steamer *Signal* and *Robert Dollar*, from Portland.

San Francisco, Sept. 16.—Arrived at 3:15 P. M.—Steamer *Signal*, from Portland.

Hoquiam, Wash., Sept. 16.—Arrived 11th-Schooner *Jennie Wand*, from San Francisco, for Montezuma.

Liverpool, Sept. 16.—Sailed—Tauronic, for New York.

Tacoma, Sept. 16.—Arrived—Steamer *James Dollar*, from San Francisco; steamer *Texas*, from Seattle; steamer *Shawmut*, from Seattle. Liverpool, Sept. 16.—Arrived—Westernland, from Philadelphia; *Ivernia*, from Boston.

Seattle, Sept. 16.—Arrived—Steamer *Wellington*, from Laysmith; steamer *Charles Nelson*, from Tacoma; steamer *St. Paul*, from New York.



WHEELER COUNTY PIONEERS AT CAMP IN THEIR PARK.

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